



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

GOVERNOR'S LECTURE SERIES: A HEALTHY FUTURE FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN

Tuesday 7 March 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cath Bowtell, Chair, The Royal Women's Hospital

Lisa Lynch, Acting Chief Executive Officer, and

Panellists to whom you'll shortly be introduced

Distinguished guests

First, I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we gather – the Wurundjeri and Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation – and pay my respects to their Elders, past and present, and to Elders of other communities who may be with us.

Tony and I are delighted to welcome you to Government House for this public lecture on *A Healthy Future for Girls and Women*.

It is one of a series that we have had the pleasure of hosting here in our historic ballroom.

It is a space that, across more than 140 years, has hosted grand balls, visits from royalty and Heads of State, ceremonies and award events.

In recent years, amongst many other events, it has hosted blood banks, circus arts, a publishing house for kids, celebrations for Victorians who have turned 100, the proclamation of a new sovereign, a variety of performances and, like this evening, public lectures.

I can hazard a guess however, that throughout that long history and across those various activities and events, the words endometriosis, fertility, menopause and incontinence have not often been uttered here!

Tonight, on the eve of International Women's Day, thanks to the wonderful expert panel who will chat with us, I'd like to change that.

It's not, I want to emphasise, that women have been unimportant in this space. Indeed, across the decades, they have often been front and centre.

Their contributions have been significant, whether through the hosting of major events – as was the norm in colonial times – or the founding of the Red Cross right here, and the packing of essential goods for the front – as occurred in World War One. Just by way of example.

That brings me to this evening.

This is a Governor's Lecture Series event that we have dearly wanted to hold. We have held similar lectures about global health, men's health, mental health and children's health.

Tonight, we complete the set!

I want to encourage open discourse about health issues that affect girls and women. They should not be secret. They are not just 'women's business.' The productivity and good health of just over half of our population are important not only to each woman but to each family, each community and to our nation.

We are fortunate in Victoria to be home to leading hospitals and research institutions, of which the Royal Women's Hospital is an important example.

As Australia's first public women's hospital, it has maintained its commitment to providing the best health outcomes for Victorian girls and women since its doors first opened in 1856.

I am the Patron of the Royal Women's Hospital: a role previously held by Governors' wives, rather than the Governor himself. I'll leave it to you to work out why I chose to break that particular tradition. If I mention that I'm the only Victorian Governor ever to give birth to two babies there, you'll get the drift....!

We are delighted this evening to be joined by some of the Hospital's brilliant experts.

And fortunate to have Lisa Lynch here with us to guide the conversation on these critical health issues. Lisa has over 25 years experience in the public health sector, working as a clinician, educator, researcher, author, coach and leader.

Shortly, she will introduce and facilitate a conversation with our panel.

We hope that you enjoy the evening and learn something new about the progress being made in the health of our girls and women.