



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

GRAND PRIX LAR
Thursday 21 March 2024

Acknowledgments

The Honourable Steve Dimopoulos, Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events,
representing the Premier of Victoria

The Honourable Ben Carroll, Deputy Premier, Minister for Police, Minister for Crime
Prevention and Minister for Racing

The Honourable Danny Pearson, Assistant Treasurer, Minister for Transport Infrastructure,
Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop, Minister for WorkSafe and the TAC

The Honourable Ted Baillieu, Former Premier of Victoria

The Honourable Martin Pakula, Chairman, **Travis Auld**, CEO and **Board members** of the
Australia Grand Prix Corporation

Guenther Steiner, Former Team Principal of Haas Formula One Team, and **Distinguished
representatives** of FIA, Formula One, the Australian Grand Prix Corporation

Senior members of the Victorian Public Service and Victoria Police

Victorian Senior Officers of the Australian Defence Force

Members of the Consular Corps

Distinguished guests

I begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the unceded lands on which this House stands – the Wurundjeri and Bunurong people – and pay my respects to their Elders, past and present.

It's a pleasure to welcome you all to Government House this evening to celebrate the 2024 Formula 1 Rolex Australian Grand Prix.

From 21 – 24 March, Victoria will host guests from across Australia and the world.

Brought together by a love for the craftsmanship and talent that defines Formula 1, locals and visitors alike look forward to this event each year.

As with many dates in Melbourne's major events calendar, the Grand Prix has a long history here in Victoria.

For more than 70 years, the Albert Park circuit has provided racetrack facilities alongside hospitality and entertainment services.

In 2024, guests can enjoy hospitality suites, world-class dining, Fan Zone experiences and live performances from local and international artists.

Of course, racing and the hospitality offered to guests have changed significantly across seven decades.

Newspaper reports from the Grand Prix's first year spoke with excitement of the two "*internationally famous drivers*" set to compete in the race with "*the latest in 140 m.p.h sports cars.*"

Guests were treated to light refreshments by the Army Catering Corps and the Army Canteens Service whilst the total number of onlookers was anticipated to reach 50,000.

As I said, significant change.

What hasn't changed is the Grand Prix's commitment to showcasing the very best of racing talent and engineering.

Formula 2 and 3 will return in 2024 as support categories that allow the next generation of racing talent to demonstrate their skills.

Last year saw two Victorian drivers compete in the F3 division while Melbourne local, Oscar Piastri, battled through a difficult race to come eighth in F1.

I'm also keen, as I suspect many of you are, to explore the changes made by the Grand Prix's new leadership team.

For the first time since 2011, the Australian Grand Prix Corporation is being led by a new CEO, Travis Auld.

Travis brings a wealth of professional experience, having held many roles in the AFL, the Gold Coast Suns and Essendon Football Club.

Also new to the Grand Prix this year is Chairman, The Honourable Martin Pakula, who replaced Paul Little at the end of 2023.

I look forward to seeing what they will bring to such an iconic event.

Thank you to the board, leadership team and countless staff at the Australian Grand Prix Corporation for once again delivering a unique and exciting sporting event.

And to our guests from inter-state and overseas, I hope you can use some of your remaining time in Melbourne to explore the city and its surrounds.

Whether it's visiting the National Gallery of Victoria's *Triennial* exhibit or enjoying our renowned wineries or restaurants or exploring Victoria's natural beauty.

Please enjoy your evening here.

I now invite Minister Dimopoulos to say a few words.