



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
VICTORIA

# CONSULAR CORPS MELBOURNE CHRISTMAS RECEPTION

**Tuesday 16 December 2025**

## **Acknowledgments**

**The Honourable Danny Pearson MP**, Minister for Economic Growth and Jobs

**Joseph Petric**, Dean, **Eileen Lizzie Lozano Granados**, Deputy Dean, **Andrew Mendelawitz**, Secretary, and **Members of the Consular Corps Melbourne**

**Paul Stephens**, Director Victoria State Office, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

**Representatives from the Department of Premier and Cabinet**

**Distinguished guests**

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

It's a pleasure to welcome you all here this evening.

This is one of the last official engagements for the year, and it is fitting to be joined by those with whom we have such regular engagement.

In speaking to you tonight, I would like to reflect on two other recent engagements in the Official Program.

Earlier this month, we hosted the 2025 Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence, which recognised the contributions of some outstanding Victorians from the diverse communities across our State.

The ceremony served as a reminder of the strength of our multicultural society here in Victoria, and how this diversity expands our possibilities and our horizons.

Then, last week, I toured the Western District in Victoria – a region of historical significance, as the site of the first European settlement in our State.

There, I visited the Port of Portland – which also happens to be the origin of one of Victoria's first exports – three bales of Merino wool, shipped to Tasmania in 1836.

Since that time, countless vessels have arrived at and departed from our shores.

With them have come waves of new Victorians, new ideas and cultures, and new innovations to sustain our growth.

Likewise, we have shared our goods with the world, and helped build skilled workforces to sustain the growth of communities overseas.

Across the almost 190 years since those bales of wool left Portland Bay, our trade connections have grown, our communities have become increasingly diverse, and our distance from the rest of the world seems much smaller.

I reflect on these engagements as they represent two enduring strengths of our State.

Victoria has always prospered from being open – to trade as well as to migration.

And I was equally pleased to represent Victoria abroad on my two Official Visits to six countries this year.

Importantly, international engagement is not a zero-sum game.

When our State benefits, so too do our partners.

Our diverse cultural communities make Victoria a more welcoming and vibrant place for all – for citizens and visitors alike.

And shared growth in key sectors come as a direct result of successes in collaborating with our partners abroad.

These are the strengths that have built Victoria into what it is today, and these are the strengths will sustain us into the future.

Our strengths rely on one another.

And the Consular Corps play a vital role.

Today, almost half of Victoria's population were either born overseas or have a parent born overseas.

That diversity continues to bring cultural exchange and people-to-people links that enrich all of us here.

We also remain an outward-looking State, and one that is eager to reach out to our friends.

The Consular Corps has made a longstanding contribution to building these strengths into what we see around us.

Whether through supporting your diaspora that live and work here, or strengthening partnerships between governments, institutions and businesses – the work you do is crucial.

It will be of particular importance as we look ahead to addressing common challenges – both internationally, as well as domestically.

Tragically, this week's events have served as a horrific reminder of how we must all commit more strongly to fostering a community where acts of evil against one another are unthinkable.

Here at Government House, I am pleased to have been able to host many conversations to support these efforts throughout the year.

During times of uncertainty, they are the strengths we will lean into – rather than shy away from.

I'd like to thank all of you for the important role you play, and I welcome the shared value we place on international exchange and collaboration.

As we mark the end of another year, I know Victoria and its institutions remain committed to strengthening it in the years to come.

I now invite Minister Pearson to address us.