



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
VICTORIA

## COMMITTEE FOR MELBOURNE DINNER

Thursday 26 May 2016

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

#### **Ministers**

#### **Members of Parliament**

The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor of Melbourne, **Robert Doyle**

**Mr Scott Tanner**, Chair of Committee for Melbourne

#### **Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen**

First, I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we are gathering and pay my respects to their elders, past and present, and to any elders with us this evening.

Melbourne is the city in which I was born and bred. It is where I have lived for most of my life, where I have married, had my children, worked and ....watched some of the best possible footy that you could ever see!

My earliest recollection of it though is through the lens of floods of tears. It was 22 November 1956. I was standing at the window of the home I'd then lived in for my whole three years, watching my siblings, (senior citizens of 6,9 and 11), excitedly heading to the MCG with my parents, for the Opening Ceremony of Melbourne's Olympic Games. I was left behind, considered too young to go. It left a scar (and probably explains why, as an adult, no amount of time has ever been enough for me at "the G"!)

For the very many of you in this room who have absolutely no recollection of Melbourne in the 1950's....and I realise there are going to be more and more of you in that category.... Let me explain that it was a golden time.

Two world wars just behind us. A prosperous time. Victoria riding on its economic strengths of motor vehicle, textile and chemical manufacturing. The start of television and all the

wonders of that black and white moving image within our homes - *I Love Lucy, Leave it to Beaver, Father Knows Best and Pick a Box. Easy living.* Languid summers of running under sprinklers and roaming to the shops – with no adult supervision needed - to buy an icy pole or a cobber, musk stick, black cats or raspberries. Perhaps a spearmint leaf and sherbet bomb.....but.....I digress!

Coming to “the city” was the biggest treat. We dressed up for that. Yes, at the risk of sounding ancient, we wore “good clothes” for a trip to town. And gloves! The Christmas fun fair at the top of Foy’s (on the corner of Bourke and Swanston Street) was never missed.

Our absolute favourite was when our mum took us to Ernest Hillier’s. The irony, that it was usually after she’d taken one or all of us to the dentist, happily eluded her. Religiously, we’d head straight there from the dentist, to enjoy the most sugary, syrupy choc-malt milkshakes that you could ever find!

I know I am beginning to sound like I’ve stepped out of a time warp. There is a reason though for my trip down memory lane; although I admit that I have possibly warmed to it a little more than necessary.

That is Melbourne of the past. At least my past.

What is our Melbourne of today?

Well, Melbourne has grown from 1.5 million then to 4.3 million now. We have a place called Docklands, another sports stadium down that way, a developed Southbank, graffiti covered laneways that we love and foster, Fed Square where the Gas and Fuel towers used to be, and scores of glass towers that could never have been imagined.

We have an Arts Centre with a spire and an iconic NGV. We now host at least 13 Arts Festivals every year, as well as fashion festivals, food festivals, a Grand Prix, and we have a

Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre that last year hosted just over one million people.

We have a huge Tennis Centre on the river and a square stadium too. We have thousands of people LIVING right in town and, increasingly, food shops to support them.

I suspect we have a smaller proportion of doctors and dentists in the CBD, but, (to warm my heart), more lawyers, and more financial services too. Definitely more bars, restaurants and hotel options. It is a lively city, both night and day, just like the best city centres of the world.

We don't have phone booths but we do have Wi-Fi hot spots, and clever roads that can read for themselves how long we've parked. And we have bikes and bike lanes, and Collins Street just keeps on going after Spencer Street - in a way it never used to.

But right now is history too. So, what will our city look like by the early 2050's, a century from when I was born?

Will Robert Doyle still be Lord Mayor? Will men's football be as popular as the AFL Women's League? And if we're talking footy, will the Essendon drug saga have been concluded? On less important topics, we do know that Melbourne's population will, on all projections, almost double. We'll be heading towards eight million people, the increase driven by overseas migration, some interstate migration, a slight increase in fertility rates and an increased life expectancy. In fact, by 2050, more than 2.2 million of us will be aged over 65 (compared with 800,000 now).

That phenomenal growth will inform all that the city needs and strives for and, although those numbers carry with them the uncertainty of projections, they are probably more certain than any of the projections as to how our expanded population will best be supported.

I say that because the disruptive forces of technology make projections shaky, save for the projection that disruption shall continue, and it will manifest itself across all areas of

business, across all industries and all geographies, and in all work practices. It surely becomes much harder to know what we don't know about the future.

I had a seminal experience recently, in the course of hosting a dinner for Chemi Peres, the Israeli venture capitalist. We had included several of Melbourne's brightest young entrepreneurs amongst the guests, some of whom were informally chatting with – perhaps more aptly put, they were pitching to - this eminent man, as the dinner was drawing to a close. He was listening and encouraging but, he made it plain that the investments that most appealed to him were the ones that were focused not three years' out, but thirty. He sought the genius of those who were ahead of any curve that was immediately predictable.

After a career in the law, perhaps the most reactive of professional disciplines, I was in awe of the boldness of projecting into such uncharted seas.

But project we must.

As you are no doubt well aware, we must factor in the declining PC usage in favour of mobile devices, and the consequential changes in business and revenue models.

We must factor in the digital disruption to changing markets, the flow-on issues of privacy and cyber-threats, the need for more agile work-styles and the inevitability of digital and some robotic replacement of the workforce.

We must also factor in the increase in entrepreneurship - that its face is and shall continue to be increasingly young - and female - and that funding models must keep up. And we must understand the global marketplace, the growing global middle class, lucrative new markets and Asia as the hub of what is referred to now as the new world order of knowledge.

Of course, as cities grow, effective infrastructure and sustainable urbanization will be imperative, as will how big cities, such as Melbourne, can meet its demand for resources,

and how, for example, the health care needs of its growing and ageing population will be met.

The policy of how to meet those challenges is not for me. It is for governments, bureaucrats, clever business, academics, planners and organisations like the Committee for Melbourne, but not for me.

The Committee for Melbourne has a vision for our city, the vision of a strong and globally competitive economy, with world class infrastructure and liveability. It is a vision underpinned by its members' diverse skills and disciplines, coupled with an obviously deep affection for our city.

And in furtherance of the Committee's vision, amongst its greatest assets must surely be the alumni and participants of the Future Focus Groups.

Nowhere is that clearer than in the projects spawned by this bright young group since its inception in 1996.

Open House Melbourne is a terrific example. A vital part of Melbourne's event landscape: a lively public education organisation focused on the built environment. Our Government House is one such 'Open House'.

We enjoyed the day last year, particularly in the way it started. Returning from an early walk around the tan, and heading towards the gates to Government House, some people already lined up for the gates to open were kind enough to let us know that there was no point in going any further – it wasn't open yet!

There is a raft of other clever projects, realised by these high-achievers. Projects, for example, to tackle the barriers to youth employment, projects to promote and underpin our largest export of international education, and those designed to bring different social and cultural groups together or to reinvigorate forgotten parts of Melbourne.

I am particularly pleased not only to be the Patron of the Committee for Melbourne, but also the Patron of the Future Focus Group. We overlook the skills and ideas of these young people at our peril. They are actually not the leaders of tomorrow. They are the leaders of today. They are bred to navigate the challenges and opportunities of our times. They have the skills and knowledge to understand and recognise them. They are more likely to divine the answers, while those of us of different generations are often still trying hard to divine the questions.

The youth, energy, commitment, knowledge and innovative ways of this group will ensure that Melbourne continues to not only grow, but prosper.

May I urge them – and all Committee for Melbourne members – to continue their hard work, within the spirit of our State’s simple motto of “Peace and Prosperity”. And may I congratulate you all on your commitment to our city, and the time that you dedicate to it.