



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
VICTORIA

# CONSULAR CORPS MELBOURNE GALA DINNER

**Friday 9 May 2025**

## **Acknowledgments**

**His Excellency Vitaliano Gaspar Gallardo Valencia**, Ambassador of Peru

**His Excellency Diego Felipe Cadena Montenegro**, Ambassador of Colombia

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

**Danni Jarrett**, Chief Executive Officer, Global Victoria

**Rob Holland**, Executive Director, Department of Premier of Victoria

**Alanna Boyd**, Deputy State Director, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

I begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the lands on which this building stands – the Wurundjeri people of the Eastern Kulin Nation – and pay my respects to their Elders, past and present.

Earlier today, I attended the opening of the *Melbourne 2050 Summit*.

This forum served a dual purpose: looking back at where we've come from and looking forward to where we, as a city and a people, are headed.

Melbourne has been defined by a rich history of inclusivity and cultural diversity – a strength that will undoubtedly inform our vision for the future.

As we reflect on this, it is fitting to consider the history of this very venue.

The place where we meet tonight, originally known as the 'Grand Hotel,' was a centrepiece of 'Marvellous Melbourne' – an era defined not just by the wealth of gold, but significantly, by the people the gold brought.

These were people who travelled from all corners of the globe in search of fortune – bringing with them unique perspectives on culture and community, shaped by their diverse backgrounds and experiences.

The Polish miner Seweryn Korzelinski spoke of the melting pot of cultures that existed on the Victorian goldfields, writing in his memoirs of how miners would:

*"...amuse themselves with conversation about their countries of origin and its habits and describe events they have experienced, because every one crossed many lands and many a sea before arriving in Australia."*

Whether they found that fortune or not, many of those migrants settled here – flagging this State as an early example of what a multicultural society could be.

Though migration has ebbed and flowed across history, it has remained a constant theme that has come to define Victoria's modern identity.

There's no corner of this State that hasn't been shaped by its influence.

The benefits of such exchanges are not limited to the cultural and the culinary.

For generations, people from abroad have brought with them important social movements, trade connections and innovations that have been adopted and adapted on our shores.

It is now a much less arduous journey to reach Victoria from abroad than in those early days on the goldfields.

But even as the world becomes increasingly globalised, personal connections and face-to-face engagement remain as important as ever.

Since commencing in my role as Governor, I have enjoyed my many conversations with the Consular Corps, in which we have discussed our shared priorities.

Victoria's focus on these partnerships, at all levels, reflects the value we place on them.

As was true of our earliest days as a State, Victoria remains outward-looking, supported by our global network of 24 Victorian Government Trade and Investment Offices across the world.

This engagement will only increase in importance in the years to come, as we address common challenges and seize opportunities together.

I'd like to thank all of you for the important role you continue to play in fostering these partnerships.

Whether as consuls or honorary consuls, your work supports countless communities across our State, while also playing an active role in diversity and inclusion for all Victorians.

For my part, in just a few weeks' time, I will be travelling to Europe as part of an Official Visit as a representative of Victoria in this spirit of exchange and collaboration.

I look forward to continuing our ongoing dialogue upon my return, and I thank each representative here for helping facilitate the strong relationships that we have proudly built together.

Thank you.