



**Message from HE the Governor
of Victoria, the Hon. Linda Dessau AC
and Mr Anthony Howard AM, QC**

It has certainly been a difficult start to the year, with parts of our State so heavily affected by bushfires and now the unprecedented challenge of COVID-19.

First and foremost, we care about the health and well-being of all Victorians and hope that those associated with our Patronages are safe and well cared for. We all need to stay across the advice of our health authorities, which are constantly updated and can be found at www.dhhs.vic.gov.au and www.health.gov.au.

We have seen the anxiety in the community caused by COVID-19, and its effects. Of course, anxiety like this is understandable at a time of such uncertainty. But it is important, now more than ever, to remain calm and to work together.

It is a time too for gratitude to all those who are working so hard to look after our medical and emergency needs, to care for the vulnerable, to keep essential services running and to respond to this unfolding situation.

We are conscious that many of our Patronages are amongst those groups. We express to them the gratitude felt by all Victorians. We would be pleased if you would convey that to your members for us.

We are conscious too that a number of our Patronages will be celebrating particular anniversaries or achievements during this period, when large groups of people will be unable to gather together. Others will have members who are likely to feel acutely the cancellation of their normal events and activities. That, and the social distancing practices now in place, will often bring a sense of isolation. Each person, each organisation, will experience these upheavals in different ways. Our thoughts are with them all.

Although for now Government House will not be able to welcome guests in the usual way, we remain as eager as ever to communicate with Victorians across the community. How lucky we are to live in an age when we have technology to assist us.

With that in mind, we encourage you to keep in touch and to write to the office if there is any way we can connect with your organisation, now or in the future, remembering that many engagements can be conducted through online technology. Requests can be made to requests@govhouse.vic.gov.au.

Please take care of each other. This is a time when we all need to check on family, neighbours, the elderly, workmates who are working off-site - anyone who might be alone or doing it tough.

The Hon. Linda Dessau AC

Anthony Howard AM, QC