

**Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

**73rd Italian National Day Reception**

**Address by the Honourable Kim Beazley AC,  
Governor of Western Australia**

I would firstly like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet – the Whadjuk Noongar people – and pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging.

Good evening everyone, and welcome to the Government House Ballroom.

It is a pleasure to join you all to celebrate the 73<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of the Italian National Day.

Over the weekend, 'Festa della Repubblica' celebrations have been in full swing including a military parade through the historic centre in Rome, an open day at the presidential palace and a display by the Italian Air Force acrobatic patrol – the Frecce Tricolori. This in addition to many smaller celebrations in cities and towns.

I note the final stage of the 2019 Giro d'Italia also wrapped up on Sunday, finishing in Verona and marking the end of three weeks of gruelling cycling covering 3, 518.5km. Richard Carapaz became the first Ecuadorian Grand Tour Champion in the event's 110 year history. The event brings together cyclists from all over the world and I'm sure there were many celebrations.

Since becoming a Republic 73 years ago, Italy's national day has become a celebration of its key principles and values such as democracy and respect for human rights. It is a special day for Italians all over the world.

It is also an opportunity, for us, to acknowledge the strong ties that connect Australia and Italy – trade and commerce, language and culture, demographic representation and social contribution.

The bond between our countries is traditionally strong thanks to these ties, our common values and a well-integrated community of more than 1 million Australians of Italian descent (and 170, 000 Italian born residents) living in Australia today.

This year our countries celebrate 70 years of friendship.

Since the early settlement of Australia, Italian people have decided to make their home here, and we are glad they did.

Almost from the outset, Australian Italians enriched an otherwise limited Anglo-Irish bi-culture. Italian priests were critical in missionary work in this State, QLD and the NT. Raffaello Carboni played a significant role in the Eureka Stockade.

The revolutionary movement for Italian unity was an important part of the intellectual sub-structure of democratic debate in 19<sup>th</sup> century Australia. But in practical terms it was the substantial number

of Italians who participated in and catered to the mining in our gold rushes that created the first impressions in this country.

Really it was the surge of migration after WWII that changed the face of Australia. There is no doubt that Italians and Greeks, in terms of numbers, led the way in the creation of our multicultural Australia.

Today, our two highly developed and complementary G20 economies share robust international engagement and enduring people-to-people ties. There is a bright future ahead for continued growth and expansion.

123, 000 people of Italian origin live in WA, with more than 29, 000 people speaking Italian at home.

The Italian community is embedded in our culture, business and industry. Italian Australians have contributed massively to our way of life in WA and at this event last year I listed some of these notable and well-loved individuals – many who are here today.

It is important to note that we rarely use a description of one of us as an Italian Australian, an Anglo Australian or a Greek Australian. We are all Australians. I have never been in a workplace, campaign office, sporting outfit or whatever when one of my colleagues has not been of Italian origin. You energise our community across all levels.

At this point I would like to acknowledge outgoing Consul General, Dr David Balloni.

Over the last four years, Dr David Balloni has committed himself to carrying out important work in encouraging and promoting interests between Italy and WA.

I understand that over the coming months Dr Balloni will complete his tour of duty before departing Western Australia with his family. We thank Dr Balloni and his family for their service and contribution to our State and I look forward to welcoming them back soon.

It is wonderful to be here with our fellow Australians of Italian family as we celebrate the 73<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of the Italian National Day. A happy Festa della Repubblica to you all.

I now invite everyone to stand for the Italian National Anthem