

German National Day

This is the official Speech delivered by the then Premier of Victoria, John Brumby, at a reception in the Premier's office in 2007 to celebrate the German Day of Unity in October.

The German Ambassador commented during his speech that John Brumby was the first of any government – state or federal – to hold a reception for the German community to celebrate the reunification of Germany.

Premier John Brumby Speech on Tuesday 9 October 2007

In November 1989, Australians joined the rest of the world as the Berlin Wall was officially breached.

Almost one year later - on October 3, 1990 - we celebrated again at the peaceful reunification of East and West Germany.

Tonight, we are not only acknowledging these historic events. We are also acknowledging the enormous achievements of German people around the world - and the wonderful contribution that they and their families have made to the State of Victoria.

German migrants began arriving in Melbourne in the late 1830s.

Since then, they have contributed to almost every aspect of our social, cultural and economic development - across politics, religion, the arts, industry and business.

German migrants were among our earliest explorers, scientists, pioneers and entrepreneurs.

And they played an important role in the growth of Australia in general, and Victoria, in particular.

Indeed, the achievements of 19th century Germans in Melbourne and Victoria have been described as one of the high points of Australian colonial culture.

Ferdinand von Mueller, for example, became a renowned botanist in Australia and played a key role in the creation of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens - the finest botanical gardens in Australia.

Wilhelm von Blandowski was Victoria's first Government Zoologist.

Wilhem Lindt was one of Melbourne's most famous early photographers.

And Wilhelm Carl Vahland was Bendigo's Chief architect -responsible for designing many of the town's magnificent buildings.

Many German immigrants settled in our regions, from the wheat belts of the Wimmera and Mallee districts to Grovedale, near Geelong.

Others took part in some of the events that shaped Victoria's strong multicultural democracy.

Of the 30,000 Germans who came to Australia during the Gold Rush of the 1850s, almost one third headed for Victoria.

German was said to be the most common language spoken on the Goldfields after English.

The evidence also suggests that German gold diggers played an important role in the movement which tried to improve conditions for the miners.

Among the leading members of the Ballarat Reform League was a German from Hanover - Friedrich Vern -

and Germans also fought and died during the Eureka Stockade of 1854.

Today, Victoria is proud to be home to almost one third of Australia's German-born population.

Personally, I am very proud to have a grandmother of German descent.

I am also delighted to have a Minister of direct German descent - Joe Helper - as a key member of my Cabinet.

Our Government has worked hard to strengthen not only our social and cultural ties with Germany, but also our thriving trade and investments ties.

Victoria is still the only Australian State with a business office in Germany, and we continue to attract a large share of German investment and re-investment to Australia:

With companies such as Bosch, Pilz, Siemens and EDAG, to name a few, making an important contribution to Victoria's economy;

And a German-based company, FMB, played a part in helping to build Australia's first and only Synchrotron here in Melbourne.

The attendance tonight of so many successful Victorian businessmen and women, church and community leaders, scholars and legal representatives, demonstrates how much Victoria owes to the contribution of our German community.

Just this morning, I opened 12th International Metropolis Conference in Melbourne - the largest immigration conference in the world, and the first time it has been held in the southern hemisphere.

It was an ideal opportunity for me to highlight Victoria's success as one of the most diverse and welcoming places in the world.

A place where one in two small businesses - the engine room of the economy - are either owned by overseas-born or second-generation Victorians.

And a population, where 1 student in 5 attending a Victorian University in 2006 was an international student.

I said that more than 150 years of immigration had made Victoria socially and economically stronger.

Tonight I would like to thank our German community for contributing so much to our State's reputation as a world-renowned multicultural success story.

I wish you and your families the very best for the recent German Unity Day.

John Brumby
Premier of Victoria 2007-2010

Baum was the name of his grandmother's family

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