

LIBERTY!

WELCOME TO LIBERTY!

#81 February 2023

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President's Column

The return of our Democracy Award Dinner held on December 3, 2022, was a major event for Eureka Australia and a reunion of friends after a three year Covid absence.

We commemorated the Eureka events and the Stockade 168 years ago and stood and recited the oath of allegiance together – those magnificent words that the diggers recited, led by Peter Lalor, at Bakery Hill on Thursday November 30th as they contemplated the daunting stand they proposed to take to defend their rights at Eureka - as it turned out - some 3 days later.

The Oath of Allegiance: *We swear by the Southern Cross to stand truly by each other, and fight to defend our rights and liberties.*

It is interesting how similar sentiments are expressed today in the Affirmation of Australia Citizenship which was recited at Citizenship ceremonies on January 26.

The Affirmation:

I affirm my loyalty to Australia and its people, whose democratic beliefs I share, whose rights and liberties I respect, and whose laws I uphold and obey.

The parallels between the two are instructive, a welcome and powerful indication of the deep relevance and impact of the Eureka actions of the Diggers and their Supporters as they set out on the path to deliver a democratic society with laws they could respect. **Let us never forget the men and women of Eureka**

An important event also occurred at the Eureka Centre on December 4 when a Eureka Descendants Panel discussed what Eureka meant to each of them. Peter Lalor Philp and Marianne Messer participated from Eureka Australia and their excellent accounts of the event are at Page 4 onwards later in this newsletter. Marianne has also provided a paper on the *State of Democracy in our World Today* a thought provoking piece later in this newsletter.

Vice President's Column: Michael Van Leeuwen

Eureka Democracy Award Dinner:

Over 100 Eureka Australia Members shrugged off the COVID blues with a great night at the Arora Hotel, Richmond to have our annual Christmas celebration and the awarding of the 2022 Democracy award. It was great to be actually

able to meet again and enjoy the good fellowship that has always been the hallmark of Eureka Australia gatherings. It was an entertaining evening.

President Eric Howard reflected on a successful year in 2022, including the Pathway of Remembrance launch in May in Ballarat, attended by the Ambassador for Ireland, Mr Tim Mawe. Flanked by snow gums and native grasses, the Pathway of Remembrance features 35 plaques honouring those who died, presented along a gravel path that traces a section of the Eureka Lead – an alluvial gold reef that stretches from Miners Rest through to Eureka in Ballarat.

The Eureka Democracy Walking App is an on line guided tour in the Melbourne CBD and is available to be downloaded live to your phone from the Apple Store or the Google Play store. He recommended people learn more about the impact of Eureka on Victorian and Australian history by following the 14 locations stages around the CBD. There was more App development to look forward to in 2023.

The new electorate of Eureka was created prior to the 2022 State Election in a redistribution by the Electoral Commission and was supported by Eureka Australia after we were approached by the Commission. Local sensitivities about the impact on existing electorates were worked through and we are delighted that Australia's greatest democratic set of events has now been recognised in the name of the new Electorate of the area covering the location of the Stockade and Eureka Lead,

National Anti-Corruption Commission: Eureka Australia wrote to the national head office of each of the major political parties late in 2021 seeking their response to proposals for a National Anti-Corruption Commission as advocated by the Centre for Public Integrity. We received no replies. Undeterred we wrote again in March this year to all parties and received one reply - from the Labor party setting out their commitment to a NACC along the lines the Centre for Public Integrity was seeking. We are very pleased that legislation to establish this entity passed the Parliament in the week of our December dinner. Such an entity is necessary to support our democratic institutions and practices. Election Donation reform remains an issue to be tackled.

Democracy Award Winner Steve Bracks

Steve Bracks was announced as this year's Winner of the Democracy Award. His contributions as Premier were immense. He became one of Victoria's most successful and longest-serving Premiers, winning three consecutive elections,

achieving record majorities in the 2002 and 2006 elections, introducing substantial reforms in infrastructure and services, investing heavily in education and skills, lifting Victoria's retention rate to Year 12 education to one of the highest in Australia, while maintaining strong budgets and a growing economy. With the support of all other Australian governments, Steve led a National Reform Agenda to increase workplace participation, improve skills, reduce business regulation and boost productivity.

After his resignation from the Office of Premier and from Parliament in 2007, Steve has held two major honorary positions, an advising role in East Timor working alongside the newly elected Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão assisting with the establishment of Gusmão's administration up to 2017; and Honorary Chair of the Union Education Foundation from 2011.

Accepting the award, Steve spoke movingly about his early years in Ballarat, leading on to a political career. He was always aware that Democracy could never be taken for granted, and needed to be protected and nurtured, with the example of the Diggers at Eureka always present.

Steve's complete remarks are provided later in this newsletter.

EMERITUS PROFESSOR JUDITH BRETT AM AWARDED AUSTRALIAN HONOURS

Judith Brett AM was awarded Australian Honours on Australia Day 2023, receiving the Award of Member of the Order of Australia. We congratulate Judith on this well-earned recognition of her contribution to scholarship and presentation of so many elements of Australia's democratic and political development over many years. As Guest Speaker at our 2022 Democracy Award Dinner, Emeritus Professor Judith Brett gave a very entertaining speech on her book *Secret Ballot to Democracy Sausage*. It looked at the way that Australia, among very few other countries in the world, had compulsory voting. This had a very important impact on democratic practises in Australia. She had many amusing and interesting anecdotes to tell, with the best one (in her book) about the 2019 election, where Bill Shorten (then Labor opposition leader) was presented with a democracy sausage on a roll after voting. He looked at it suspiciously, and then bit onto the side of it rather than the end. His electoral doom was assured....

Judith's address was thoroughly enjoyed by all present and we thank her. Judith's wonderful address will be published in full in the next Liberty.

PANEL EXPERIENCE AT THE EUREKA CENTRE ON DECEMBER 4TH 2022.

Peter Lalor Philp and Marianne Messer participated in this event at the Eureka Centre and have prepared the following summary of events.

Eureka Descendants Panel, united under the flag, 168 years later.



It was a surreal experience. The last time our families had been side by side was at Eureka. Anastasia Hayes and Anastasia Withers bent together, hand stitching the Eureka flag. Timothy Hayes and Peter Lalor working their deep mine as partners, then standing together under the same flag pledging allegiance to each other and the charter of rights they wrote.

Trooper King salvaging the flag from the battlefield.

Stories of the flag

It was the flag that connected our ancestors then, and again today, 168 years later, as we meet together in the same place, around the same time, under the same flag. It's a poignant and significant moment. Invited by the Eureka Centre, there is an easiness amongst us as we exchange thoughts and reflections on what it means to be proud descendants of the Eureka line. Owen King and Peter Lalor Philp have met before. Fortunately they had always known their own Eureka story, and grown up with a pride in, and gratitude for, their family legacy. Peter Philp Lalor, having grown up the proud inheritor of his name, credits his famous ancestor with instilling in him a lifelong

commitment to social justice. Peter reminded us that in order for Eureka to remain relevant, we have to be involved in modern day equivalent actions. He described 'A Voice to Parliament' as having a strong link between the Ballarat of the 1850s and Australia today. Peter reminded us that during that unsettled time, local Aboriginal people were Eureka supporters, hiding the diggers' children and partners.

Owen King told us that his ancestor, Trooper King, caught up in the moment and believing he was doing his duty, later told his family he had been on the wrong side of history. Drawn from a group of army recruits who were serving their time in return for land, Trooper King said if he had had his chance again, he would have fought on the other side. Was it an act of conscience then, that led him and his family to take care of the Eureka flag, to preserve it and then donate it back to the people of Victoria?

Sadly for two of us the Eureka connection was not handed on with honour. For both Val D'Angri, descendant of Anastasia Withers and myself, Timothy and Anastasia Hayes' five times great granddaughter, our ancestry was apparently a source of shame.

"It was not a story our family told" Val explains. And yet, eight years ago, when, as a textile expert, she found herself coincidentally charged with the task of restoring the Eureka flag, Val felt a strangely strong connection with the famous historical artifact. "I used to call it my flag". A chance encounter with someone who knew her Anastasia Withers' ancestry, connected Val even more deeply with both her two times great grandmother, and the flag she had spent so many hours preserving.

We may never know why some of our families chose to keep their Eureka connection a secret. In the days immediately following the rebellion it may have been a matter of safety, or of shame. The rebellion was an apparent abject failure. 13, including Timothy, were charged with treason, a hanging offence, and sent to the old Melbourne jail for months awaiting their trial. Certainly, in the years following, to be Irish and a rebel was a secret both to keep as a protection against prejudice, and to savour as a proud tradition. Anastasia's granddaughter, Anastasia Hayes the second, met this appreciation whenever she shopped at the Victoria Market. My cousin, Leon Whittaker, used to go shopping with her and remembers Irish and Chinese would refuse to take her money. "Your money's no good here, Anastasia" they would say. "We remember Eureka." In an era of prejudice against outsiders, of which the

Irish and Chinese were uppermost, the Eureka rebellion had great potency. In our family, unfortunately, unforgiveness may have been another Eureka inheritance. My family nurtured a hatred of royalty well into the last century. Anastasia Hayes, the second, had a famous son, Alan Villiers, author and seaman, who served with Prince Phillip in the Second World War. In Australia, to open the 1956 Commonwealth games, Prince Phillip decided to visit Anastasia at her modest family home in Kensington. After knocking unsuccessfully for several minutes, Prince Phillip called out, probably quite haughtily: "It's His Royal Highness, Prince Phillip". "I know who you are" came the reply from behind the still closed door, "now bugger off!"

Sadly this judgement extended beyond the monarchy and included any non-Catholics. She never forgave her son Alan for serving with the royals. Her daughter Hazel, my beloved grandmother, was irretrievably cut off from her family after marrying outside the church. Is that where the legacy of Eureka went? I wonder what both Anastasias would make of me: raised a Catholic, now a (born again) protestant chaplain? I hope the fact that I celebrate their legacy, and carry a deep gratitude for their faith and determination, would get me over the line with these two powerful matriarchs.

While Val D'Angri's family may have either hidden or overlooked her connection with Anastasia Withers, Val acknowledges she has much to be proud of. Her Anastasia is described as an ex-convict and talented seamstress living in Bendigo at the time of the protests. Val, also a talented seamstress and teacher, celebrates equally her convict, and her fine Eureka heritage. Val was recently awarded an AO for her services to education and history.

As we looked at each other along the line of the panel we wondered what would our ancestors make of us and our democracy today?

What happened at Eureka was the result of a combination of elements: the gathering together of aspirational miners, the opportunity for a fresh start in a new nation, the tone deaf actions of a heavy handed constabulary, all galvanised by the Ballarat Reform League charter, a fine and inspirational document drawn up by the miners representatives, of which Timothy was Chairman, and which has been described as Australia's declaration of independence.

“That it is the inalienable right of every citizen to have a voice in making the laws he is called upon to obey – that taxation without representation is tyranny.

...the people are the only legitimate source of all political power.”

For us the health of Australia’s democracy is personal. The fight against the tyranny of taxation without representation cost each of our ancestors dearly, and changed the course of each of their lives, while changing the direction of the young Australian nation.

Professor Geoffrey Blainey once wrote: “Should we celebrate that our changes have happened through parliamentary process...or that its process was hastened by bloodshed and revolution.” We discussed how, for us, it is both. Our family stories are inextricably linked not only by what happened at Eureka, but also by the leadup and the remarkable aftermath.

By November 1855, less than a year after Eureka, the Victorian Constitution was proclaimed and an interim government was formed, for which the diggers voted. Victoria, and therefore Australia, became the birthplace of social democracy. The right to rule of landowners, and gentry, was replaced by the voice of the people, in a secret ballot, the first in the world.

After the panel discussion, my first ever groupie approached me. Megan Davies, a teacher at the Sovereign Hill School runs classes with a big focus on the significance of the Eureka flag: “I never thought I’d get to meet a descendent of Anastasia Hayes!” she said excitedly. “Two” interjected Madi, my daughter, who is equally enthralled by our newly found legacy. As always, I felt ashamed that Megan knew so much more about my ancestor than I did.

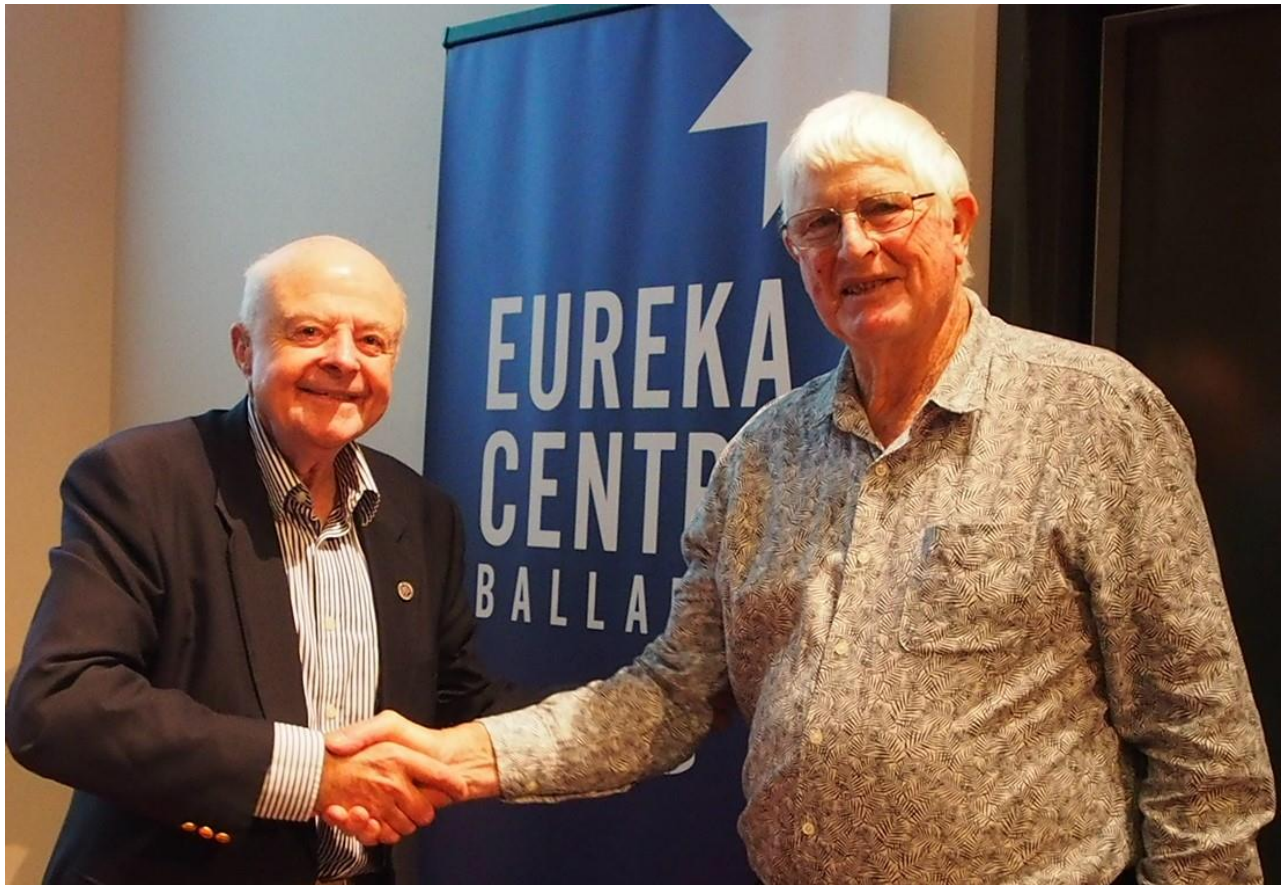
Perhaps my role now that I know where I have come from, is to carry this legacy on with the same integrity and commitment to truth the diggers showed. I have always believed in our Australian liberal democracy. Now my commitment is personal. I think of the costs our ancestors paid: broken lives, broken families, poverty, grind and secrets carried faithfully over 16 decades. Time for our proud inheritance to be shared. This is not just our story, this is Australia’s story.

Marianne Messer



LALOR THANKS KING OVER EUREKA FLAG

Peter Lalor Philp had the opportunity to shake hands with Owen King whose Great Grand-Father, John King, pulled down the Eureka flag during the Stockade attack. John was a member of the Victoria Police. The flag was passed over to the authorities and later given back to the King family who kept it until the late 1800s when it was loaned to the Ballarat Art Gallery. Lalor Philp thanked Owen for preserving the flag which if left at the stockade could have been destroyed in the fury of the moment. Owen told Peter that if his ancestor had not been a government employee, he probably would have been on the side of the diggers in the stockade.



Peter Lalor Philp and Owen King at the Eureka Centre on December 4 2022

RE-IGNITING THE EUREKA SPIRIT

By Peter Lalor Philp

Descendants of those who participated in the Eureka Stockade were given a platform to reflect on this historic event at the recent 168th anniversary of Eureka.

Two important questions asked were: Present an impression of our ancestor and suggest what can be done to advance the significance of this event. The current generation is reliant on history, frequently confusing and sometimes contradictory and always aware of what the Prime Minister Robert Menzies warned us that 'all history carries biases.' Therefore, in attempting to provide the most accurate examination of my great great grandfather, Peter Lalor, I have always returned to his statements and original eyewitnesses' accounts. This research has confirmed that Peter Lalor was no reluctant leader at Eureka. He was schooled within an activist

family at Tenakill, Ireland. His father Patt Lalor and at least four of his brothers were radical leaders in the liberation movements in Ireland. Fellow travellers to Australia record that even before arrival here, Lalor was talking about bringing change to the governance of the colony in the same way as his family was doing in Ireland.

According to one of the Eureka Stockade captains, John Lynch, Peter Lalor came under notice about the time the Ballarat Reform League commenced. "It was a critical time. Discontent was spreading fast, and some leading members of the Reform League were deficient in discretion. Lalor's appearance amongst them had a tranquilising and cheering effect. For tall-talk and bluster he substituted moderation and common sense", wrote Lynch. Later there was division between members of the League with followers of John Basson Humphrey wanting to proceed with "the efficacy of soft flattery and hard words in alternate doses", claimed Lynch

"The stout heart of Lalor could not brook this beggarly refuge. Coming fresh from a country where humbug of constitutional agitation had nearly emasculated its manhood, he felt no desire to countenance it here...and to command attention of their action must be reflected from the gleaming steel behind them," continued Lynch.

An answer to the second question, the challenge lies in how to we renew the Eureka spirit when even the hungry 24-hour media is questioning its relevance today. This year the hometown Ballarat Courier failed to mention on the eve of the 168th anniversary in its bumper weekend magazine edition.

Their questioning regrettably, is true. Similar to so many incidents, Eureka of 1854 is fading into the annals of history. This is despite the excellent work of Eureka Australia and the Eureka Centre, Ballarat. This has materialized because of the ignorance surrounding the who what and why of the rebellion. There is little understanding of the aftermath following the brief conflict at Eureka.

There needs to be a revival of the Eureka spirit that stirred the diggers. The issues fought for and won might be different, but the values remain pertinent. Believers in the democratic process begun at Eureka must embrace contemporary issues to which younger people understand.

In 2004, people came to Ballarat to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Eureka Stockade, with its parades, storytelling and importantly while taking shade under a tree at the site of the 1854 uprising, a modern-day Peter Lalor, Christine Lalor Gillespie, encouraged members of her family to make a public stand against a contemporary injustice, the illegal imprisonment and torture of Australian, David Hicks. Not all Lalors or organizers of the event identified with Christine's led protest but maybe they misunderstood the significance of this occasion. Eureka 2004 was no less a place of protest than it was 150 years earlier. Those protesting saw the connection between the injustice faced by Peter Lalor's diggers a century and a half earlier and the injustice that had driven David's father, Terry Hicks to action.

The attention given to Terry Hicks' involvement and the endorsement of fellow marchers, gave Eureka invaluable awareness, not only through the daily media, but generated coverage by a number of national magazines. However, the aim of the joining the march, was not promotion but the injustice suffered by an Australian and the torture practiced at Guantanamo Bay.

I have been questioned as to whether Peter Lalor would have joined this modern day protest. I am sure he would have. And I am certain he would have been proud of the stand taken by his Great Great Grand-daughter, Christine.

While Eureka Australia and The Eureka Centre, Ballarat are actively promoting the Eureka story, there requires greater involvement from all believers in democracy including descendants of the 1854 uprising, not to be satisfied with historical heroism but to embrace contemporary issues that will ensure that this important event remains relevant. An example is, 'A Voice to Parliament' with a strong link between Ballarat of the 1850s and today. During that unsettled time, local Aboriginal people hid the children and women of diggers.

Let us hope that all future celebrations marking the Eureka anniversary will always provide a forum for those who are denied their human rights today. Otherwise, the Eureka Stockade will continue to be a fading feast.



Peter Lalor Philp, Marianne Messer, Owen King and Val D'Angri at the Eureka Centre December 4, 2022

NEW MEMBERS NEEDED! Vice President Michael van Leeuwen talked about upcoming activities in 2023, including a new democracy driving App for Ballarat, and a mid-year talk and dinner, (to be advised later). However, Eureka Australia needed more active members to grow our offer to new people, and our impact on discussions in the public sphere on democratic issues of the day. Michael encouraged people to join up tonight and urge others to do so. He was pleased to report that four people had joined, two as Life Members!

THE YEAR AHEAD

2023 is shaping up to be the biggest year yet for Eureka Australia – if you are not yet a member, join up!

STEVE BRACKS ADDRESS:

Eureka Australia Democracy Award Dinner,

2022 Hon Steve Bracks AC

3 December 2022



Thank you Eric, and thank you to all the Eureka Australia Committee Members for this honour.

Thank you also to Judith for your inspiring words, and for your on-going contribution to Australian history and public debate in Australia.

You would be an ideal candidate for a future Eureka Award!

Friends, I'm not going to spend too much time talking about the significance of Eureka to Australian democracy.

Or about the reforms that my government introduced.

Growing up in Ballarat, like many of you, we were immersed in the story of the Eureka Stockade.

It framed our understanding of Australia.



We know the Eureka Stockade was the birthplace of democracy in Australia.

We know the famous catch cry that echoed around Ballarat in 1854 “no taxation without representation”.

We know that it was migrants from 18 different nations – who fought for their rights at the Eureka Stockade.

We also know the significance of the Eureka legacy.

The right to vote, the secret Ballot, the eight hour day.

We know that democracy is not just a word.

It is the cornerstone of our way of life in Victoria, in Australia.

Tonight instead, I want to share with you some reflections on the importance of democracy in Australia's close neighbour, Timor-Leste.

Since I retired as Premier in 2007, I've made 47 visits to Timor-Leste.

Terry has accompanied me on many of those trips in her role as CEO of the Balibo House Trust.

We have witnessed democracy thrive despite the many, many challenges facing Timor-Leste – one of the poorest countries in our region.*

Timor-Leste was a Portuguese colony for 500 years before being brutally invaded and occupied by Indonesia from 1975 to 1999.

After a 24 year war of resistance against the Indonesian occupation, led by my friend, the extraordinary Xanana Gusmao, in 1998 Indonesia finally agreed to allow the Timorese to vote on their future in a UN supervised referendum.

In the lead up to the vote, Indonesia waged a violent campaign of intimidation.

Indonesian backed militia groups, armed with machetes, butchered known

independence supporters in villages across the country.

At Liquica, an idyllic seaside village west of Dili, a terrible massacre occurred at the Catholic church on 6 April 1999.

Fearing Indonesian militia attack, 2000 people gathered in the compound outside the church.

At midday, Indonesian troops and militia arrived and demanded the pro-independence village chief be handed over.

Tear gas was thrown into the priest's house where families were seeking refuge.

Around sixty people were killed as they fled, either shot or hacked to death with machetes.

Despite the brutality of the intimidation campaign, on 30 August 1999, the people of East Timor ventured out of their homes to UN supervised voting centres.

They were putting their lives at risk.

The UN officers were unarmed.

Despite the risks, people walked for kilometres, in blistering heat, to join queues snaking around the voting centres.

The voting itself was relatively peaceful.

However, when the UN announced three days later, that the Timorese voted

78 per cent in favour of independence, Indonesia launched a devastating campaign of destruction.

Up to 2000 people were killed in the bloodbath that followed as Indonesian-backed militia killed independence sympathisers, burnt homes and destroyed schools, hospitals and bridges.

On 20 September a United Nations peacekeeping force led by Australia left for East Timor to quell the devastating post-ballot violence.

East Timor was under United Nations administration from October 1999 to 20 May 2002.

During that time, the UN worked with the Timorese to establish the governance framework necessary for a new country.

To embed democracy.

An electoral system had to be devised, and a parliament and bureaucracy established. On 20 May 2002, Timor-Leste became the 191st member of the United Nations.

The newly independent nation of Timor-Leste embraced democracy with passion.

Since I first visited when I was Premier in 2003, there have been eight constitutional governments.

Power has changed hands between the major parties without bloodshed. And while voting is not compulsory, the participation rate remains high.

Of a population of over 1.3 million there is an average turnout of 77.53% of registered voters.

I have been fortunate enough to be in Dili during an election campaign. The streets are festooned with the flags of the competing political parties. Rallies attract thousands of raucous supporters.

The next election is due in May next year.

Xanana Gusmao, who is in opposition, is contesting again and strongly tipped to win. There will be debates, speeches and election promises.

There will be democracy on steroids.

Because the Timorese also know that democracy is not just a word.

Over 200,000 Timorese died during the Indonesian occupation, yet the people did not stop demanding the right to a vote of self-determination.

While democracy is cornerstone of our way of life in Australia, we take it for granted.

In Timor-Leste, democracy is cherished.

It is practiced with a passion that echoes that on the Ballarat gold fields at the Eureka rebellion.

A passion driven by the struggle for basic human rights.

Steve Bracks AC



PRESIDENTS REMARKS RE COMMEMORATION AND FOR THE DEMOCRACY AWARD:

EUREKA AUSTRALIA

Steve and Terry Bracks, Judith Brett and partner Graeme, Committee members, Members and Supporters, friends, Welcome to Eureka Australia's Annual Commemoration and Democracy Award Dinner

This is EA's first gathering since 2019, and much has transpired in that time.

Thank you all for attending and to all involved in arranging tonight's event.

There are two major components of this evening:

- (1) It is a Commemoration event – it is 168 years today since the Eureka Stockade attack occurred and
- (2) We celebrate our wonderful democracy, which Eureka did so much to accelerate and promote in the mid 1850's and down the years since - in a uniquely Victorian and Australian way. Tonight is a chance to reflect on the need to nurture and strengthen our democratic society

Before turning to the Commemoration I will highlight some key activities your Committee has actioned and participated in since 2019.

ONE: We supported the Victorian Electoral Commission's 2021 recommendation to create a new electorate of Eureka

TWO: The Pathway of Remembrance which was opened in May this year by the Irish Ambassador, Mr. Tim Mawe, by Cr Dan Maloney then Mayor of Ballarat and myself.

THREE: Eureka Australia wrote to the national head office of each of the major political parties late in 2021 seeking their response to proposals for a National Anti-Corruption Commission as advocated by the Centre for Public Integrity. We are very pleased that legislation to establish this entity passed the Parliament this week. Election Donation reform remains an issue to be tackled.

FOUR: THE EUREKA MELBOURNE DEMOCRACY WALKING APP is a guided walking tour of the Melbourne CBD. It shows the immediate and longer-term impact of the Eureka events on democratic development in Victoria and the Australian nation. It will take you through the city, and show you 14 or so places of significance and identify individuals critical to the unfolding story of political reform in the aftermath of the struggle at Ballarat.

FIVE: The project to seek UNESCO listing of the Central Victorian Goldfields. We are working with the Listing Committee of local governments seeking to ensure that the more abstract but deeply important demands for political rights and social change from across the Victorian goldfields are appropriately

recognised, documented and promoted as a foundation of the UNESCO bid. The goldfields agitated over some years for these vital changes. Physical buildings matter but political reform and cultural change deliver lasting social impact. We believe the TORRENT OF POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REFORMS THAT THE EUREKA AND OTHER EVENTS ACROSS THE GOLDFIELDS HERALDED, AS VICTORIA MOVED STRONGLY TOWARDS LIBERAL DEMOCRACY, need to be bedrock components of the Bid.

COMMEMORATION

Let us now turn to the commemoration of the Eureka events and the Stockade 168 years ago:

I would ask you to please stand and repeat the lines of the oath of allegiance that the diggers recited at Bakery Hill on Thursday November 30th as they contemplated the daunting stand they proposed to take to defend their rights at Eureka - as it turned out - some 3 days later.

Please repeat after me: We swear by the Southern Cross to stand truly by each other and fight to defend our rights and liberties.

Professor John Molony reminds us that *“The men and women who had been at Eureka knew that in this new land, the right to stand up against tyranny, to be treated with respect befitting a human person and to hope in, and work for, a better future, is inalienable. They knew that those things had been fought and died for at Eureka. They had stood up for a freer, more democratic society and we are all the beneficiaries”.*

Let us never forget the men and women of Eureka

Thankyou.

Let’s enjoy each other’s company and entrée.

EUREKA DEMOCRACY AWARD PRESENTATION REMARKS

The actions of the diggers at Ballarat in 1854 speak to the importance of a free society being prepared to react to oppressive authority. They sought fairness and equity, the valuing of human rights and respect for human dignity.

As I mentioned earlier Eureka Australia commemorates the events of Eureka but also seeks to encourage a broader discussion about the goldfields

community's quest for representation and basic freedoms. We endeavour to improve understanding of the role that these democratic ideals and values played in the new political rights evident in Victoria from 1855 and indeed their continuing influence in contemporary Australian society.

Democracy is a fragile thing. Around the world, from Ukraine to Myanmar, and elsewhere, totalitarian regimes today continue to seek to brutally deny democratic government to many societies.

Democracy requires constant vigilance.

As citizens living in one of the world's oldest continuous democracies and one of the best examples of a liberal democratic society, we face a great obligation to protect and strengthen Australian democracy.

We need to do more to inform our community about what a democratic society entails, and what they can do to strengthen its condition. Tolerance for others to live the life they wish without adversely impacting others and to express their opinions in a nonviolent way are important components of any democratic society.

Eureka Australia annually nominates a recipient of the Eureka Democracy Award to recognise an individual (or organisation) who has, through their endeavours, contributed to the strengthening of democratic traditions in Australia.'

Tonight's Eureka Democracy awardee is Steve Bracks.

Steve Bracks [AC](#) was elected to the Victorian parliament representing the seat of Williamstown in 1994, going on to become Victoria's 44th Premier in October, 1999.

Steve as Premier lead a minority government from 1999 to then record majorities in the 2002 and 2006 elections. The Bracks governments could reasonably be characterised as reforming, consultative and well regarded.

Steve's government's introduced proportional representation for multi member electorates for the Legislative Council, delivering a more representative Upper House; implemented regional rail transport upgrades; improved education and skills development which lifted Victoria's retention rate to Year 12 to one of the highest in Australia; and led a National Reform Agenda to increase workplace participation, improve skills, reduce business regulation and boost productivity. These national reform proposals won backing from all Australian Governments.

It is fair to say that Steve displayed a clear sense of the priorities of the Victorian community, introducing reforms while maintaining a strong budget position.

After nearly eight years Steve retired on his own terms from the offices of Premier, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Veterans' Affairs, and from Parliament in July 2007 – a rare achievement for any leader of government.

He then went on, in an honorary capacity, to support PM [Xanana Gusmão](#) in [East Timor advising on](#) establishing his administration and its accountabilities to the Legislature. This was – and remains - critical but challenging work.

In September 1999, an INTERFET Force lead by Australian troops headed by then General Peter Cosgrove was established in Timor Leste.

The INTERFET force did its job well, but by 2006 the situation in Timor-Leste had deteriorated and Australian troops were back there leading the International Stabilisation Force.

Steve Bracks arrived as honorary special adviser to Xanana Gusmao in September 2007, with the Gusmao Government only a month old and facing massive challenges.

Steve has travelled to East Timor on numerous occasions from 2007 to the present day, to provide valuable advice and support in a highly challenging environment. A wonderful example of the big leading democracy reaching out to a small island state struggling to shrug off authoritarian rule and war and establish self-government by its people.

They have been very fortunate to have your support and guidance Steve.

Steve was awarded a Companion of the Order of Australia award in 2010 recognising services to the Parliament and Community of Victoria.

Steve was appointed as Chancellor of [Victoria University](#) from 2021, and has a long term commitment to supporting many Australian Victorian community organisations as **Patron** (These include the **Australia Lebanon Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Vic) Ltd**; **The Balibo House Trust**; **The Burnet Institute**; the Centre for Dialogue La Trobe University; the **Conservation Ecology Centre – Cape Otway**; **the Eureka Centre, Ballarat**; and more

Steve chairs many other community focused organisations including the MCG Trust and the Australian Republican Movement's Advisory Panel.

He currently chairs Maurice Blackburn Lawyers; the Australian Football League (AFL) Strategic Community Investment Fund Advisory Board among many other roles, and was Chair of the Cbus superannuation fund from 2007 to 2021.

Steve grew up in Ballarat and is a strong supporter of the commemoration of Eureka and the values it represents. Steve was a founding Patron of the Museum of Australian Democracy at Eureka, now the Eureka Centre.

He is a member of the Australian Republican Movement's Republican Advisory Panel; and the West of Melbourne Alliance Board. His ongoing advocacy for multiculturalism and Aboriginal reconciliation, further demonstrate his community commitment.

An active and involved Victorian, Steve supports his community every day. He has demonstrated his commitment to improving and strengthening democracy here and overseas over many years.

Please join with me in acknowledging Steve Bracks as the recipient of the Eureka Australia Democracy Award for 2022.

Eric Howard

THE STATE OF DEMOCRACY IN OUR WORLD TODAY. Marianne Messer

How would our Eureka ancestors view the way we are guarding their democratic legacy in the 21st Century ?

One Saturday last year, along with millions of my countrymen in voting stations all over Australia , I lined up (in my case, outside our small seaside town's basketball stadium). The smell of democracy sausages wafted in the early morning air, and I shuffled past a well wrapped ,labelled and delicious looking table of home made cakes manned by our town's 'Lionesses'. "All the proceeds going to support refugees" read the sign. I made a mental note to come back and get those melting moments. Inside I passed a line of party faithful handing out how to vote cards. The local member was there, chatting amiably to her competitors. It was all very civilised. Later that day, without violence or public demonstration, our government changed... And I enjoyed those melting moments.

World Class

Australia has the gold standard in democracy. A healthy democracy is defined by four clear criteria and Australia meets them all: All our politicians are elected, all adult citizens have

the legal right to vote in fair and free elections, without violence, government intimidation, fraud, irregularity or vote buying, and we enjoy both freedom of association and freedom of expression.

While not all democracies are as exemplary as ours, the growth of democratic governments in our modern world has been dramatic and far reaching. By the beginning of this century, for the first time in history, website 'Our World in Data' recorded that a majority, 61.14% of the world, was governed by liberal democracies.

Author, Francis Fukuyama mapped this growth in his 1989 book, The End of History and the Last Man. In 1789, Francis reminds us, all governments were defined as closed autocracies. By 1856 Australia was one of three democracies in the world. Then, in the next 200 years, democratic governments grew from 5 to 61. By any standards this is an amazing development. This is not to say this has been a seamless journey. The nature of human history is that outside events have dramatically impacted on the growth of democracy, sometimes positively and often negatively. The two world wars and the cold wars were initial set backs and then great impetus for the growth of liberal democratic governments. Today global events continue to impact. 21st Century democracy is under as much an attack as it has ever been. Internationally, as has always been the case, there is a sliding scale of effective democratic practice, a scale that moves back and forward in worrying and often unpredictable ways. We observe with concern, the way previously strong democracies are losing ground. In Afghanistan this century, a young democracy slides back into a closed autocracy with all of the attendant pain and suffering. Poland, Guatemala and others have lost their Independent Judiciaries, one of the key protections for democracy. Weakening media integrity and public perception of its reliability and trustworthiness are a global threat, even in strong and well established democracies like the US, the UK, and our own. As Thomas Jefferson said : "The price of freedom is eternal vigilance".

Eureka Heritage

Our Eureka legacy reminds us we have a serious responsibility to guard our hard won freedoms with wisdom and commitment. History tells us the threat to democracy is real and constant. **Dr S. Y. Quraishi**, Former Chief Election Commissioner of India, writes: "The monumental human victory achieved when democracy became the predominant form of governance now hangs in the balance like never before." (quoted in the International Institution for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) in the Global State of Democracy Report 2021.)

Did Eureka change the world ?

Is it too much to say that what happened at Eureka was a world changing moment?

While the event was parochial and small, just a handful of disgruntled miners defending their rights and liberties, outnumbered by a heavy handed military force, driven by an out of touch and out of time autocracy, Eureka had an international parentage and an international significance. Using the Ballarat Reform League Charter's definition of democracy: that ... "the people are the only legitimate source of all political power" as

a spring board, the next 200 years has seen the dawning of the new age of democracy, particularly in the 21st Century . For the first time in history, democracy is the dominant form of government.

Eureka captured a moment in time, for a young nation and for a world on the brink of change. By its nature Eureka was both an international and a young person's event. The protagonists, most in their twenties and thirties, came from many lands, eager to start a new life, in a new and egalitarian way. Despite their initial failure, they triumphed. By November 1855, less than a year after Eureka, the Victorian Constitution was proclaimed and an interim government was formed, for which the diggers voted. Victoria, and therefore Australia, became the birthplace of social democracy. The right to rule of landowners, and gentry, was replaced by the voice of the people, making Victoria the first social democracy in the world. Today it is exciting to hover your cursor over an interactive world map of the history of [global democracy](https://ourworldindata.org/global-democracy) ('https://ourworldindata.org') and see Australia light up as the first.

Covid and Democracy

Since 2020, Covid has had a dramatic impact on the world of democracy. While there has been push back against the imposition of what might have been perceived as draconian government anti pandemic measures, Covid has also sparked many new modern day democratic practices. In Mongolia citizens used an app to vote on infrastructure investments during the pandemic. In Scotland, the government consulted with its citizens via a digital conversation for feedback on Covid-19 restrictions. The UK's People's Commission on life after Covid-19 engaged over one million citizens, to help shape what the UK will look like after the pandemic; and in Oregon and France, virtual citizens' assemblies on pandemic recovery and climate change and post-pandemic sustainable recovery have been held. (Bastian Herre and Max Roser, "Democracy". Published online at OurWorldInData.org.)

While democracy experts concur that the threats to our electoral freedoms are greater than they have ever been, there is general optimism about its sustainability. "Flexibility is its greatest asset", observes Dr Quraishi.

Herre and Roser agree. "The extent of this decline (in democracy) is substantial, but it is also uncertain and limited. We can see it clearly across democracy metrics: the world has fallen from all-time democratic highs to a level similar to earlier decades. But the extent of this decline ... is limited in the sense that the world remains much more democratic than it was even half a century ago." (Bastian Herre and Max Roser, "Democracy". Published online at OurWorldInData.org.)

So, for Eureka Australia, the challenge remains. We are determined to protect and promote healthy democracy this century here and internationally. It is our legacy and our responsibility.

**MEMBERSHIP FORM:
EUREKA AUSTRALIA
DESCENDANTS AND SUPPORTERS INC.**
Membership Application/Renewal for 2023 (Jan-Dec)
Please print all details and ☐ where appropriate.

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Other Names:			
Address:			
		Postcode:	
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Membership of Eureka's Children Inc. operates on a calendar year basis.

- **Ordinary Membership** – Includes descendants of those connected with the Stockade event, its prelude and its aftermath as well as those who support the Eureka story and its ideals of democracy

Full \$40.00 per annum	<input type="checkbox"/>
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per annum
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To send cheque or money order please print, complete this form and return with your cheque/money order to: Eureka Australia. 6 Gibbons Street, Sunbury, Vic. 3429.

If paying by EFT and you are a new member you would need to also complete and return this form as an initial record of your membership by email to committee@eurekaaustralia.org.au