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**SPECIAL OCCASION:** Governor of Victoria Professor David de Kretser plants a New Caledonia pine tree in the Ballarat Botanical Gardens for the 150th anniversary of the gardens, watched by Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens president Raoul Dixon. Picture: **Ian Wilson**

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## Governor here to mark 150th

By **Marcus Power**

"THE SOUL cannot thrive in the absence of a garden."

Quoting St Thomas More, Professor David de Kretser, Governor of Victoria, neatly summed up the feelings of all gathered to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens.

"Botanical gardens are found the world over and are often the starting point for many cities to provide for their citizens a microcosm of the world's flora. Ballarat has achieved this and more," Professor de Kretser said.

The Governor was speaking at a ceremony in the gardens yesterday to commemorate the milestone.

He also planted two New Caledonia pine trees to mark the occasion.

Looking at the giant trees of the gardens, it's hard to imagine the land where they stand was once police horse paddocks next to a swamp.

But as Ballarat Mayor David Vendy recounted, Ballarat's gold rush-era citizens wanted to recreate something of their former homeland in the young city.

Both the governor and the mayor congratulated the Friends of the Botanical Gardens for their efforts in the management and planning of the site.

**Another report page 2**

# Using the statues was on the cards

By James Kelly

AS PART of continuing celebrations for the 150th anniversary of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens a new range of cards has been launched.

The Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens has produced a set of cards featuring the Stoddart statues.

The statues came to Ballarat when in 1884 Thomas Stoddart presented the 12 classical Italian marble statues to the city.

They used to live in the gardens and are now housed inside the conservatory after they became the target of repeated attacks by vandals.

The idea to use the statues came from Lorraine Powell and she said it wasn't a hard decision.

"It seemed an obvious thing to do because they are beautiful," she said.

"They haven't had anything done like this for ages."

Convener of the 150th anniversary celebrations Sue Beck said the Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens was also celebrating its 25th anniversary.

"We aren't surprised. We are very proud and gratified to still be involved," she said.

The cards come in packs of six and are available for \$6 at the conservatory.



**CLASSIC GREETINGS:** Lorraine Powell, left, and Sue Beck at the launch of the Stoddart statues greeting cards. Picture: **Eugene Hyland**