HOSPITAL IN THE HOME SOCIETY OF AUSTRALASIA
2026 ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING
OPENING ADDRESS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE CAROLINE WELLS AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
HOBART, WEDNESDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2026

Good morning, everyone.

Thank you for that wonderful Welcome to Country. I too would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of lutruwita/Tasmania and pay my respects to Elders past and present, and to Aboriginal people joining us today.

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to Tasmania, and particularly to Hobart, for the 18th Australasian Hospital in the Home Conference. A very warm welcome to those who have travelled from interstate and overseas. We are delighted to have you here.

This is the first time Tasmania has hosted this conference, and it is wonderful to see so many people brought together by a shared commitment to improving healthcare and, most importantly, the experience and outcomes of the people in our care.

I hope you have an opportunity during your stay to enjoy a little of what makes Tasmania so special — our beautiful landscapes, wonderful food and hospitality, and above all, the warmth of our people.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank the Hospital in the Home Society of Australasia, the local organising committee and the Hospital@home South team. Bringing a conference of this scale to Tasmania takes considerable effort, commitment and collaboration. We are very grateful for all you have done to make it possible.

When we think about hospital care, we often picture hospital buildings, busy wards and clinical equipment. But Hospital in the Home challenges us to look beyond those traditional settings and ask a more important question: what matters most to people when they are unwell and need care?

For appropriately selected patients, receiving hospital-level care in their own home can make an enormous difference. It allows people to sleep in their own bed, remain close to family and community, retain independence and maintain a sense of normality at a time when life can feel anything but normal. And there is something very powerful in that.

Having started my career as a nurse, I have a particular appreciation of the difference that compassionate, skilled and person-centred care can make. Nursing teaches you that healthcare is about so much more than a diagnosis or treatment plan. It is about the person in front of you — listening, building trust, providing reassurance and understanding what matters most to them and their family.

We know that the things that might seem small are not always small to the person receiving care. Feeling safe, being comfortable, having family nearby can make an enormous difference. That is one of the reasons I find the Hospital in the Home model so meaningful. It reflects something those of us who have worked in healthcare understand instinctively: excellent care is not defined by where it is delivered, but by how it is delivered and importantly how people experience it.

Of course, providing hospital-level care in someone's home is about much more than moving services outside hospital walls. It requires clinical excellence, sound judgement, flexibility, innovation and considerable coordination, with patient safety always at the centre.

At the heart of every successful Hospital in the Home service are the people who make it happen — our doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, pharmacists, support staff and many others.

I want to acknowledge your skill, dedication and compassion. Delivering care in someone's home requires adaptability, confidence and teamwork, as well as the ability to build relationships with patients and families in their own personal spaces.

I also recognise the researchers, educators, clinicians and healthcare leaders who continue to challenge traditional models and seek better ways to deliver care. Progress happens because people are willing to share experiences, learn from one another and have the courage to think differently. And that is exactly what this conference is about.

Here in Tasmania, we understand the importance of home and community. As an island state, with diverse rural and regional communities, we face particular challenges around geography, distance and workforce availability. We know that one model will not suit every patient or every community. But we must continue to evolve the way we deliver care to meet people's changing needs.

Hospital in the Home is an important part of that evolution. It provides an opportunity to support people closer to home, make better use of our health resources and deliver care that is both clinically excellent and genuinely centred on the individual.

Ultimately, we want people to receive the right care, in the right place, at the right time. And sometimes, the right place is home.

One of the great strengths of a conference like this is the opportunity to bring together people from different professions, health services and countries, all with a common purpose.

There is so much we can learn from one another. Some of the best ideas emerge from sharing experiences, discussing challenges and looking at familiar problems through a different lens.

I encourage you to make the most of the next few days. Share your successes, be open about your challenges, ask questions and make new connections. I hope you leave Tasmania with fresh ideas, new relationships and renewed enthusiasm for the important work you do. Most importantly, I hope the conversations that begin here lead to meaningful improvements in the care and experience of patients and families across Australasia.

Before I finish, I want to again congratulate the Hospital in the Home Society of Australasia, the local organising committee and the Hospital@home South team for bringing this important conference to Tasmania for the first time.

To everyone here, thank you for your commitment, professionalism and willingness to continually find better ways to care for people. Having experienced healthcare through my own professional background, I know this work is not always easy, and it is not always recognised as much as it should be. But it matters enormously.

At the heart of healthcare are people — those who need care, the families who support them, and the dedicated professionals who make that care possible.

Hospital in the Home reminds us that excellent care is not defined by the walls of a hospital, but by the knowledge, compassion and commitment of the people who provide it.

I wish you a wonderful conference. May you learn, connect and be inspired, and find a little time to enjoy our beautiful island State.

It is my great pleasure to officially open the 18th Australasian Hospital in the Home Conference.

Thank you, and welcome to Tasmania.