



**NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH TASMANIA INC
40TH ANNIVERSARY AWARDS CEREMONY
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE CAROLINE WELLS
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
TASMANIA POLICE ACADEMY, ROKEBY
SATURDAY 17 OCTOBER 2026**

Good morning, everyone, it is a pleasure to join you as we celebrate a remarkable milestone: 40 years of Neighbourhood Watch in Tasmania.

Thank you, Peter, for your acknowledgement of Country, I too would like to pay my respects and to any Aboriginal people with us today. Your continuing contribution to the cultural, social and spiritual life of our State is deeply valued.

I understand that Neighbourhood Watch began in Australia in the early 1980s as both police and community members recognised that crime prevention could not be achieved by law enforcement alone. It required partnership – neighbours looking out for neighbours, communities taking shared responsibility for their own safety, and citizens working alongside police to help reduce crime.

In Tasmania, the first group was established in Risdon Vale in 1986, and from those beginnings the movement grew to a peak of more than 150 groups across the State. Today there are 50 registered groups that use modern technology to enhance the way they share information and maintain connections.

Today we also acknowledge 20 years of Neighbourhood Watch Australasia the national coordinating body, formed in partnership with Neighbourhood Support New Zealand. This trans-Tasman collaboration has strengthened coordination, shared learning and innovation, and has helped ensure that Neighbourhood Watch remains relevant and effective in a changing world.

Across four decades, Neighbourhood Watch has evolved from a program focused on burglary prevention and property marking to one that embraces broader goals of crime prevention, community safety and connectedness. Research cited in your own publications highlights that Neighbourhood Watch does far more than reduce crime. It builds social cohesion, fosters trust, reduces fear, and creates meaningful relationships between police and the community. It helps people feel safer – and it helps people feel less alone.

In a time when one in four Australians reports feeling lonely, and when many households consist of a single occupant, the role of Neighbourhood Watch in strengthening neighbourliness is more important than ever. Your work reminds us that safer communities are also more connected communities.

In Tasmania, your two flagship events of the Children's Calendar Drawing Competition, which we also celebrate today; and the Cuppa With a Cop events that pop up all over the State on a regular basis, epitomise the value of your work engaging all members of our communities.

Today's awards recognise the volunteers, coordinators, police partners, community leaders and children who continue to uphold these values. Your dedication ensures that Neighbourhood Watch remains a vital part of Tasmania's social fabric – a program that has adapted, endured and continued to serve our communities for 40 years.

I congratulate all award recipients, and I commend Neighbourhood Watch Tasmania and Neighbourhood Watch Australasia for their ongoing commitment to building safer, more inclusive and more connected neighbourhoods.

We are all better because you are there.

Thank you.