HOSPITAL IN THE HOME SOCIETY OF AUSTRALASIA
RECEPTION TO MARK THE 2026 ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE CAROLINE WELLS AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, THURSDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2026

Good evening, everyone.

It is an absolute pleasure to welcome you all this evening as we celebrate the closing of the 18th Australasian Hospital in the Home Scientific Meeting here in beautiful nipaluna/ Hobart.

I'd like to begin by acknowledging the Palawa people as the First Peoples of lutruwita/Tasmania and the Traditional Custodians of the land we're gathered on today.

For countless generations, they have cared for this island, its landscapes, its waterways and its communities, and I'm grateful to be able to live here.

I pay my respects to Elders past and present, and to any Aboriginal people with us today. Your continuing contribution to the cultural, social and spiritual life of our State is deeply valued.

It was my absolute pleasure to open the conference yesterday, and I sincerely hope that over the past two days you have found the conversations stimulating, the insights valuable and, importantly, the experience enjoyable.

As I reflect on the conference, I keep coming back to the work you do and in particular, the words of Robyn Wilkinson during the opening session.

There is something incredibly powerful about hearing directly from people with lived experience. Robyn's contribution was not so much an interview as an opportunity for her to share, in her own words, exactly what she wanted us to hear. It was emotional, at times raw, and profoundly honest. Her reflections on the very different experiences of hospital-based care compared with Hospital at Home brought to life what can sometimes be difficult to convey through data, policy or clinical discussions.

Having cared for my late husband, who lived with motor neurone disease, I connected deeply with what Robyn said about the importance of control, dignity and being able to manage your own care, and the very real impact that a hospital environment can have on a person and their family.

It was a powerful reminder that, at the heart of everything we do, is a person. Someone who wants to feel heard, respected, supported and, wherever possible, in control of their own care. I can assure you that like Robyn, Rick wanted to be heard.

It also made me reflect on just how much healthcare delivery has changed, and how much further it can evolve. My partner Rob and I were talking about this recently. Having worked as a GP for 42 years, he has seen enormous changes in the way care is delivered. Twenty years ago, home visits were a routine part of general practice. Today, it is estimated that only around five per cent of GPs regularly undertake them. Yet, as he said to me, Hospital in the Home simply works. It works for patients, it makes a genuine difference, and it offers a model of care that is so much more aligned with what people need and value.

And that, I think, is what this conference has reinforced for me. This is not simply about changing where care is delivered. It is about rethinking how we care, putting people and their families at the centre, and creating models of care that offer greater choice, dignity, independence and better experiences. So, as we come together this evening, I want to say a heartfelt thank you to each and every one of you.

Whether you are delivering care, leading teams, driving innovation, shaping policy, undertaking research or advocating for change, you are all part of something incredibly important. The work you do reaches far beyond the clinical encounter. It touches lives, supports families and changes the experience of healthcare for the better.

I hope you take great pride in that, because you should.

Thank you for the difference you make, for your commitment to doing things differently and, most importantly, for never losing sight of the people at the centre of it all.

It is genuinely life-changing work, and it deserves to be celebrated.

Before I close though, I thought seeing as we have been talking about homes, I'd share a little about this home. Government House is both the Governor's residence, office and a place of welcome for the people of Tasmania.

Government House is one of Tasmania's most significant heritage buildings and is regarded as one of the finest vice-regal residences in the Commonwealth. Designed by colonial architect William Porden Kay, construction commenced in 1855, with Governor Sir Henry Fox Young and his family taking up residence from late 1857.

The building is a striking example of early Victorian neo-Gothic architecture, constructed largely from sandstone actually quarried here on the estate. The former quarries have since become ornamental ponds, forming part of the beautiful grounds that surround the House.

Government House contains 73 rooms and stands within approximately 15 hectares of gardens, paddocks and landscaped grounds. Among its most impressive spaces is, of course, the Ballroom in which we are gathered today.

Here in the Ballroom, you may have already noticed the magnificent floor, the largest Huon pine floor in the world, the decorative vaulted ceiling and the three chandeliers above us, each with 4117 pieces. Their names are Charlotte, Crystal and Cinderella. The three large mirrors behind me were, at the time of their installation, the largest in the Southern Hemisphere. Fun fact, when they came out from England, they were transported suspended in molasses to prevent any breakages.

Interestingly, during the construction of Government House, this very room served as a workshop. It is quite extraordinary to consider that a space originally filled with the noise and dust of construction has since hosted generations of significant Tasmanian occasions.

While the building reflects Tasmania's colonial history, its purpose today extends well beyond preserving the past. It is a place where people come together, where service and achievement are recognised, and where connections are made across our community. Throughout the year, these rooms host investitures, official receptions, community celebrations, charitable organisations, visiting dignitaries and conference delegates such as yourselves.

So, in closing it a delight to have you here, whether you live here or are from further afield. Thank you and please enjoy the reception.