



**AFTERNOON TEA TO MARK THE
40th ANNIVERSARY OF THE SUNSHINE TENNIS CLUB
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE CAROLINE WELLS
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, TUESDAY 11 AUGUST 2026**

Good afternoon, everyone.

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to Government House as we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Sunshine Tennis Club. Congratulations to everyone who has contributed to this remarkable milestone.

I acknowledge the Palawa people as the First Peoples of lutruwita/Tasmania and the Traditional Custodians of this land. For countless generations, they have cared for and nurtured this remarkable island, its landscapes, waterways and communities.

I pay my respects to Elders past and present and recognise the enduring contribution of Aboriginal Tasmanians to the cultural, social and spiritual life of our State.

Today, we celebrate much more than four decades of tennis. We celebrate the power of community.

When the Sunshine Tennis Club was established in 1986, it had no courts, no clubhouse and few physical assets. What it did have was something far more valuable—a group of passionate volunteers who believed in creating a place where people could come together through a shared love of tennis.

Their vision was never simply to provide a place to play. It was to foster friendship, encourage participation and create opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to belong. Forty years later, that vision remains at the heart of everything the club does.

Situated in the heart of Howrah, Sunshine Tennis Club has become an integral part of the Howrah Community Centre precinct. Alongside the bowls club, community radio station, Girl Guides, Men's Shed and many other organisations, it has helped create a vibrant hub where people connect, support one another and strengthen the fabric of the local community.

That sense of belonging is one of the greatest gifts of community sport.

Whether someone joins as a child picking up a racquet for the first time, a family looking for a welcoming club, or a lifelong player enjoying the social side of the game, Sunshine Tennis Club offers far more than tennis. It creates friendships, promotes healthy lifestyles and brings neighbours together in ways that enrich the whole community.

Today, the club is one of Tasmania's largest, with around 300 members, six beautifully maintained synthetic grass courts, a modern clubhouse and excellent coaching through Inspire Coaching Academy under coach Sahil. These facilities are impressive, but they are simply the setting for what matters most: the welcoming and inclusive community that has been built around them.

That success has always depended on volunteers.

From the club's earliest days, members devoted countless hours to turning an ambitious idea into reality. The first President acknowledged the patience and commitment of those who persevered while the club took shape, particularly Peter Rogers, Ian Griffiths and Con Canamella. Their efforts laid the foundations for everything that followed.

The same community spirit drove years of fundraising through quiz nights, raffles, community dinners and countless other events. Together, members created facilities that would benefit generations to come.

When the clubhouse officially opened in 1998, then Mayor Cathy Edwards described it as a tribute to the many people who had contributed through committee service, volunteering and coaching. Those words remain just as true today. Community clubs succeed because ordinary people generously give their time for the benefit of others.

One person whose contribution deserves special recognition is Life Member Carol Drew.

As President for fifteen years, Carol led fundraising for the clubhouse, championed improvements including the hitting wall and clubhouse deck, and worked tirelessly to grow the club. Although Carol is no longer with us, her legacy lives on—not only in the facilities she helped create, but in the strong, welcoming community she helped build.

The club has continued to invest in its future through upgraded facilities, improved coaching, modern technology and ongoing court improvements, ensuring future generations will enjoy the same opportunities to connect through sport.

Nothing demonstrates that future more clearly than this year's Club Championships, where both the Men's and Women's titles were won by junior members—11-year-old Lachlan Butters and 15-year-old Margaret Getahun. Their success reflects not only individual talent but also the strength of a club where coaches, volunteers, families and fellow players all contribute to helping young people thrive.

Beyond competition, Sunshine Tennis Club continues to bring people together through social events, the Cancer Council's Biggest Morning Tea,

local competitions and the hosting of state and national tournaments. While trophies and results are celebrated, it is the friendships, shared experiences and community connections that leave the most lasting legacy.

Over four decades, only eleven members have received the club's highest honour of Life Membership, reflecting the exceptional service it recognises.

Today, it is my privilege to add to that distinguished group by recognising two people whose commitment has spanned almost the club's entire history.

Foundation members David and Alanna Rolfe have given many years of outstanding service to Sunshine Tennis Club. Through their generosity, leadership and unwavering commitment, they have helped build not only a successful sporting club but a stronger, more connected community.

At the conclusion of my remarks, it will be my great pleasure to present David and Alanna Rolfe with Life Membership of the Sunshine Tennis Club. Congratulations to you both.

Finally, to every committee member, volunteer, coach, player, sponsor and supporter—past and present—thank you. You have demonstrated that strong communities are built not simply through facilities or sporting success, but through people who are willing to give their time, share their talents and welcome others.

May Sunshine Tennis Club continue to be a place where great tennis is played, lasting friendships are formed, and community continues to flourish for many years to come.

Congratulations once again on your 40th anniversary and thank you all for being here today.

And now to the life member presentations.

Dave and Alanna have contributed in so many ways to the success of the Sunshine Tennis Club.

From Dave helping with digging drains and painting as part of the clubhouse construction, working bees and all other manner of work, to his support of the Junior tennis players as Junior Development Officer with recognition from Tennis Tasmania with the Volunteer Recognition Award in 2022 and Club Volunteer of the Year Award in 2004, Dave has always given his all to the Club. This includes removing a magpie from the Club Rooms, no easy task!

Alanna too has done incredible work over many years. Organising records to National Archives, more BBQs and committee meetings than she can recall and always being there.

On behalf of all involved with the Sunshine Tennis Club, thank you.

It is now my pleasure to present the Life Member Awards to David and Alanna Rolphe.