



**RECEPTION TO MARK
NATIONAL SCIENCE WEEK SOUTHERN TASMANIA 2026
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE CAROLINE WELLS
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, MONDAY 17 AUGUST 2026**

VICE-REGAL SALUTE IS PLAYED

Good evening, everyone, and welcome to Government House as we mark National Science Week Southern Tasmania 2026.

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.

This is my first National Science Week reception and I am very pleased to be able to host what has become an annual fixture of the Government House program each August. Elizabeth College takes the lead in a number of events for the week and this year is no different. In fact, Elizabeth College has been supporting National Science Week for the past 26 years, an amazing effort, so thank you to all involved.

We know that National Science Week's annual celebration of science and technology is a wonderful time for people to get together and to think about, talk about and participate in science. Latest information from the National Science Week website indicates that some 3 million Australians take that opportunity.

That is such an important thing, especially as we consider the increasing reliance upon, and some of the challenges associated with, technology in all its forms across the globe. It is also encouraging to note that the week and associated activities draw Australians of all ages, backgrounds and interests.

At its heart, National Science Week is about fostering curiosity. It's about capturing the imaginations of young people—some of whom may not yet realise they are budding scientists and showing them the possibilities that lie within STEM fields. It is about creating pathways to careers that matter, not only for the individuals who pursue them but for our society as a whole.¹

Tasmania has a proud and growing role in the national and international science landscape, from Antarctic and climate science, to marine and environmental research, to quantum computing and renewable energy. This is all happening in Tassie and we need more bright young minds to continue this work, to ask new questions, and to find new answers. And events like this play an essential role in nurturing that talent.

This year's school theme, "*Seeds of Science: nurturing science for all*", invites students across Australia to explore the power of curiosity, inquiry and shared learning in growing scientific understanding. Just as seeds need the right conditions to grow, knowledge flourishes when it is nurtured, shared and applied to real-world and authentic challenges across all the scientific disciplines.²

Elizabeth College will host nearly 1000 primary and secondary students during the week, the latter in partnership with Taroona and Hobart City High schools. The College is again very involved with 12 teams of three in the Royal Australian Chemistry Institute titration competition. Students are also competing in the International Chemistry Quiz. And guest speaker Gayla Haim will present this year's Physics, Quantum and Dark Matter lecture on Thursday evening.³ So lots going on!

Tasmanian grant recipients⁴ demonstrate the importance of these endeavours. The Beaker Street Festival, now in its 10th year has presented more than 70

¹ <https://www.scienceweek.net.au/about/> accessed 27 Jul 25

² <https://www.scienceweek.net.au/schools/> accessed 10 Aug 26

³ Email Karen Dyrsdale

⁴ <https://www.scienceweek.net.au/national-grant-round-recipients-for-2026-announced/#tas> accessed 10 Aug 26

science-led events in Hobart and beyond, with more than 200 scientists participating. You would have seen all the signs and activity down at the wharf over the last week or two.

Cosmic Breath will lead astronomy and art workshops that will reach about 160 participants through public events, hospice sessions and prison workshops where observing, storytelling, journaling, art and meditation will demonstrate the links between astronomy and art. While we are talking about astronomy, the fun fact of the week. Did you know that UTAS has more telescopes that it directly operates than any other university in the world! I didn't know that!

And the Central Coast Council "Seeds of Curiosity" program is very diverse, with everything from ecosystems, agriculture to astronomy. The Hive takes science to the northwest in Penguin and Ulverstone, talking about space and terrestrial weather, guiding stargazing sessions and a pub trivia night. For those looking for something different, there was slime mould photography paired with Mountain Harp music, a feature of the program in Ulverstone and a unique Tasmanian experience.

One of the main reasons for this reception is to allow students, mentors and leaders in Science to interact and share ideas, so I will conclude my remarks. We are shortly going to enjoy some live music on the stage. The Elizabeth College Saxophone quartet will shortly present "Aurora Australis", composed by Elizabeth College student Lachie Monk.

The quartet will then provide us with background music throughout the event. Thank you to Avery Adamczewski, Noah Davies, Zac Sayer and Ethan Lavulo, all led by Damien Oliver-Black. Thank you all for this wonderful contribution to our evening together.

Thank you all for being here, and for everything you do to advance scientific understanding and opportunity in Tasmania.

I wish you all a most inspiring, successful and fun National Science Week.

Now over to you David.

[OS invites musicians to the stage to perform]