ROYAL HOBART GOLF CLUB INC
OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE REDEVELOPED WESTERN PRACTICE FAIRWAY
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE CAROLINE WELLS
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
SEVEN MILE BEACH, MONDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2026

Good afternoon, everyone.

It is a real pleasure to be here at the Royal Hobart Golf Club today, and a particular pleasure to officially open the redeveloped Western Practice Fairway.

I would like to begin by acknowledging the Palawa people as the First Peoples of Lutruwita/Tasmania and the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gather today.

For countless generations, they have cared for this island, its landscapes, waterways and communities. I feel very fortunate to live, work and spend time in this beautiful part of the world.

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

Today is a particularly special occasion for me, as this is my first visit to the Club in my new role as Patron.

There is, of course, a wonderful and long-standing connection between the Governors of Tasmania and this Club, and with this beautiful course here at Seven Mile Beach. It is a connection I am very pleased to continue. In fact, that association goes back a hundred years.

In 1926, Sir James O'Grady bestowed the Royal Charter on the Club and ceremoniously unfurled its new flag at the celebrations. I must say, Sir James was clearly a very busy man! Just on Saturday night, I attended the centenary commemoration of the Railton Community Hall, where Sir James had also laid the foundation stone. It seems we have something in common. Sir James was the 14th Governor of Tasmania, and I am the 30th — and, I like to think, just as busy!

Another Governor with a strong connection to the Club was Lieutenant General Sir Charles Gairdner. In 1963, he had the honour of hitting the first ball from the tee at the ceremonial opening of this course.

He was evidently a very keen golfer. Indeed, when the Club asked if it could frame the three-wood he had used to drive that first ball, he politely declined. He was simply not prepared to part with his favourite club!

I rather like that story. It tells us something about the enthusiasm and passion for golf that has been shared by so many of your members — and by several of my Vice-Regal predecessors.

Earlier today, we also had the opportunity to see the Governor's Trophy, established in 1991 by General Sir Phillip Bennett, another enthusiastic golfer. It is lovely to know that this tradition continues, with the trophy still being awarded each year.

Now, I should confess that my own golfing abilities are not quite in the same league as those of my distinguished predecessors!

I must therefore thank Tim for his patient introduction to the finer points of putting earlier today, and Lindy for shortly taking on the rather more challenging task of helping me with my drive.

I am hoping that, with a little practice — and perhaps some more expert tuition — I might improve!

And that brings us rather nicely to today's occasion.

We often hear that practice makes perfect. It is a familiar saying, but there is a great deal of truth in it. Whether in golf or in life, we all need somewhere to learn, develop our skills and, hopefully, improve along the way.

That is exactly what this Western Practice Fairway provides for the members of this Club.

It is an important and much-used facility. Members come here to practise after collecting their buckets of balls from the Pro Shop, while the Club's teaching professionals use the fairway to help golfers of all abilities — from complete beginners to experienced players looking to refine their game.

It is wonderful to see a facility that plays such an important role in the life of the Club being given a new lease of life.

Earlier this year, the Club embarked on a substantial redevelopment of the fairway. What we see today is the result of many months of careful work — from soil cultivation and seed sowing to fertilising, irrigation and mowing.

A great deal of effort goes into creating and maintaining a quality practice facility, and I congratulate everyone who has contributed to bringing this project to completion.

In particular, I would like to acknowledge Tom North, the Course Superintendent, and his team. Their knowledge, hard work and attention to detail have helped deliver a wonderful result.

I look forward to hearing a little more from Tom shortly about the work involved and how the redevelopment will ensure the fairway serves the Club and its members well for many years to come.

I would also like to thank Peter Lane, the Club President, and Bill Lethborg for so warmly welcoming Rob and me today.

We have thoroughly enjoyed our visit, seeing the Club's facilities, meeting members and learning more about the activities that make this such a special place.

Clubs like this are about so much more than the game itself. They are about friendship, community, shared experiences and a genuine sense of belonging. It is clear that the Royal Hobart Golf Club has all of these qualities in abundance.

I am delighted to become part of the Club's continuing story as Patron, and I look forward to strengthening this long association in the months and years ahead.

So, it is now my very great pleasure to officially declare the redeveloped Western Practice Fairway open.

I wish the Club and all its members many happy hours of practice, plenty of improvement in their games — and, of course, a few more good shots than bad!

Thank you.