PHILANTHROPY AUSTRALIA (TASMANIA)
AFTERNOON TEA TO MARK THE LAUNCH OF THE TASMANIAN FUNDERS NETWORK
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE CAROLINE WELLS AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, TUESDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2026

Good afternoon, everyone. I am delighted to welcome you all here as we celebrate the launch of the Tasmanian Funders Network.

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.

Today we are here to acknowledge the power of philanthropy, a force for positive change across Tasmania and beyond.

Philanthropy is often described in terms of generosity, but at its heart it is about believing in the potential of others. It reflects a commitment to building stronger communities, expanding opportunities and helping to create a better future for people we may never meet.

Here in Tasmania, as well as nationally and internationally, philanthropy has played a vital role in addressing complex and deeply entrenched challenges in areas such as health, education, environmental sustainability and social equity.

Our State has a rich tradition of philanthropic giving, fostered by people whose contributions have left a lasting legacy. In preparing for today, I was fascinated to learn the story of Emily Dobson, who is recognised as one of Tasmania's first philanthropists.

From the early 1890s, Emily was involved in an enormous range of causes. She advocated for improved sanitary conditions to combat the spread of typhoid through the Women's Sanitary Association and organised a soup kitchen that supplied up to 1000 meals a day during the depression of 1892-95.

Emily founded and supported organisations focused on public welfare, including the Ministering Children's League, the Victoria Convalescent Home at Lindisfarne, the Child Welfare Association and the Tasmanian Sanatorium for Consumptives. In 1919 the Tasmanian National Council of Women established the Emily Dobson Philanthropic Prize for welfare organisations in her honour.

Another notable Tasmanian philanthropist of the early 20th century was Henry Allport, whose generosity lives on at The Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts here in Hobart.

This living collection of nationally significant Tasmanian colonial paintings, photographs, rare books, manuscripts, English and European decorative arts and furniture, originally donated by Henry's estate in 1965, serves as both a family memorial and a dynamic contribution to the cultural resources of our State.

Henry also created the Allport Bequest, a charitable trust that continues in perpetuity, donating gifts and funds every six months to causes benefiting the people of Hobart.

Today, philanthropy in Tasmania continues quietly and humbly with contributions across a broad range of sectors including arts, health, housing, social services, sport, multicultural, faith, First Nations, democracy and environment. According to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, Tasmanian charities received $107 million in donations and bequests in the 2024 reporting period.

In addition to contributing financially, Tasmanians make an extraordinary difference through their service to others.

As Governor, I am honoured to meet so many people who quietly support their communities and make a meaningful difference in the lives of those around them. For a small State, we certainly make an outsized contribution when it comes to giving back. Indeed, Volunteering Tasmania's 2023 *State of Volunteering Report* found that an astonishing 332,100 Tasmanians, or almost 70 per cent of our population, volunteered in some capacity.

It is clear that Tasmanians are now and have always been generous through donations of their time, talent and treasure.

And today, it is a pleasure to welcome so many people who embody that spirit of generosity to Government House.

Following the opening earlier this year of Philanthropy Australia's new Tasmanian office, the launch of Tasmanian Funders Network is another significant milestone.

Funders Networks now exist in all States, providing a chance for funders to connect, collaborate, share ideas and learn from each other. Importantly, they create a space where relationships can be built and where collective effort can help address challenges that no one can solve alone.

I acknowledge Philanthropy Australia's commitment to helping raise the visibility of Tasmania's philanthropic contribution and celebrating the generosity of the individuals, families, foundations and businesses that do so much to support communities across the State.

The Tasmanian Funders Network presents many exciting opportunities. By working together, there is much that can be achieved to strengthen giving towards a more generous, just and sustainable future.

May I commend Philanthropy Australia on the important role you play in connecting funders, community organisations and changemakers to ensure generosity is directed where it can make the greatest difference. To all the funders and network members with us today, thank you for your commitment to making a difference in the lives of others.

Finally, I wish the Tasmanian Funders Network every success. I hope it will become a valued forum for connection and shared purpose, helping to inspire thoughtful giving and ensuring that Tasmania's strong tradition of philanthropy continues to grow for generations to come.

Thank you and I look forward to meeting with you over afternoon tea.