CITY OF DEVONPORT
CIVIC RECEPTION HOSTED BY THE MAYOR OF DEVONPORT
TO WELCOME THE NEW TT-LINE SHIPS
ADDRESS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE CAROLINE WELLS
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
DEVONPORT, SUNDAY 1 NOVEMBER 2026

Good morning, everyone. I am delighted to be here with you today as we welcome the new *Spirit of Tasmania* vessels into passenger service.

Thank you, Dave, for your beautiful welcome.

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

It is wonderful to be here in Devonport this morning, after Rob and I were lucky enough to be on board the inaugural passenger sailing of the *Spirit of Tasmania V*.

Last night's journey from Geelong was a fabulous opportunity for us to experience the excellent facilities which so many Tasmanians and visitors will now be able to enjoy when they travel across Bass Strait. This includes increased passenger vehicle capacity, accessible accommodation and additional options for families and business travellers.

I was delighted to see the new pet-friendly accommodation – although our cat Gus is happily settled at Government House, it's lovely to know he could join us in our cabin on future trips. I suspect though that Gus might give the idea a firm paws down, and Rob may have some reservations of his own.

This morning, watching the North-West Coast come into view as we travelled down the Mersey River into Devonport, was just magical and what a beautiful day you turned on for us, Mayor.

And I have to say, I was paying particularly close attention to our crew as they skilfully guided the vessel into port. That's because, just two weeks ago, I had the chance to try steering the *Spirit* myself – virtually, thankfully! – when we visited Pivot Maritime International in Legana.

Their amazing maritime simulation technology gave me the chance to try 'berthing' the vessel in a range of conditions. And let me tell you, it gave me a whole new appreciation for the skill and precision our crew bring to the job and which I saw in action this morning!

TT-Line's partnership with Pivot to create this simulation model is just one example of the Tasmanian innovation that has been involved in this project.

As Governor, I have made a commitment to championing Tasmania. That means celebrating those organisations whose innovation and expertise strengthen our economy and elevate our standing on the national and international stage.

It also means showcasing Tasmania's many strengths and supporting opportunities that contribute to our visitor economy, encourage trade and investment, and foster sustainable economic growth.

Thanks to their increased passenger and freight capacity, the new *Spirit of Tasmania* vessels open the door for all these opportunities. With an additional 470 passengers per sailing and three times as much capacity for caravans on board, more tourists than ever will be able to sail into Devonport and travel our beautiful island at their own pace. People are certainly taking advantage of this and, coming on board, there were lines of caravans and camper trailers.

The increased freight capacity will enable Tasmanian producers and businesses to expand their reach, strengthening their access to mainland markets and creating new opportunities to connect with customers across Australia and beyond. Tasmanian excellence is also highlighted on board, with Tasmanian artwork and locally sourced materials on display and our best food and wine on offer to guests.

Of course, the expertise of our international partners has also been integral to these new vessels.

I acknowledge Finnish Ambassador Arto Haapea, who is with us today, and may I say *kiitos* to Finland's Rauma Marine Constructions who built both these new vessels. This represents one of the largest single export deals ever conducted between Finland and Australia, and we look forward to continuing the strong partnership between our two countries.

My predecessor, former Governor the Honourable Barbara Baker, travelled to Rauma to formally launch and name *Spirit V* and so it's a nice full circle moment that I was able to travel to Tasmania on that same vessel today.

May I thank and congratulate recently re-elected Mayor of Devonport Alison Jarman, Devonport City Council and the people of Devonport for hosting us this morning. Devonport is a city with a proud maritime heritage and a longstanding connection to the *Spirits of Tasmania*. As our Bass Strait passenger gateway, Devonport has welcomed generations of visitors and plays an important role in connecting our island State to the rest of Australia.

Finally, I acknowledge TT-Line and all those involved in bringing these vessels into service, from the crew on board and teams ashore to the many people who have contributed to the project over the years.

May *Spirit of Tasmania IV* and *V* continue to build on the legacy of their predecessors, strengthening the ties between Tasmania and the mainland, supporting trade and tourism, and carrying travellers to and from our shores for many years to come.

Wishing everyone safe and happy sailing.

Thank you.