



**RECEPTION FOR THE
SOUTHERN TASMANIA HARMONY CLUB INC
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE CAROLINE WELLS
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, WEDNESDAY 19 AUGUST 2026**

Good evening, everyone. I am delighted to welcome you all here to the magnificent Government House ballroom as we celebrate more than 30 years of barbershop harmony in Tasmania.

Before we begin, I would like to 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.

Tonight we are here to celebrate the Southern Tasmania Harmony Club. But more than that, we are also here to celebrate the community your Club has created.

From your origins as The Wellingtones to today's award-winning Deep South Chorus, you have not only nurtured singers' vocal talents, you have also given them a place to belong. Your Club brings together performers of all ages from all walks of life in a spirit of camaraderie and friendship. You all share the common goal of musical development as well as a passion for rich harmony.

Indeed, there is a magic about music that draws all of us closer together – particularly when we join with others in song.

While we may not be as well known for our vocal talents as famous choral nations like Wales, singing together has long been a part of Australia's history.¹ In the 19th and early 20th century, workers sang as they laboured through repetitive tasks in factories and farms, and at home families gathered around pianos for singalongs.² At schools and churches, singing played an essential role in proceedings.

Today we can see Australians' passion for singing in action at football stadiums around the country every weekend, as fans belt out club theme songs and classic hits. And you only had to see the public support for the recent Festival of Voices, where it was clear that Tasmanians have a special place in our hearts for choral singing. I had the great pleasure to attend the opening of the Festival of Voices and experience the uplifting Big Sing. As we huddled together on a midwinter night at Princes Wharf and raised our voices as one, I imagine many in the crowd had goosebumps – and not just because of the cold!

Aside from creating this wonderful feeling of community connection, we also know that group singing can provide tangible health benefits. Singing is beneficial for improving breathing, posture and muscle tension, and learning new songs is cognitively stimulating.³ There is evidence that music can play a role in pain relief and in sustaining a healthy immune system.⁴ Researchers have also found that group singing improves mental health and wellbeing outcomes for those who take part.⁵

¹ [Church hymns and social beers: how Australia is reviving the magic of singing together](#), The Conversation, accessed 23 July 2026

² Ibid.

³ [Choir singing improves health, happiness and is the perfect icebreaker](#), The Conversation, accessed 23 July 2026

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ [Group singing fosters mental health and wellbeing](#), Mental Health and Social Inclusion Vol 15 Issue 2, accessed 23 July 2026

Dr Walters and I have seen firsthand, especially in aged care, where faces come alight, all due to the power of the sing-a-long. During the Festival of Voices, we were at a Devils' football game where we had the pleasure of listening to the men's group, Adelaide Vocal Union, at half time and chatting with them afterwards. For them, connection was so important and coming together once a week for a sing, a beer and chat was integral to their wellbeing.

I am sure that members of your Club have felt some – or indeed all – of these benefits as you have sung together and brought barbershop harmony to audiences in Tasmania and beyond over the years.

Tonight we acknowledge several milestones for your group of singers. This year marks 30 years since The Wellingtons joined the national barbershop organisation that today is known as Barbershop Harmony Australia. It is 20 years since you were incorporated as the Hobart Men's Barbershop Harmony Club, home to the Deep South Chorus and The Silvertones Chorus.

Following a name change in 2024 to the Southern Tasmania Harmony Club, today you continue to thrive. You have created a unique environment for male singers, providing a pathway for men to start their barbershop singing journey and continue it for as long as they wish. As your high-performance ensemble, Deep South keeps pursuing excellence in singing, performance and audience impact. With their focus on community singing, The Silvertones remain well-loved for their contribution at local festivals and in the seniors community.

You also support and encourage many barbershop quartets and actively promote youth engagement in barbershop singing within Tasmania. Your Club members sing in mixed quartets and regularly collaborate with the broader choral community, making you a fixture of our outstanding local musical scene. Many Tasmanians will have heard you singing around our community, from pop-up Christmas Carol performances to local Eisteddfods, and from commemoration services to the annual Festival of Voices.

I should also mention your achievements in national competitions, including hosting three highly successful Barbershop Harmony Australia Festivals here in Hobart, and Deep South taking home a silver medal at the 2024 Festival. May I wish you all the best as you head to Newcastle to compete in this year's event in October.

The ongoing success of community clubs like yours is not down to luck or good fortune. It is because ordinary people give extraordinary amounts of their time to make things happen.

May I acknowledge all those who have volunteered their time throughout the Club's history. I note the commitment of your members Dr Tim Begbie and Trevor Rootes, who have been recognised as Barbershop Harmony Australia National Hall of Fame Members for their service to the national and Tasmanian barbershop community. We remember the service of the Club's late Life Members Ken Hunt and Fred Brown and thank Life Member and current Silvertones director Richard Gardam for his dedication.

I note the guidance and leadership of the Club's many talented Music Directors, past and present, as well as those who have served in coaching and management roles. You have all helped to create an enduring barbershop harmony legacy here in Hobart.

Finally, may I applaud all the singers who have raised up your voices over the years. I am delighted that we will now have the chance to hear some of your beautiful harmonies.

Thank you, and please enjoy the reception.

David ...

[OS to introduce The Silvertones Chorus performing 'That Lucky Old Sun', directed by Richard Gardam, followed by Deep South Chorus performing 'I Can't Give You Anything but Love', directed by Jenni Pyefinch.]