

**OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE
NEW MARITIME HERITAGE EXHIBITION
SPEECH BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC,
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
CARNEGIE GALLERY, MARITIME MUSEUM OF TASMANIA
TUESDAY 1 MARCH 2022**

Good evening and thank you for inviting me as Patron of the Maritime Museum of Tasmania to officially open this new Maritime Heritage Exhibition.

I pay my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land: the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community. I recognise a history of truth, which acknowledges the impacts of colonisation upon our First People. I stand for a future that respects and acknowledges Aboriginal stories, culture, language and history.

May I acknowledge among us:

- the Honourable Rob Valentine MLC
- the Honourable Meg Webb MLC
- the Honourable Josh Willie MLC
- the Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Helen Burnett
- Alderman Damon Thomas
- Commander Mark Tandy, Navy Headquarters Tasmania.

Before commenting on the magnificent new exhibition, I would like to mention the Maritime Museum itself because its own story has real significance to our Tasmanian history and culture.

The Museum is able to trace its lineage back to 1931 as the Shiplovers' Society, although the Society never had a permanent display space. The Maritime Museum was formed in 1974 with much of the former Shiplovers' collection put on display.

The Maritime Museum was originally next to St George's Church in Battery Point. It was then moved to Secheron House, the former Harbour Master's home, until relocated permanently to this historic Carnegie Building in 1999.

Her Majesty The Queen officially opened the Museum in March 2000, during her last visit to Tasmania. Her two-week visit to Australia included just one day and night in Hobart with only three public engagements: a visit to Salamanca Place; a tour of Incat; and her opening of this Museum.

The Museum now has some 400 members, including 100 volunteers and two part-time staff. I acknowledge its volunteers, who are key to the success of the institution, providing many essential functions including:

- front-of-house duties
- shop sales
- collections management and curatorial administration
- acquisitions and research
- digitisation of images
- school holiday programs
- liaison with other museums and community groups
- and tours and events.

To every volunteer, our many thanks. Your commitment is outstanding in preserving the artefacts and their stories.

Now, as the Museum approaches its 50th Anniversary, this new exhibition becomes a wonderful tribute to the intimate story of Tasmania's links with its maritime heritage.

This exhibition is the result of over two years of planning, design, research, object selection, construction and installation. I am told that the efforts of the Museum's volunteers and staff in recent months have accelerated and have been rather akin to a duck on a pond; all serene on the surface, but below all frantic action!

The new displays we see today cover many aspects of our maritime heritage, from indigenous watercraft that traversed our waterways for millennia; through early European exploration; to the whaling industry that transformed Hobart into a major seaport and commercial centre.

There are also stories of shipwrecks; rescues; shipwrights and shipbuilding; colonial trade; immigration; and Tasmania's maritime connections with many parts of the world. Collectively, they illuminate our contribution to global trade and seafaring.

Another part of the display deals with convict transportation and the maritime connections found at penal settlements around then Van Diemen's Land. I draw attention particularly to a rare painting of the convict transport vessel, the *Lady East*. She docked in Hobart Town in 1824 with some 208 male convicts aboard. This painting was acquired in 2019 through the Museum's Endowment Fund.

Another unique exhibit is the reconstructed Captain's Cabin from the Navy destroyer HMAS *Derwent*. This provides an insight into the life of a naval commander. Soon videos will be seen through the portholes with real footage taken on *Derwent* in the 1980s. I am told the Museum has had welcome feedback from former crew of the *Derwent*.

In conclusion, I congratulate Chris Tassel, John Wadsley and everyone who has looked after this wonderful Museum. I also congratulate everyone who has worked hard to bring this new exhibition to our public in Tasmania and also beyond.

As Governor and your Patron, I have the greatest pleasure in declaring open the "Maritime Heritage Exhibition" of our Maritime Museum of Tasmania.

Thank you.