

AUSTRALIAN ANTARCTIC MEDAL INVESTITURE
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
DRAWING ROOM, 10.00 am MONDAY 4 OCTOBER 2021

[VICE-REGAL SALUTE IS PLAYED]

Please be seated.

Don and I warmly welcome you to this Investiture at Government House.

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land: the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community, who have survived invasion and dispossession, and continue to maintain their identity, culture and Indigenous rights.

For those you not familiar with Investitures held here, and indeed at Government Houses across the country, this event is markedly different in all but its most important function namely, investing Australians with insignia in recognition of significant achievements.

It is different because ongoing Covid-19 restrictions necessarily dictate that we restrict numbers of recipients and guests.

As stated by the Governor-General:

“The Australian Honours and Awards system provides the people of Australia the opportunity to recognise and say ‘thank you’ to those whose efforts make our communities and our nation a better place.

"Through the Order of Australia, Bravery Decorations and other awards we recognise and celebrate outstanding Australians – ordinary people who do extraordinary things for their local community and for Australia.”¹ End of quote.

The Australian Antarctic Medal forms part of the suite of Meritorious Service Awards. These Awards are distinguished by their having in common work undertaken in the course of formal employment, the other categories being ambulance, fire and corrections services; police, intelligence and emergency services; and other recognitions within the public service sector.

¹ <https://www.gg.gov.au/australian-honours-and-awards>, accessed 4 October 2021.

These all contribute very considerably to our collective wellbeing across the country. The Australian Antarctic Medal, by contrast, recognises exceptional work done nearly 4000 nautical miles from our shores, in inhospitable and hazardous environments.

The broad citation for the Medal is that it recognises “those who have rendered outstanding service in scientific research or exploration in connection with an Australian Antarctic expedition, or in support of such work, for 12 months or more in the Antarctic region, except in exceptional circumstances.”²

Australia has been involved in scientific exploration of Antarctica since the expeditions led by Sir Douglas Mawson in 1911–1914. The Australian Antarctic Territory was declared in 1933. The Australian Antarctic Medal was established to replace the British Polar Medal and its variations dating back to 1857.

There are three Tasmanian recipients in 2021. Just four Australian Antarctic Medals were awarded in Australia this year, so Tasmania has excelled.

Of the three Tasmanian recipients for 2021, Dr Nick Gales is unable to be here – he is, as some of you may know, a keen sailor and he his wife, Catherine, are or recently were in the Coral Sea. He will be invested next year, but, given the close collegiality of Antarctic specialists I would like to read his out: “For outstanding contribution to the Australian Antarctic Program, particularly his leadership in Antarctic and Southern Ocean scientific research by developing a marine mammal program in the Southern Ocean.”

Can I ask you to join me in congratulating Dr Gales in absentia.

May I also take a moment to further acknowledge Sir Guy Green, here today in his capacity as the long-time Honorary Antarctic Ambassador for Tasmania.

Sir Guy was our Governor for eight years from 1995 to 2003, and on the day his term of office ended in October 2003, then Parliamentary Secretary for the Antarctic, Dr Sharman Stone said that, and I quote: “The Australian Government’s Antarctic Program and policy interests have benefited greatly from Sir Guy’s passion for the frozen continent”. And she noted Sir Guy’s “deep

² [Australian Antarctic Medal | Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet \(pmc.gov.au\)](#), accessed 23 September 2021.

understanding of the significant role Australia plays in Antarctica, our scientific research and our commitment to protecting the Antarctic environment.”³

Furthermore, “His support over the years for the annual meeting of the multi-nation Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources – CCAMLR – has done much to lay the groundwork for productive discussions.”

I am preparing to deliver my first address to the members of CCAMLR next month. It is a vibrant and most important international organisation and so I add my thanks to you, Sir Guy, for your exceptional work promoting that body.

And now it is my privilege this morning to invest with insignia two Tasmanians with the Australian Antarctic Medal.

Official Secretary ...

[David announces the recipients one by one, per run sheet]

After which, HE:

May I ask you to join me in congratulating our two recipients.

Now please join Don and I for refreshments in the Dining Room.

³ [A great supporter of the Antarctic - Australian Antarctic Program \(News 2003\) \(antarctica.gov.au\)](https://www.antarctica.gov.au/news/2003/03/20/a-great-supporter-of-the-antarctic), accessed 23 September 2021.