

ROYAL OVER-SEAS LEAGUE TASMANIAN BRANCH
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, MONDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2022

Good evening. I welcome you all to this reception for members and associates of the Royal Over-Seas League Tasmanian Branch, to mark the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

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 Elise Archer MP, Attorney-General
- the Honourable Guy Barnett MP, Minister for Trade
- Stephen Jones, ROSL Chairman, and members
- Frank McGregor, Honorary Consul of the United Kingdom
- and associates representing the Order of Australia Association; Royal Commonwealth Society; Australian National Flag Association; Southern Tasmania Welsh Society; Tasmanian Caledonian Society.

That roll call of names tells us much about the meaning of this reception to mark Her Majesty's 70th year on the Throne. The first Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee. The strong and abiding links between Tasmania – and what was long ago fondly known as The Mother Country, or sometimes 'home' – are respectfully well represented today through your societies, and by each one of you individually.

Therefore, as The Queen's official Vice-Regal appointee in this historic Platinum Jubilee year, I am delighted to thank you for maintaining these ties. We acknowledge that The Queen has had a most exceptional record of service.

Princess Elizabeth (born Elizabeth Alexandra Mary on the 21st of April 1926) became Queen Elizabeth The Second on the 6th of February 1952 at the age of 25, on the death of her father, King George the Sixth. Her call to duty and service has never wavered since, through wars, economic crises, domestic political instability, family controversies and tragedies: and, most recently the passing of The Duke of Edinburgh in April 2021, the longest serving British consort.

At no time during her 7 decades has her devotion to duty or her popularity waned.

There may be some here this evening who will recall the first visit to Tasmania of Queen Elizabeth and His Royal Highness Prince Philip in 1954.

According to one newspaper and I quote: “When the 27-year old sailed into Sydney harbour on the 3rd of February 1954, she practically stopped the nation.”¹

The Queen and Prince Philip then embarked on visits to 57 towns and cities during their 58 days spent in Australia.

For this Platinum Jubilee celebration, we may reflect briefly on Her Majesty’s first visit to Tasmania.

The five-day Tasmanian visit began at Princes Wharf with the arrival of T.S.S. *Gothic*. The Queen and Prince Philip and Royal Household entourage stayed at Government House for the first three nights. They then flew to Wynyard to start a ‘Royal Progress’ motorcade through Burnie, Penguin, Ulverstone, Devonport, Latrobe, Sassafras, Deloraine, Westbury, Longford and Cressy to *Connorville* wool property. They stayed the night, departing the next day by air from Launceston to Melbourne.

The motorcade comprised 12 vehicles (only three from the Press). The other nine vehicles had front and rear Police motorcycle escorts, with specific distances maintained between each vehicle, the motorcade’s total length was well over 400 metres – no doubt a most unusual sight on Tasmania’s quiet rural northern roads.

The three Royal days in Hobart included Civic events at the Town Hall and City Hall; a visit to the Repatriation General Hospital; a tree planting at Anglesea Barracks; Divine Service at St David’s Cathedral; unveiling of the Sesquicentenary Memorial in Hunter Street; a Parade of Ex-Servicemen and

¹ <https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/stories/1954-royal-tour-queen-elizabeth-ii>

Women at the Queen's Domain; the Opening of Parliament. At Government House, an Investiture, a Reception and an Afternoon Garden Party were held. Invitations to these events were hugely sought after. To mark this visit, an oak tree, (*Quercus robur*) was planted by the main drive of Government House. To mark the Queen's visit in 1963, a Blue Gum, (*Eucalyptus globulus*) was planted on the South Terrace and, to mark the visit in 1988, a Huon Pine, (*Lagarostrobos franklinii*) was planted in the Native Garden.

The Queen has visited Tasmania on seven occasions and a number of serving Government House staff have fond memories of her visits. One story relayed to me occurred during a formal dinner on the 2000 visit. Our Executive Butler, Leigh Millington, was informed by Premier Bacon, who was sitting next to The Queen, that Her Majesty had noticed that the painting of Queen Alexandra was crooked. According to Leigh, it was not, rather the top shelf of the dumb waiter below was and is still warped, making the painting look crooked. To which the Premier replied ... "you butlers have an excuse for everything!"

Thinking he would do the right thing, Leigh moved secretly behind the dining room screen. Using an umbrella, he poked the frame of the painting to match them up, but it was the wrong direction, which made the painting really crooked!

Ladies and gentlemen, I shall conclude with another anecdote which seems quite fitting. It is customary for a new Governor and Spouse to visit Buckingham Palace for an audience with Her Majesty.

My predecessor, Kate Warner, and her husband, Dick Warner, had their audience with Her Majesty at Buckingham Palace in 2015. She also presented them with these signed portraits [HE gesture them].

In presenting them, The Queen surprised them by saying: "Why don't you put them on that lovely piano in your Drawing Room"!

I have received a signed Message from The Queen to mark Accession Day and the start of the Platinum Jubilee, thanking people for all the support she has received in her reign. It includes her continued commitment to serve, her thanks for her family's support and her wish in relation to the role of Queen Consort.

I have placed Her Majesty's Message here for you all to read.

Now please do join me in a Toast to mark the Platinum Jubilee.

[ADC hands HE glass; DOS hands PC glass. All glasses raised]

HE: "The Queen."

[Royal Anthem is played]

Thank you.