

OPENING OF THE HOBART WRITERS' FESTIVAL 2021
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
BALL ROOM, GOVERNMENT HOUSE
FRIDAY 8 OCTOBER 2021

Thank you, Luana [*provided Welcome to Country*] and good evening all. Don and I warmly welcome you to this Opening Event of the 2021 Hobart Writers' Festival.

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.

I am pleased to host this Opening Event, as we shall be hearing the announcement of this year's Emerging Tasmanian Aboriginal Writers Award.

I would like to acknowledge among us:

- The Honourable Elise Archer, Minister for the Arts and whose portfolio includes Attorney-General;
- Sue Kennedy, Chair of the TasWriters Board of Management and fellow Board members;
- Cassandra Wunsch, TasWriters Director and Festival Director;
- Kate Mackie, Director, Arts Tasmania.

The program for this year's Writers' Festival is, despite Covid-19, especially noteworthy with a rich variety of sessions. The program is a valuable reminder of how important literature is in our society. Literature is educational, recreational, therapeutic, escapist, controversial, highly creative and more. Perhaps, above all, literature has been and continues to be of central significance in recording and interpreting our human story.

The Festival sessions cover an array of areas including children's and young adult fiction; the arts as a vehicle for social change and transformation; Tasmanian history; creative responses to adversity; graphic novels; gardening; and of course, the chance to hear and engage with some of our national award-winning authors.

I am particularly impressed to learn about “The More Than Human Poetry Project” which began in May and has grown to a collective of some 23 Tasmanian poets. To quote its key feature: “The focus falls not on the natural world as something separate from humanity but on the sense that we are embedded in an ecosphere we depend on and are currently compromising.”

To conclude, on a personal note, Don and I are delighted to be hosting you all, as we have been members of a local book club for over ten years now. Our book choices have taken us on journeys around the world, to mysterious and hidden places, and invariably, we have lively discussions.

Thank you to all of the official supporters of our Writers’ Festival and warmest congratulations to all the organisers and volunteers. I wish you an uplifting and inspiring weekend.

David ... [invites Sue Kennedy to the lectern]