

SOUTH HOBART PROGRESS ASSOCIATION INC
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, FRIDAY 17 JUNE 2022

Good evening and welcome to this reception to mark the centenary of the South Hobart Progress Association.

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. 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 Rob Valentine MLC, Member for Hobart
- Councillor Anna Reynolds, Lord Mayor of Hobart
- Phillip Hoysted, South Hobart Progress Association President
- Office Bearers and colleagues.

Reaching the milestone of a centenary is a cause for celebration. It is the strongest affirmation of the value of the organisation involved. In your case, working and advocating on behalf of your South Hobart community is most commendable.

In a moment, your President will be speaking about your centenary. May I just make two mentions of South Hobart pre-1922, your founding year.

My first mention is of our now World Heritage-listed Cascades Female Factory, which operated as a female convict site from the 1820s to the 1850s. Thanks to the tireless work of the "From the Shadows" team, the Convict Women's Press, and many others, the Female Factory now recognises by documentation and creativity, the injustices and suffering that took place there.

In February this year, at the Female Factory, I had the honour of unveiling a convict woman statue, the work of internationally acclaimed Irish sculptor, Rowan Gillespie. The convict statues there, and elsewhere in Hobart, are of great cultural significance to Tasmania, and to Ireland.

To have such an important and rare convict site – one of five in Tasmania, one of eleven in the country – makes South Hobart and your Progress Association de facto custodians of an historic Australian story.

My second mention is of the close history between South Hobart and Government House. Strickland Avenue is named after Sir Gerald Strickland, Governor of Tasmania, from 1904 to 1909. Strickland Avenue prominently bisects South Hobart from east to west.

Sir Gerald and Lady Edeline Strickland arrived in Tasmania in October 1904. He had been knighted but, even in his own country, Sir Gerald Strickland didn't seem to be well known. A UK newspaper journalist wrote in 1904, and I quote:

“The new Governor of Tasmania, Sir John Strickland, will land in Hobart in the course of a few days. I am sorry to say that I am in entire ignorance of the past history of this gentleman...”ⁱ End of quote.

There was certainly a cause for ignorance and possible mistaken identity. I quote again, from another UK newspaper: “Sir Gerald Strickland, Knight of Great Britain, and Count Della Catena, Noble of Malta, are one and the same person.”ⁱⁱ

In fact his full noble title was: Gerald Paul Joseph Cajetan Carmel Antony Martin Strickland, 6th Count della Catena, 1st Baron Strickland, GCMG. Impressive indeed.

Born and raised in Malta, he was educated in England as a dual citizen of inherited Maltese nobility.

He had the extraordinary double distinction of being Prime Minister of Malta for four years (during which he survived an assassination attempt) and a Governor of three Australian states for 13 consecutive years, including Tasmania.

He was described variously as “tactless,” “a stickler for formalities and constitutional propriety” and also “altogether too Machiavellian for ordinary intercourse”ⁱⁱⁱ. He was also more generously described as “a very amiable man” and “pleasant and unaffected...”^{iv}

As well as Strickland Avenue being named after Sir Gerald, the delightful Strickland Falls are named after Lady Edeline.

So, as I said there has been a close history between South Hobart and Government House.

South Hobart has a rich history, as detailed in the equally rich and beautiful book of Alison Alexander's *Beneath the Mountain*. South Hobart is replete with hotels, industry, grand mansions, schools, shops, cafes and churches. It is a vibrant community. Your association is achieving your aims to promote and preserve South Hobart's cultural and built heritage.

May I now congratulate you all on the centenary of your South Hobart Progress Association.

Thank you.

ⁱ Ross-shire Journal, Friday 18 November 1904 page 6.

ⁱⁱ Belper News (Derbyshire), Friday 28 August 1908 page 6.

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/strickland-sir-gerald-8700>, accessed 18 May 2020.

^{iv} Halifax Evening Courier, Wednesday 3 February 1909 page 4; Daily Telegraph, Wednesday 16 November 1904, page 8.