

THE ROYAL HOBART REGATTA ASSOCIATION INC
PRESENTATION OF FELLOWSHIPS
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC,
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE BALL ROOM, TUESDAY 26 JULY 2022

Please be seated.

Good afternoon and welcome to this presentation of Fellowships of the Royal Hobart Regatta Association. As your Patron, I am delighted and privileged to make these presentations on behalf of our Association to a number of individuals who have given significant service over the years.

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.

I also acknowledge:

- David Skegg
- Fellows
- Association members and supporters

The Royal Hobart Regatta has been a Tasmanian institution since the first time that it was held in 1838. This coming event in 2023 will mark the 185th anniversary of the Regatta, an impressive and historic achievement.

The Regatta was originally conducted on 1 December 1838, a date fixed by then Governor Sir John Franklin to mark the anniversary of the discovery of the island by Abel Tasman. Sir John and Lady Franklin chose this anniversary as a way of actively promoting greater use of the name Tasmania to avoid convict connotations still strongly associated with the name Van Diemen's Land.

The Regatta Day was established in the hope that, for at least one day of the year, the residents of Hobart might come together "in harmony [joined] by a common love of sailing and of their beautiful harbour"¹. There were, apparently, some 12,000 people at the inaugural Regatta celebrations which took place on the Queen's Domain and Macquarie Point. They watched the five

¹ <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/franklin-sir-john-2066> accessed 20 July 22

races: one for four-oared gigs, two for sailing-boats, one for dinghies, and the main event, a race for fifteen whale-boats, while enjoying free cheese and beer.²

The idea was for an event that would be attended by all residents, in a celebratory and holiday atmosphere. That is not to say that there have not been some challenges for the Regatta.

The first few Regattas went very well and were conducted in accordance with the original objects of Governor Franklin's intent. Soon, by 1842, in response to reports of heavy drinking and what Lady Franklin described as a "festivity of licentiousness and immense disorder," the Governor called upon the organising committee to apply more stringent regulations around the serving of alcohol.

However, free beer was a significant attraction, and so the Committee declined to change this. As a result, in 1843 the Regatta went ahead without Vice-Regal Patronage. This was one of only two Regattas not to have the support of the Governor of the time.³

The Regatta continues to be a focal point on the first weekend in February each year, when the Hobart and district community come to the Regatta grounds to enjoy boat racing, rowing, the trans- Derwent swim, military displays, side-show alley, rides, and musical entertainment.

Today is a celebration of a related kind. We know that the Royal Hobart Regatta Association is a voluntary group of dedicated people, who are committed to delivering an interesting and varied program each year. The Committee rely not only on the sponsorship of commercial partners, but also the voluntary assistance of members of the community.

The Constitution of the Regatta Association provides that, in addition to the grant of Life Membership to long standing supporters, Fellows may be appointed in recognition of significant service or support to the Association.

Shortly, we will present seven Fellowships to people, who have been deemed worthy by the Committee. You will hear about their service as we present the awards.

² https://www.utas.edu.au/library/companion_to_tasmanian_history/R/Regattas.htm accessed 20 July 22

³ <https://www.hobarthistory.com.au/the-first-hobart-regatta/#:~:text=The%20Hobart%20Regatta%20was%20Tasmania's,this%20island%20by%20Abel%20Tasman.> accessed 20 July 22

In conclusion I congratulate the Fellows about to be presented. May I also thank the entire Organising Committee of the Royal Hobart Regatta for the work that you do, to continue Governor Franklin's vision of an event that unites the community in a love of our Harbour and of sailing. I am pleased to continue the tradition of Vice-Regal Patronage and look forward to a successful 185th anniversary Regatta in six months' time.

David...