

**TASMANIAN COUNCIL OF HOSPITAL AND HEALTHCARE AUXILIARIES
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, FRIDAY 1 JULY 2022**

[Vice-Regal Salute is played]

Good afternoon. I warmly welcome you all to 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. 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.

We are here today to recognise the work of our island's hospital and healthcare auxiliary volunteers. I was delighted to confirm this event after being contacted by Lou Partridge, Secretary of the Tasmanian Council of Hospital Auxiliaries.

Generally, we would host a morning or afternoon tea. However, may I say as your Patron, that your volunteer work deserves far more than a cup of Earl Grey and a Tim Tam!

In our archives we have a record of some of your history. It's most interesting and may I give you some examples:

First, a newspaper quote from February 1930:

"In the house committee's report to the Hobart Public Hospital Board yesterday there was reference to the formation of a woman's auxiliary ... such auxiliaries were common to all large hospitals of the world, an outstanding instance being that at the Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney. Ladies took charge of all the linen and did all the sewing. From a small beginning this auxiliary had grown until today it was one of the most important departments of the hospital."¹

Two years later, in 1932, the *Mercury* reported, and I quote:

"A scheme for the organisation of suburban and country auxiliaries, to assist the Alexandra Hospital for women at Hobart, was approved at a big gathering at the

¹ *Examiner*, Friday 21 February 1930, page 9.

hospital yesterday. The urgent need of funds to carry out the work of the institution was stressed, and it was pointed out that on the mainland it was mainly through the efforts of such bodies that public hospitals were enabled to function.

“Lady Helen Nicholls was elected patroness, as the wife of Tasmania’s Administrator Sir Herbert Nicholls [acting in place of the absent Governor]. Lady Nicholls said that the hospital was urgently in need of help. The formation of auxiliaries would give the young people an opportunity to lend their assistance, and to take an interest in the hospital. It would be open to anyone to form an auxiliary and manage it as she thought best, and she hoped that many such offers would be received.

“The hospital was almost crowded out, and [soon] there would be no beds available. Money was needed for extensions, and the only means of raising it were by the concrete organisations of auxiliaries, which would function independently of the general hospital committee, and raise funds by entertainments and other means.”²

End of quote.

Many auxiliaries were subsequently formed, although it was not until September 1954 that a two-day conference of about 100 delegates in Launceston became, quote, “the first of its kind ever to be arranged in the State”, and that, “If delegates consider that the conference fulfils its purpose, they may decide to hold it annually.”³ The conference had been arranged to discuss “problems common to hospital auxiliaries throughout Tasmania.”⁴

Today, we have some 30 effective auxiliaries supporting hospital and healthcare facilities across Tasmania with memberships ranging from a few to up to 90. We have a total State membership of about 150 volunteers.⁵

The auxiliary kiosks at the Launceston General Hospital, Mersey Community, North-West Regional and Royal Hobart Hospitals are efficient and much appreciated.

The same can be said for the auxiliaries on Flinders and King Islands, on the east coast at St Helens and St Marys, the west coast, and the Huon Valley.

² *Mercury*, Friday 12 August 1932, page 2.

³ *Advocate*, Wednesday 8 September 1954, page 5.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Lou Partridge letter dated 1 April 2022, and attachment to email dated 28 June 2022.

In fact, as your Secretary Lou Partridge has noted, auxiliaries have the whole State covered.⁶

May I acknowledge that in this past financial year members have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars, purchasing wheelchairs, beds, surgical equipment, trolleys, special lifting devices, televisions, and more.

In addition, there are projects auxiliaries have been working for several years, which are coming to fruition – the redeveloped children’s ward at the LGH being one fine example.

Your fundraising initiatives are legendary: tip shop; fashion parades; soup and sandwich lunches; open gardens and homes; beautiful knitted baby and infant clothes; lolly bags; barbecues; trivia nights.

I am also advised by Lou that this year, long service certificates and badges have been presented to members across the State who have reached the service milestones of 10, 20, 30 and even 40 plus years of service.

On behalf of all Tasmanians, I warmly acknowledge these service recognitions. I also congratulate you and thank all auxiliaries for your unselfish service.

As your motto states, to which you steadfastly adhere: “Let us hold high O Lord, the lamp of service for the care, comfort and welfare of all.”

You have been doing this for some seventy years now – the great service of care, comfort and welfare.

Congratulations again. You give wonderful service to our island community.

And to conclude on a lovely Government House note: our long-time Executive Butler Leigh Millington tells me that in the late 1980s, when Sir Phillip Bennett was Governor, the Lady-in-Waiting to Lady Margaret Bennett was none other than Robyn Saunders of the RHH Central Kiosk Auxiliary – where are you, Robyn? [hopefully waves her arm!]

Thank you very much. David ...

[... invites Lou Partridge to respond]

⁶ Attachment to email 28 June 2022.