

**FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL TASMANIAN BOTANICAL GARDENS**  
**REMARKS BY**  
**HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC**  
**GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA**  
**GOVERNMENT HOUSE, WEDNESDAY 10 AUGUST 2022**

Good evening. I warmly welcome you all to this reception to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Friends of the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens.

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:

- Lee Cole, President
  
- Kay Hayes, Immediate Past President
  
- Andrew Smith, Friends founder
  
- Bernard Pryor, Membership Officer.

I should state at the outset that any friend of the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens is a friend of Government House! We have been very good neighbours for a long time now – 164 years to be precise. Government House was first occupied in 1858, by which time the Botanical Gardens had been formally in existence for forty years.

As an example of our friendship, we have recently started hosting a new project together, acknowledging our respective French Connections, with a joint garden tour of the French collections of flora in the RTBG through the fence to our Government House recreated Lahaye's Garden.

Your work as Friends since 1992 has been of great significance to the RTBG. To name just a few: the Fuchsia House; the Mixed Border; the bicentenary lily pond platform; the Orchid Lab; the Cottage; event hospitality; and staff botanical research grants.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Microsoft Word - FRTBG Membership Information.docx](#), accessed 5 August 2022.

These are fine examples of the formal commitment of the Friends to foster the educational, historical, cultural, recreational and scientific functions of the RTBG. And this is in addition to your valued professional support to the Board and Directors.<sup>2</sup>

As volunteers, the Gardens provide you with an enviable working environment. So, there are three good reasons to be a Friend of the RTBG, and I am sure there are many more.

Certainly, Government House appreciates having you as our neighbour. Interestingly, our respective sizes are almost identical: Government House 15 hectares, the RTBG 14.5 hectares.<sup>3</sup>

That was never planned but came about because of a land transfer. At the time of the construction of the Tasman Bridge in 1964, you lost some of your foreshore land. In compensation, the entire area east of the Eardley-Wilmot Wall was transferred to the RTBG from Government House.

Admittedly, that area had been nothing more than a large sloped paddock. We can see how beautifully landscaped and cared for it is today. However, I can inform you that the then Government House Official Secretary wrote some fairly stiff letters to the government agency which had unilaterally made that transfer decision!

May I conclude by noting that your magazine, *Fagus*, has a regular piece on a chosen Significant Tree. Similarly, we have been running Government House Significant Trees tours with Andrew Robert-Tissot for some years now. They continue to be really popular. Between us, we have a combined 30 hectares of professionally managed areas. These are critically important areas of the Domain.

Interestingly, as long ago as 1875 an article in the *Mercury* newspaper referred to the Queen's Domain as being, quote, "the indispensable ... lungs of the city".<sup>4</sup>

So, Friends of the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens, you are now thirty years young. Keep up your valuable and valued work looking after our beautiful Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens and your "indispensable" personal contributions to our healthy environment.

Happy birthday and thank you.

David ... [invites Lee Cole, President, to respond briefly]

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<sup>2</sup> [Friends Mixed Border – Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens \(rtbg.tas.gov.au\)](https://www.rtbg.tas.gov.au/), accessed 5 August 2022.

<sup>3</sup> [090518-SMP-Final.pdf](#) (2009 Strategic Master Plan page 2.)

<sup>4</sup> [27 Jul 1875 - THE MERCURY. - Trove \(nla.gov.au\)](#), accessed 5 August 2022.