

THE COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION IN TASMANIA (INC)
85TH ANNUAL STATE CONFERENCE
OPENING SPEECH BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE (ONLINE VIA MS TEAMS)
SATURDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2022

Good morning and thank you very much for inviting me as your Patron to open the 85th Annual State Conference of the Country Women's Association in Tasmania.

I pay my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land: the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community and recognise their enduring culture. I recognise a history of truth, which acknowledges the impacts of colonisation upon our First People. I commit to a future that listens to and respects Aboriginal stories, culture and history.

It is disappointing that I have been unable to travel to Grindelwald to be with you, but thankfully we have the positive development of our ability to link up and communicate in this way.

You may have read my Patron's Message in your 86th Annual Report, that I have been in the role of Governor for over a year now. I have been privileged to travel widely in our community, meeting many Tasmanians, including CWA members. This gives me an appreciation of the value and importance of your work across Tasmania, so aptly expressed in your Mission Statement: To support families in communities to achieve a better future for all.

Just last Wednesday, we were hosted by the CWA Nubeena Branch for a delicious lunch, whilst on a Tasman Municipality official visit. We learned about their community work whilst talking with members, the youngest of whom was ten years old.

I shall be visiting all 29 Tasmanian Councils during my term. These visits are rewarding and informative. My community engagement role is a very significant part of my work as Governor. I am able to learn on these visits about our communities – be this in early education, health, literacy, food security, family violence and other social aspects that we must address as Tasmanians.

I would therefore like to mention some of my engagements where I have focused on women, given your long, proud and highly effective CWA work in Tasmania and your stated vision of “Helping to improve the lives of women, children, and their communities, with a special focus on rural, regional and remote areas.”¹

So here are some, in my time so far as Governor.

A little over a month after commencing in the role, in July last year, I hosted a networking session for members of the Women Supporting Women group. This was an initiative of the Department of Premier and Cabinet and led up to a forum in November entitled “Women Supporting Women in Leadership”.

I gave an address to open that forum. That meeting was an important initiative, especially so, in the light of the revelations this week about the workplace culture in Tasmania’s ministerial and parliamentary services, described as “toxic and unsafe”.²

In September 2021, I was the keynote speaker at a Women in Law Breakfast hosted by the Tasmania University Law Society, where I was able to draw on my experience as a career lawyer.

Also in September last year, I visited the Hobart Women’s Shelter. Our Government House Executive Chef, Ainstie Wagner, conducts “Cook and Connect” sessions with Shelter residents, teaching the basics of cooking, a very worthwhile and effective program.

I keep in contact with the Shelter. In December, we hosted a visit by Shelter residents at Government House; also that month we hosted an enjoyable Christmas Lunch for Shelter residents and staff. As well, in February this year, I hosted a Women's Housing Working Meeting on behalf of the Hobart Women's Shelter.

Returning to September last year, I had the honour to attend and deliver an address at the unveiling of the restored headstone of Jessie Spinks Rooke. As you may know, Jessie was Tasmania’s leading advocate for women’s suffrage; a truly significant historical figure. May I recognise the good work by the South Burnie Lions Club, and Rodney Croome, to ensure her belated recognition through her restored headstone.

¹ [Home - Country Women's Association in Tasmania \(cwaintasmania.com.au\)](https://www.cwaintasmania.com.au/), accessed 14 October 2021.

² [Report finds toxic, unsafe culture in Tas parliament - Government News](#), accessed 1 September 2022.

In November 2021 I attended a Tasmanian C-Suite Boardroom Lunch hosted by Chief Executive Women. Later, the same month, I visited Karinya Young Women's Service in Launceston, of which I am the Patron.

Of relevance, in December last year, Don and I were part of the very enjoyable Christmas and birthday celebration to mark the 80th anniversary of the Lindisfarne Branch of the CWA.

In February, I attended the online launch of "Our Watch and Women with Disabilities Victoria's Changing the landscape: A national resource to prevent violence against women and girls."

During March, I delivered a number of International Women's Day speeches: hosted by the Clifford Craig Foundation; the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Tasmanian State Office; and our Multicultural Women's Council of Tasmania.

In March, we hosted a reception for delegates attending the National Conference of the Australian Women Pilots' Association.

In May, I enjoyed sounding the starter's horn for the Mother's Day Classic fun run and walk in support of the National Breast Cancer Foundation.

Finally, last month I delivered two addresses to women's groups: the 2022 Unions Tasmania Women's Conference; and to students participating in the 2022 Fearless Festival.

As Tasmania's 29th Governor and second female Governor, I have the opportunity to speak about women's issues with some experience and I hope that I can impart some good advice to women, especially younger women.

As members of the CWA, I thank you all for your dedication and your commitment. You make a real difference. I wish you all the very best and look forward to meeting many of you as my term progresses.

I now have the privilege of declaring open the 85th State Conference of the Country Women's Association in Tasmania.

Thank you.