

**HOBART HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY INC**  
**2022 DAFFODIL, CAMELLIA AND FLORAL ART SHOW**  
**SPEECH BY**  
**HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC**  
**GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA**  
**HOBART TOWN HALL, FRIDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2022**

Thank you [Andrea Gerrard, for introducing HE].

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.

This is a very sad day, with the passing of Her Majesty The Queen. She served in her role with graciousness and unwavering dedication over more than 70 years. As the Vice-Regal representative in Tasmania, our thoughts are with the Royal family.

As the Honorary Patron of our Hobart Horticultural Society, I am delighted to be here to officially open this year's "Daffodil, Camellia and Floral Art Show". As ever, we have a fabulous setting of floral exhibits, where artistic creative expression matches with keen competition. May I say that for me, there are two strong themes that resonate this week with the creativity of the Hobart Horticultural Society. The first is about artistic expression of stunning floral art exhibits. And this is bookended with wonderful synchronicity.

This is because last Tuesday evening – with Hobart Horticultural Society Secretary Heather Pryor and Bernard Pryor attending – Government House hosted a fundraising evening for the Art Collection of the Royal Society of Tasmania. Seven Van Diemen's Land artists were represented, one of whom was Louisa Anne Meredith. Louisa was described that evening by an eminent art historian as Australia's most significant nineteenth century female artist. Many of you will know, Louisa's principal artistic output were her striking botanical works.

So, here in the Town Hall today we have a continuing commitment to botanical artistic expression, maintaining the legacy of a great former Tasmanian artist who deeply loved and admired our island's flora.

And this evening I am officially opening this year's Annual Art Show of the Rotary Club of Hobart. I know from past shows that botanical art is strongly featured. So, we have a Hobart trifecta this week.

The second element of synchronicity is also Tasmanian, but of a darker legacy. Last Wednesday the 7<sup>th</sup> of September was National Threatened Species Day. That date is observed throughout Australia and was chosen because it was the date of the death of our last known thylacine at the Beaumaris Zoo, next to Government House, in 1936.

As stated by the World Wildlife Fund Australia:

“National Threatened Species Day is a day when we shine a spotlight on all Australian native animal and plant species that are facing similar fates to that of the Tasmanian tiger. On this day we celebrate our iconic Aussie wildlife and the incredible conservation work [being done] to restore our environment.”<sup>1</sup>

So, we are urged to pay greater attention to our natural world – in this Hall today this is exactly what we see, a collective attention to horticulture. May I acknowledge the dedication associated with your craft and the attention you bring to highlighting the importance of our increasingly vulnerable natural world.

I would like to give you just one example of the focus of Threatened Species Day to promote protection of plants.

The Northern Peninsula Region at the top of Cape York has a number of Aboriginal clans. It is approximately 1,000 kilometres north-west of Cairns by road.

In 2009, the World Wildlife Fund Australia released a publication titled “Australia's Hidden Treasures” to mark that year's National Threatened Species Day. The publication highlighted and focused on the rare Cape York “pitcher” plant. A new species had recently been discovered, in 2006, at a swamp near the Jardine River. But its exact whereabouts was kept secret, for the plant's sake.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.wwf.org.au/what-we-do/species/national-threatened-species-day#gs.bkyb7i>, accessed 8 September 2022.

The pitcher plant, *Nepenthes tenax*, is more commonly known as the “flesh-eating plant”. The newly discovered species grows tubelike to about 100 centimetres. It is believed to consume small rats, mice, lizards and even birds.<sup>2</sup>

I wonder whether I may get anyone here to plant, to cultivate and to lovingly tend a Tasmanian variety?

In all seriousness, I commend you all for your passion and commitment to horticulture and all things floral. At Government House, we are also very committed to our garden, including regular associations with Andrea Gerrard and the Hobart Horticultural Society.

May I mention a few recent examples of Government House horticultural activities:

- The Kids to Farms experience;
- Our seedlings are provided for the prison vegetable garden;
- Our staff participated in the recent careers expo promoting horticulture, at Wrest Point and also Rosny College;
- Our Estate Gardens Manager, Tara Edmondson, is a Blooming Tasmania committee member, promoting statewide garden tourism;
- Our gardener, Bettina Elischer, provides floral displays for horticultural shows here in our Town Hall, including a daffodil display here today; and
- All our excess Government House agricultural produce is distributed where most needed in the community.

On that collegial note, may I happily and proudly declare open the 2022 “Daffodil, Camellia and Floral Art Show” of the Hobart Horticultural Society.

Thank you.

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<sup>2</sup> *Torres News* (Thursday Island, Queensland), Wednesday 16 September 2009, page 3.