

**26TEN WEEK 2022**  
**REMARKS BY**  
**HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC**  
**GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA**  
**GOVERNMENT HOUSE, WEDNESDAY 26 OCTOBER 2022**

**[Vice-regal salute is played]**

Good evening and welcome to this Government House reception to mark both 26TEN Week 2022 and also the tenth anniversary of 26TEN.

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 and continued connection to land, sea, and 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.

May I acknowledge among us:

- Sue McKerracher, Libraries Tasmania Executive Director;
- Daryl Quilliam, 26TEN Coalition Chair;
- Siobhan Gaskell, Convenor;
- Richard Warner, Coalition Member;
- Anita Planchon, Director Strategy and Engagement;
- Allison Mitchell, Services Coordinator;
- Christina Roscoe, Operations Coordinator.

I shall be brief in my remarks, as we have a video to look forward to shortly. May I offer my congratulations to 26TEN on reaching your ten-year milestone. I know that one of the core principles of 26TEN is “a long-term strategy for all of Tasmania.”<sup>1</sup> In your ten years you have achieved very substantial results of making a difference to lives of Tasmanians, helping adults to improve their

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<sup>1</sup> <https://26ten.tas.gov.au/Pages/Strategy.aspx>, accessed 23 October 2022.

reading, writing and maths. There are well over 1,131 member organisations and supporters; and over 1,333 volunteer adult literacy tutors.<sup>2</sup> Over the decade, 2,783 people have participated in 249 plain English workshops.<sup>3</sup>

In 2012, when Siobhan and her colleagues started 26TEN, I suspect you did not know what lay ahead. You reached out to adults with literacy and numeracy difficulties, which they often chose to ignore or to hide.

An SBS headline in December 2013 starkly declared, and I quote: “Half of Tasmanians are illiterate and it is crippling the state's economy, but experts warn there will be no easy way out.”<sup>4</sup>

End quote.

In celebrating your first anniversary in October 2013, then Governor Peter Underwood addressed a reception in this Ball Room, and he said:

“To the learners I cannot stress strongly enough that it is not your fault that you are in need of support to improve your functional literacy. Nor can I stress too strongly what good role models you are to encourage others who are in need of tutoring to come forward and get busy in the 26TEN business.”

Governor Underwood continued and said:

“... If our literacy rate is improved Tasmanians will become better informed, more empowered, more innovative and better equipped to generate wealth and culture... Jobs are created and sustained by the education, initiative and energy of the people. Therefore improving the functional literacy rate is an imperative but it will take time... But all you ... have made a start on this and I congratulate you on that...”<sup>5</sup>

I endorse these comments. You help Tasmanians connect with a range of programs, and with services offered by member organisations. You help businesses find out how they can take action to contribute. There are many significant benefits from your many programs, with such positive impacts on people’s lives, improving confidence, wellbeing and skills. The stories of adult learners on your website demonstrates this.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://26ten.tas.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>, accessed 23 October 2022.

<sup>3</sup>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/no-easy-answers-to-tasmanian-illiteracy/t6u83967z>, accessed 23 October 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Thursday 31 October 2013, morning tea at Government House to mark the first anniversary of 26TEN.

You have improved the literacy and wellbeing of thousands of Tasmanians and, in so doing, by extension also their loved ones and friends.

I like your YouTube emoji video, which encourages adults to change their world, maybe get a better job, help their children to read, follow a recipe, or apply for a licence.

I congratulate you all on the core business of 26TEN. It is overwhelmingly a key community and positive initiative across our island State.

My warmest congratulations again on your tenth anniversary. And after the video, I will be heading straight for the photo booth with my husband Don!<sup>6</sup>

Thank you.

*[David invites video presentation]*

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<sup>6</sup> In the Conservatory, with a 26TEN banner as a backdrop, opportunity to have your photo taken in a selfie frame while saying "Happy Birthday!"