

**UNVEILING OF A BENCH SEAT TO HONOUR THE  
BURNIE VICTORIA LEAGUE FOR COMMONWEALTH FRIENDSHIP  
REMARKS BY  
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC  
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA  
EMU VALLEY RHODODENDRON GARDEN,  
SATURDAY 22 OCTOBER 2022**

Good morning, everyone and welcome to this unveiling of the bench seat to honour the Burnie Victoria League for Commonwealth Friendship.

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.

I would also like to acknowledge:

- Ms Elizabeth Singleton, former Secretary/Treasurer of Burnie Victoria League
- Maurie Kupsch, Curator and founding member of Garden
- Mr Ant Dry, Chairperson; and
- Mr Geoff Wood, General Manager

It is a very great pleasure to be here in this beautiful Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden with all these plants flowering all around us. The Burnie Spring Festival is being held this weekend, and many visitors, both new and returning, are here in the garden.

In 1906, the future Queen Mary, then Princess of Wales, became Patron of The Victoria League. The group expanded rapidly with 27 branches by 1909 — in England, Scotland and overseas and The Victoria League has been honoured by Royal Patronage ever since.

The Burnie Victoria League for Commonwealth Friendship was established in 1921 and was aligned with the objectives and ideals of the international League. The Burnie League has had Vice-Regal Patronage as one of the Royal and Loyal Societies in the State.

These Gardens have received Vice-Regal Patronage for many years, so there is a direct link in that sense between the Burnie Victoria League and the Gardens.

In March 2021, after 100 years of operation, the Burnie Victoria League for Commonwealth Friendship was wound up. At that time, the League provided a cash donation to the Emu Valley Rhododendron Garden to be used to purchase a bench seat.

That bench seat was placed here in honour of the organisation's century of commitment to the community and the Commonwealth.<sup>1</sup> It was consistent with their ethos of service that, as they wound up, their final act was to continue to serve the community with this place to rest to enjoy the gardens.

I am pleased to inform you that, if you haven't seen or heard them already, there is live music, Irish Dancers, and Knightly Swordplay to enjoy. Plants are also available from Gardens Horticulturalist, Juanita, for those who would like to replicate just a small portion of the Garden.

It is now my great pleasure to unveil this bench seat in honour of the Burnie Victoria League for Commonwealth Friendship.

Thank you.

*[HE unveils bench plaque]*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theadvocate.com.au/story/7165062/celebrating-100-years-of-friendship-and-community-service/> accessed 14 Oct 22