

**ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF MEDICAL ADMINISTRATORS  
SPEECH BY  
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC  
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA  
HOTEL GRAND CHANCELLOR, HOBART  
THURSDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2022**

Good morning. I warmly welcome all delegates to Tasmania. Thank you for inviting me to officially open the 2022 Annual Conference of the Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators.

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 really is pleasing to have our national conference circuit up and running once more. As we all know, national and international conferences, gatherings and meetings were practically the first casualties of Covid restrictions. For me, your conference is just the second conference opening that I am attending, despite having been in this role for over a year.

In May this year, I opened the 14th Australasian Lymphology Association Conference. We have also been pleased to host a few conference receptions. Two of those receptions were for the National Conference of the Australian Women Pilots' Association; and for the Australasian Humour Studies Network. Quite a diversity.

In looking at your conference program, I was struck by the focus on wellbeing. Sessions relating to psychological safety, professional development, disability enablement, population diversity care, socially conscious leadership, kids and earlier care – to name some – resonate with me through much of the work that I undertake as Governor.

As you may know, a Governor's community engagement is a very significant part of the role, not only in the amount of time devoted to engagement, but also, hopefully, for those with whom we interact. I would like to share some typical Vice-Regal community role functions with you. Some may echo your own varied forms of commitment to health and wellbeing through your leadership in the medical field across Australia.

First, may I mention the Peter Underwood Centre for Educational Attainment of which I am Chair of the Advisory Committee. Central to its work is its Children's University Tasmania, which works in partnerships with schools to help foster a love of lifelong learning in children and young people.

The Children's University is for young people between the ages of 7-14 and each member is issued with a Passport to Learning. Most entries are for extra-curricular activities and designed to increase ambitions to learn. These experiences help build self-confidence and resilience and positively impact educational attainment.

The Centre works with Learning Destinations such as community groups, sports clubs, art galleries, wildlife centres and museums, providing students with both online and face-to-face activities.

Our Government House has become directly involved, with students from lower socio-economic primary schools undertaking art projects. Images and art materials are sent to their schools and the artworks will eventually be displayed at Government House.

Secondly, at the adult level, we support groups such as 26TEN. This is an initiative of the State Government and Libraries Tasmania to improve adult literacy and numeracy in Tasmania. Some 48 per cent of Tasmania's population is functionally illiterate — the highest rate in Australia and in urgent need of improvement. 26TEN works directly with businesses and communities and has a team of coordinators and trained volunteers helping with reading, writing or maths, be that one-to-one support, small group activities, or start-up courses. Their services are free and, importantly, confidential, given the fact that many adults hide their struggles with literacy and numeracy.

Thirdly, my Official Municipal Visits are a key community engagement. We have 29 municipalities in Tasmania which I shall visit across my five-year tenure as Governor. These visits enable me to meet with a very broad range of groups, schools and other institutions. May I give a few examples:

In June this year as part of a Glenorchy official visit, Don and I spent time at Bucaan Community House which, in its own words, is "committed to embedding wellness and reablement within all its programs and activities to enable persons to be as independent as possible, to have high self-esteem, and to have the chance to make choices and meaningful contributions to their community."

Later in June, we paid an official visit to the Glamorgan Spring Bay Council on the east coast. There, we spent time with a group called the East Coast Crusaders, volunteers supported by the Council and the Tasmanian Association of Police and Community Youth Clubs, (the PCYC). Their mission is, and I quote: “The promotion and undertaking of positive activities of a community, social, cultural, adventurous and challenging nature to stimulate and advance the self esteem, recreational opportunities, life skills and sense of community in young people to come together and express themselves in a safe space, while instilling a sense of community and belonging.”

May I also mention a St Vincent de Paul business called St Vincent Industries, which provides paid employment and training to people with a disability. They make beautiful products from donated cloths and rags. Last year we bought a large quantity of their pouffes made from recycled jeans. We have them in our 1887 Tennis Pavilion overlooking our two heritage grass courts and the clay court. Not only do they make very comfortable seating from which to watch tennis, they look great. We have hosted employees of St Vincent Industries for lunch at this tennis pavilion.

In conclusion, these are some examples of my engagement with our Tasmanian community which echo, in small ways, your commitment to health and wellbeing through your leadership in the medical field.

Delegates, that is more than enough from me. I wish you all a most successful and enjoyable conference in your important work for and with our Australian medical profession.

We look forward to hosting some of you this evening at Government House.

Thank you.