

**ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF MEDICAL ADMINISTRATORS
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, THURSDAY 29 SEPTEMBER 2022**

[Vice-Regal Salute is played]

Good evening. I have great pleasure in welcoming you all to this Government House reception.

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

I hope you have had a productive and enjoyable day. I shall be brief in my remarks so that you can enjoy socialising and meeting other delegates.

As many of you are from interstate, I thought I would say a few words about this building. It has early remnant foundations dating back to 1827. These were built over with new foundations and some walls, in the early 1840s. It was not until the early 1850s that this third and final design was built.

This Ball Room space served as the principal interior workshop during final construction. You can imagine the noise and dust. In fact, Henry Fox Young, the first Governor and his wife and their children took up occupancy in February 1858. However, the noise and dust obliged them to move to the Governor's Cottage at Port Arthur.

Interestingly, convicts were forbidden by legislation to work on the building. However, the reality was that many were experienced stonemasons, plumbers and so on and very definitely were a source of labour.

There is also a good quantity of Port Arthur timber in the construction. The gum trees from the area were exceptionally tall and straight.

If you look down, the floor of this Ball Room is Huon pine. This rare species grows only in western Tasmania and is renowned for its longevity. Some trees are more than two thousand years old.

Returning to our convicts and looking up, the architect William Porden Kay hired a young ticket-of-leave artist, named John Wiltson, to paint the ceiling of this Ball Room. He also painted the ceiling of the Dining Room, which I invite you to look at. When Wiltson was transported as a convict, aged about 24, his prisoner's file aboard the ship stated simply that his character was "bad". Yet, we have this fabulous legacy thanks to him.

Beyond this main building, with its 71 rooms on three levels and its three towers, is a large block of what were originally horse stables, a coach house, farm buildings for piggeries, as well as domestic cottages. We are in the early stages of repurposing the redundant buildings, to become an interpretation centre, museum, schools' educational centre, café and shop. These new facilities will benefit visitors, who will be able to enjoy and appreciate Government House and the role of a Governor in a modern democracy.

You may be interested to know that we produce a variety of products on the Estate – fine wines, gin, preserves and condiments, a pictorial calendar, a history book and so on. Proceeds from these sales go directly and exclusively into a Government House heritage maintenance fund.

Welcome again to Government House and I hope you enjoy looking at the State Rooms. I wish you all the best for the rest of your conference and please enjoy the Second Echo Ensemble performance and the reception.

Thank you.