

**MANNALARGENNA DAY FESTIVAL 2022**  
**SPEECH BY**  
**HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC**  
**GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA**  
**TEBRAKUNNA COUNTRY, LITTLE MUSSELROE BAY**  
**SATURDAY 3 DECEMBER 2022**

Thank you, Chair Nick [Cameron, Melythina Tiakana Warrana [= ‘Heart of Country’] Aboriginal Corporation.<sup>1</sup> [introduced HE]

It is my honour here today to pay my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land: the palawa people. I acknowledge our contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community and recognise their enduring culture and continued connection to land, sea, and waters. 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.

Don and I are honoured to be here today. We see all around us, the direct Tebrakunna Country. This Festival honours the undimmed memory of Mannalargenna, and his people, and is a celebration of survival and culture.

This one day in December each year – since 2015 – is culturally and spiritually uplifting: the declared aims of your Melythina Tiakana Warrana Aboriginal Corporation. Your declared aims are clear – through keeping place, enlivening Aboriginal cultural practice and awareness, and reclaiming the rightful place of Aborigines as the original peoples of Tasmania; and more.<sup>2</sup>

I am honoured to officially open this Tebrakunna Art Exhibition, which is a unique exhibition on the lands of the Trawlwoolway / Pairbeenne Clan of the Coastal Plains Nation<sup>3</sup>. It is a group exhibition of four of our highly talented Aboriginal visual artists: Aunty Judith-Rose Thomas; Annie Ellis; Lisa Kennedy; Belinda Casey.

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<sup>1</sup> Melythina Tiakana Warrana [= ‘Heart of Country’] Aboriginal Corporation.

<sup>2</sup> [melythina tiakana warrana Aboriginal Corporation | Trouwunna \(Tasmania\), \(Australia\) \(mtwac.org.au\)](https://www.mtwac.org.au), “Our Aims”, accessed 28 November 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Opening paragraph of the official artists’ bios document supplied by Jo Cameron.

Aunty Judith-Rose Thomas is a direct descendant of Mannalargenna. She is a 2004 University of Tasmania Master of Fine Art and Design graduate. Her career has been marked by many exhibitions and public commissions including murals. Her works are also held in private collections in Australia and internationally. She has also lectured and tutored extensively.

As stated in *Design & Art Australia Online*:<sup>4</sup> “Thomas’s geometric works seek to synthesise representations of the Aboriginal petroglyphs ... and symbolic interpretations of the European structures that frame Aboriginal experience.”

A few years ago at this annual gathering, Judith-Rose said: “Mannalargenna is our grandfather, and his spirit is still roaming this land.”<sup>5</sup>

Annie Ellis, whose ancestral grandfather is Mannalargenna,<sup>6</sup> has works that are imbued with sadness and sorrow, but equally with the strength of survival and belonging, and with unbroken and unbreakable continuity.

Annie Ellis vividly depicts this in her naked female figures, dancing in mist and wearing only bright red felt ochre-inspired hats. These were the Aboriginal women, the Tyerelore, who developed their own unique culture in the tough conditions of the Furneaux islands, including the red hats.

Annie is a member of the Tasmanian Briggs family.

Artist Lisa Kennedy is a descendant of the Trawlwoolway people of Northeast Tasmania. Born in Melbourne, Lisa is a graduate of the prestigious Victorian College of the Arts. She is highly respected in publishing, as an author and illustrator of many children’s books. She has most recently illustrated the enchanting *Sea Country*, written by Aunty Patsy Cameron.

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<sup>4</sup> [Judith-Rose Thomas :: biography at :: at Design and Art Australia Online \(daao.org.au\)](#), accessed 26 November 2022.

<sup>5</sup> [Mannalargenna Day 2019: Tasmanian Aboriginal culture celebrated with 600 people in North-East | The Examiner | Launceston, TAS](#), accessed 28 November 2022.

<sup>6</sup> First paragraph of Annie Ellis bio of the official artists’ bios document supplied by Jo Cameron.

This publication is shortlisted for the 2022 Tasmanian Literary Awards in the category Young Readers and Children. The winners will be announced later this month. Lisa's free-form illustrations are light in touch, and exquisitely linked, in a meaningful way, with Patsy's delightful text.

The shortlisting judges note that the book utilises a “powerful interconnection of word and image to transport readers into explorations of deep connections with landscape and country.”<sup>7</sup>

Burnie-born Belinda Casey is a proud palawa woman. Her ancestral grandmother is Fanny Smith. Belinda was a 2018 Fine Arts Honours graduate of the University of Tasmania in 2018. As such, she may be described as an emerging visual artist. However, perhaps that's no longer the case! Belinda was a selected finalist in this year's Hadley's Art Prize, for the best portrayal of the Australian landscape.<sup>8</sup>

Festival Friends, we can all see that this exhibition shows a collection of cultural treasures: kelp water carriers, baskets, shell necklaces, and hunting implements, all made by Tasmanian Aboriginal Elders and Cultural Artists.

On this significant Mannalargenna Day, I now have great pleasure in formally opening the 2022 Tebrakunna Art Exhibition.

Thank you.

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<sup>7</sup>[https://www.arts.tas.gov.au/tasliteraryawards/prizes/Minister\\_for\\_the\\_Arts\\_Prize\\_for\\_Books\\_for\\_Young\\_Readers\\_and\\_Children](https://www.arts.tas.gov.au/tasliteraryawards/prizes/Minister_for_the_Arts_Prize_for_Books_for_Young_Readers_and_Children), accessed 29 November 2022.

<sup>8</sup>[About - Hadley's Art Prize \(hadleysartprize.com.au\)](http://www.hadleysartprize.com.au), accessed 29 November 2022.