

**MIGRANT RESOURCE CENTRE (NORTHERN TASMANIA) INC  
REMARKS BY  
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC  
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA  
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, WEDNESDAY 14 DECEMBER 2022**

Good morning and I warmly welcome you to Government House. I hope you enjoyed your tour of this wonderful building.

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 continued connection to land, sea, and waters. I acknowledge the impacts of colonisation upon our First People and commit to a future that listens to and respects Aboriginal stories, culture and history.

And may I acknowledge among us:

- Tim Ault, DFAT Tasmania Office
- Ella Dixon, MRC North CEO
- Jane Gaetani-Black, MRC North Vice-Chair
- Frank Madill, MRC North Ambassador.

May I thank all staff members, volunteers, community leaders, stakeholders and supporters for your dedication and contributions to the Migrant Resource Centre. You have all ensured that the centre continues to thrive as an important part of Tasmania's social and culturally diverse identity.

This reception celebrates the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Migrant Resource Centre North, your branch having been established in Launceston in 1982.

Research on the origins of MRCs in Australia is both interesting and revealing. In 1974, a Victorian Labor politician Tom Roper, and a colleague, Robert Fordham, released a plan to remould the Victorian education system to accommodate two key areas of need. First, the plan considered it vital that children appreciate, quote, "the cultural and linguistic diversity that exists in Australia today", end quote.

Secondly, the plan also had the objective of the elimination of discrimination against migrant children in State schools.

This plan in part was modelled on a program then in existence in Toronto in Canada, which probably coined the term “migrant resource centres”, from which both teachers and materials were sent out to all schools.<sup>1</sup>

Later, a 1976 study by the ACT Council of Social Services found that because of the many problems faced by adult non-English speaking immigrants, and quote again:

“The end result is alienation and tension in the family and a tendency for the children, under pressure from their teachers and their peers, to reject their mother tongue and culture.”<sup>2</sup>

Well, nearly half a century on and those “children” are mainstays of Australia’s dynamic cultural life. Our efforts, as a community, to promote a genuinely multi-cultural community are progressing.

Today, we are much more one community, thanks to MRCs nationwide. Your MRC North has long been most successful in settling migrants and refugees in Tasmania’s north and north-west.

In your 2020-21 Annual Report, I note that approximately 300 people are welcomed and assisted each year and come from a range of countries.<sup>3</sup>

As your Governor and on behalf of all Tasmanians, I thank you all for providing settlement services, for working with our migrants, individuals and families and for providing valuable community, and special projects. Congratulations on your 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Now we will have the pleasure of listening to Monique Brumby and then some lunch.

Thank you. David ... [introduces Monique]

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<sup>1</sup> *The Australian Jewish News* (Melbourne), Friday 29 November 1974 page 3.

<sup>2</sup> *The Canberra Times*, Saturday 24 July 1976, page 9.

<sup>3</sup> *Migrant Resource Centre Northern Tasmania Annual Report 2020-21*, page 01.