

AUSTRALIAN WOODEN BOAT FESTIVAL 2023
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, THURSDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2023

[Vice-Regal Salute is played]

Good evening. I warmly welcome you all to this reception to mark the 2023 Australian Wooden Boat Festival.

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.

May I acknowledge among us:

- the Honourable Nic Street MP, Minister for Hospitality and Events
- Junji Shimada, Consul General of Japan, and Mrs Kaoru Shimada
- Kim Clifford, Honorary Consul for Japan in Tasmania
- John Bertrand, Australian Wooden Boat Festival Patron
- Maël Terry, Fêtes maritimes de Douarnenez
- Joy Phillips, AWBF Board Chair, and fellow Board members
- Paul Stephanus, AWBF General Manager
- Commander Mark Tandy, Commanding Officer, Naval Headquarters Tasmania
- Kate Dean, TasPorts, Principal Partner
- Graeme and Rob Foale of the Governor's beautiful Huon pine 80-year-old launch, ML *Egeria*, and the Motor Yacht Club of Tasmania.

Hobart is very fortunate to host the Australian Wooden Boat Festival, the largest festival of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere with a huge international reputation. During the Festival, our city, beneath kunanyi, becomes a place of pilgrimage for wooden boat enthusiasts from around the world.

Tasmania maintains our enviable reputation for building and operating wooden boats. Many traditional boat-building skills continue to be practised and taught here. Our Festival is an established and successful celebration of wooden boats, appreciating both the beauties of the timbers that go into them and the expertise of their builders.

I believe that recent Festivals have recorded visitor numbers around the one hundred thousand mark. About half these visitors are from interstate and some from overseas. Many of these Festival visitors stay on afterwards to visit many other of our island's attractions and services.

Since our first Australian Wooden Boat Festival in 1994, visitor nations have included Japan, Indonesia, the Netherlands and the USA, as well as significant representations from the UK and New Zealand.

The Festival has also become a prime exhibition event on the calendars of many maritime companies and organisations. An impressive over 80 maritime businesses are featured this year.

The Festival is also a marvellous social event, with significant community input from over 400 volunteers. I thank all the volunteers for your tireless efforts and commitment to making the Festival possible for us all.

The Tasmanian Government has provided support for the festival since its inception. Our Government's ongoing funding – and the support of nearly thirty corporate and other partners – means the Festival remains a free event for the public. This is important and ensures everyone can enjoy and learn about the nature of traditional wooden boat-building and boating.

May I congratulate everyone who has chosen to be part of our Festival, with 450 wooden boats, eleven Tall Ships and a brilliant social program over the three days. I look forward to attending the Australian National Maritime Museum Wooden Boat Symposium on Saturday morning, where I will have the honour of providing the opening address.

Congratulations again to everyone associated with the 2023 Australian Wooden Boat Festival. I wish you every success for this Festival.

Thank you. David ...

[invites Joy Phillips, Chair, or John Bertrand, Patron, to respond]