

**BLUELINE LAUNDRY 130<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY RECEPTION**  
**REMARKS BY**  
**HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC**  
**GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA**  
**GOVERNMENT HOUSE BALL ROOM, TUESDAY 14 FEBRUARY 2023**

Good evening everyone. I warmly welcome you all to Government House. Tonight, we celebrate another historic milestone in the life of Blueline Laundry, your 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

You have not only provided quality commercial laundry services, but have also provided safe, supportive, meaningful employment for people with a disability or experiencing disadvantage, for migrants, and people who have experienced trauma. It is my honour to be here with you as we mark this momentous occasion.

I begin by paying 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.

I would like to acknowledge among us here tonight:

- Amber Mignot, representing the Honourable Elise Archer, Attorney-General
- Kathryn Westwood, Chair, Blueline Laundry Board
- Members of the Blueline Laundry Board
- Michael Sylvester, CEO, Blueline Laundry
- The Honourable Eric Abetz
- Supporters and staff of Blueline Laundry

Blueline Laundry was founded in 1893 by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd as BayView Laundry at the Magdalen Home, Mount St Canice, to provide employment for disadvantaged women and girls. A change of venue to Creek Road and name to Blueline Laundry occurred in 1996.

Over the past century, Blueline Laundry has faced many, many challenges; a serious boiler accident; rebuilding operations; changes in technology and machinery; changes in workplace legislation, and more recently, COVID-19. You have adapted to all these challenges and continued the success of Blueline Laundry. You have upheld your aim to provide meaningful and supported employment for your employees.

A newspaper article from 1898 provides a glimpse into the operations of your laundry and what it was like to work there for employees. I quote: ‘I visited the laundry with its steam appliances and came face to face with the girl engineer in charge of the machinery; then on into the ironing room, where some thirty girls are at work. A pretty sight that room was, for in the smile they bestowed upon the sisters as they passed through there was all the indication of that grateful love of a child to a parent [...]. On I went through the sitting room, workrooms, and apartments, where heaps and heaps of clean linen was ready for return to customers by the delivery cart’.<sup>1</sup>

Your work output today achieves “heaps and heaps” more high-quality laundry outputs. Your workforce is diverse; most importantly you employ many with a disability. It is truly impressive that your stated purpose to use labour instead of machines to create jobs has been successful. You employ “about 2.5 times more people than a for-profit laundry of equivalent size.”<sup>2</sup>

Also impressive is your investment in the best sustainable technology to reduce energy and gas consumption, and atmospheric steam and heat emissions.<sup>3</sup>

Recently I had the privilege to visit and learn about your Blueline Laundry facility in Hobart. I have never seen so much laundry in my life...thankfully I was not asked to get to work! Although, I was given the opportunity to try my hand at folding towels on the towel folding machine. Not as easy as it looks; I was pretty hopeless! But not as bad as my husband.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/233013331?searchTerm=BayView%20Laundry>

<sup>2</sup> Email dated 2 June 2022 from Michael Sylvester to Government House.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.blueline-laundry.com/sustainability>.

You have introduced many, many changes in automation, technology and machinery. Still, you have maintained a high morale. The employees I talked with informed me of their satisfaction in their work.

I also note that some of your employees have remained with Blueline Laundry for up to 35 years! A testament to the quality of support and care you extend to your employees. I acknowledge your achievements.

So, tonight as we celebrate Blueline Laundry's historic 130-year milestone, I would like to commend and thank you for your unwavering support of your employees. I acknowledge your strong commitment to providing opportunities for your employees, demonstrating a respect for their skills and abilities, regardless of background.

Your 130 years is a history of commitment and is an example of the positive social and economic impact that a business can have in our community. My sincere congratulations to you all on 130 years of successful and caring operations.

Thank you.