

24th INTERNATIONAL SEAWEED SYMPOSIUM
SPEECH BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
HOTEL GRAND CHANCELLOR, HOBART
MONDAY 20 FEBRUARY 2023

Thank you [for HE introduction]. Good morning and a warm welcome to you all, with a special Tasmanian welcome to those from interstate and overseas.

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.

May I offer my congratulations, as Governor, to Co-Chairs Professors Catriona Hurd and Michael Borowitzka and everyone who has worked with them in planning and organising this 24th International Seaweed Symposium (ISS). Your Symposium is exceptional in its reach and variety, with hundreds of concurrent sessions, workshops, and exhibitions over six days.

The significance of this being the first ISS to be hosted in Australia is noteworthy. May I acknowledge the Tasmanian Government and the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) for their major involvement in sponsoring and hosting this Symposium, together with the nearly 30 sponsors and partners from the public and private sectors.

Just last month our IMAS hosted the International Temperate Reefs Symposium here in Hobart; and last weekend our waterfront was a buzz of activity over the three days of our biennial International Wooden Boat Festival, the biggest of its kind in the southern hemisphere.

Tasmania is the world's 26th largest island, around the size of Sri Lanka. Where Sri Lanka has a population of 22 million, Tasmania has about 550,000. Our island story is complex, and of course ancient.

It has 40,000 years of continuous Aboriginal heritage and culture. The Aboriginal population diminished over a period of 30 years during a period of conflicts, especially during the Black War in the 1820s to 30s and the spread of infectious diseases. Today, we have around 30,000 people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander living in Tasmania.¹

Our island of Tasmania is the last remnant of the ancient continent of Gondwanaland, with a legacy of complex geology – we have our planet’s largest exposure of dolerite, a stunning example being the Organ Pipes rocks on the face of our kunanyi/Mount Wellington.

Today, about 45% of our total Tasmanian land area is protected within National Parks, reserves and the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, the latter which covers almost 20 percent of the island, including many Aboriginal sites.²

We have eleven major lakes and about 3000 smaller ones, many of which are in our central highlands and are called tarns.

Tasmania has long been recognised as the principal gateway to Antarctica, and the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic and Marine Living Resources Secretariat is headquartered here.

May I conclude that brief sketch of our lovely island and wish you all and especially those on their first visit to our State a most successful, stimulating, enjoyable and productive Symposium.

Thank you.

¹ <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples/census-population-and-housing-counts-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-australians/latest-release>

accessed 19 February 2023.

² [The Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Areas | Discover Tasmania](#), accessed 19 May 2022.