

**LIBRARIES TASMANIA  
TASMANIA READS WEEK 2023  
REMARKS BY  
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC  
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA  
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, THURSDAY 9 MARCH 2023**

Good evening. I warmly welcome you all to this reception to mark and celebrate Tasmania Reads Week.

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 enduring culture and connection to land, sea and waters. I acknowledge the impact of colonisation upon our First People and commit to a future that respects and acknowledges Aboriginal stories, culture, language and history.

May I acknowledge among us:

- The Honourable Elise Archer MP, Minister for the Arts
- Dean Young MP
- Sue McKerracher, Executive Director Libraries Tasmania
- L J Owen, Terror Australis Festival Director and short story competition convenor
- Leanne McLean, Commissioner for Children and Young People
- and of course, our short story writers here this evening

I shall be brief in my remarks as we have excitement ahead of us, with the announcement of our short story competition winners.

As you will hear shortly from Sue, Tasmania Reads Week is part of Australia Reads Week, which has the most significant aim of encouraging reading.

Earlier this week, I enjoyed participating in a reading session at Rosny Library. I read Lian Tanner's *Ella and the Ocean* to about 50 children aged between five and eight. The children listened politely before embarking on some paper boat building.

I read regularly to and with my grandchildren. Their interest and attention to the text and images reminds me only too clearly how important engagement with books is for young children.

May I mention images that Government House has embarked on in an outreach project with Tasmanian state primary schools. We send them a range of images from our contemporary Government House photographic collection. We also send art supplies and canvas boards. The artworks they create are returned and we frame and display them.

Like the short stories your writers have produced, these artworks are both educational and creative. The more that we can show young people that reading and writing outside the classroom is fun and rewarding, the less our young people are likely to struggle academically.

My congratulations to Libraries Tasmania for organising and presenting this high profile and successful Tasmania Reads Week 2023.

And to L J Owen and colleagues – Terror Australis festival staff, competition judges, and Libraries Tasmania staff involved, may I commend you all on this initiative, now in its fourth year.

We look forward to seeing the anthology of stories in print later this year. You can be sure that we shall be purchasing a few copies for the Government House Library.

Thank you. David ...

[invites Sue to respond; then LJ to announce winners]