

**MULTICULTURAL COUNCIL OF TASMANIA
HARMONY WEEK 2023
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, THURSDAY 16 MARCH 2023**

Good evening. I warmly welcome you all to this reception to celebrate Harmony Week 2023.

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 impacts 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
- The Honourable Nic Street MP
- The Honourable Josh Willie MLC
- Ella Haddad MP
- Councillor the Honourable Dick Adams OAM, Northern Midlands Council
- Dattaraj Mahambrey, Chair, Multicultural Council of Tasmania, and all MCOT Board members
- Gillian Long, CEO Migrant Resource Centre
- representatives of many cultural organisations
- and the EDMB band members who will entertain us later.

Firstly, may I wish you all a very warm welcome to Government House. This multicultural event is a wonderful acknowledgement and celebration of how our people of all cultures can and do live together in harmony: which makes the name of the week so appropriate.

Our Australian Government's Department of Home Affairs drives these celebrations and makes the point that Harmony Week recognises diversity and inclusion. Harmony Week incorporates the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which is Wednesday 21st March.

Orange is the colour chosen to represent Harmony Week, as traditionally, orange signifies social communication and meaningful conversations. Orange also embraces the freedom of ideas and the encouragement of mutual respect. We can all choose to wear something orange during Harmony Week to show our support for cultural diversity and an inclusive Australia. So, let's check out our wardrobes for some orange-inspired colouring next week!

May I share some statistics about our population:

- 49 per cent of Australians were born overseas or have one parent who was;
- since 1945, more than 7.5 million people have migrated to Australia;
- apart from English, the most common languages spoken in Australia are Mandarin, Arabic, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Italian, Greek, Tagalog/Filipino, Hindi, Spanish and Punjabi;
- more than 70 Indigenous languages are spoken in Australia; and significantly,
- 85 per cent of Australians agree multiculturalism has been good for our country.¹

Australia's modern multicultural growth has been acknowledged internationally and welcomed by us all. This is not to deny that we have faced some issues and problems on our multicultural journey to inclusion. We have pockets of intolerance, but the vast majority of us are proud of multiculturalism and say, as one, with pride: "Advance Australia fair."

A fair go is in our collective identity. We should celebrate this during our Harmony Week.

¹ These facts are taken from ABS 2016 Census Data.

May I thank you all, and for your membership of all our Tasmanian organisations and societies that uphold our cultural values and do so much to enrich our community.

Thank you.

David ... [invites Nic Street to the lectern]