

**RECEPTION FOR DELEGATES ATTENDING THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF
THE NATIONAL BISHOPS OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, FRIDAY 17 MARCH 2023**

Good evening. I warmly welcome you all to this reception for delegates attending your annual conference of the National Bishops of the Anglican Church of Australia.

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:

- Primate and Archbishop of Adelaide, the Most Reverend Geoffrey Smith
- Bishop of Tasmania, the Right Reverend Dr Richard Condie
- and Archbishops and Bishops of other Dioceses throughout Australia

It is a pleasure to welcome you all here. For many of you, this will be your first visit to Government House Tasmania, so may I make a brief comment on its history.

This house is considered to be the one of the finest examples of neo-Gothic revival architecture and is the largest of its type. Of course, some of your oldest cathedrals are also examples of this style.

Built from 1855, after a number of delays, with stone quarried on site and Tasmanian timbers throughout, Government House was first occupied when Governor Sir Henry Fox Young and his family took up residence in January 1858. Some internal finishing was completed over the following two years.

I hope you take an opportunity to look through our State Rooms after the formalities this evening.

Each year your Primate calls Bishops together for a four-day leadership meeting. I am pleased that Bishops from all 23 Dioceses of the Anglican Church in Australia are meeting in Hobart this year. I believe this is the first time that your annual conference of Bishops has been held in Tasmania.

I therefore congratulate Bishop Richard Condie and his organising team for hosting your conference here.

I note that your official conference program includes bible study and prayer, and an opportunity for professional development. This year you will have a focus on Moral Decision Making and First Nations Awareness. I wish you all the best in your formal ecclesiastical discussions.

I am sure that you will all be moved by Professor Tim McCormack's address to your conference dinner tomorrow night on our Tasmanian Aboriginal Story.

I hope that you have time to enjoy our beautiful State. To give you a brief sketch, 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 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.

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.

Today, about 45% of our total Tasmanian land area is protected within National Parks, reserves and the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. The latter covers almost 20 percent of the island and includes 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. The Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic and Marine Living Resources Secretariat is headquartered here.

May I conclude by again wishing you all the best with your conference. Please enjoy your reception.

Thank you.

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