

ARTWORK AND BOOK LAUNCHES
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, THURSDAY 27 APRIL 2023

Thank you, Cody. [Cody Summers provides Welcome to Country]

Good afternoon. I warmly welcome you all to Government House for this unique dual artwork and book launch.

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.

May I acknowledge among us:

- family and friends of Belinda Casey, including members of the Aboriginal community from across the island
- former governor Kate Warner and Dick Warner
- Julie Hawkins, designer of *We Live at Government House*

In a minute, we shall hear from Belinda Casey and Leisha Owen.

Regarding our artworks, Government House Tasmania and TMAG have enjoyed a long relationship, with TMAG artworks displayed here on long-term loan.

In addition, Government House owns approximately 60 artworks. This collection has grown since the late 19th century, mostly from donations and gifts.

Early in my term, I decided to review and enhance our collection, not only through continued TMAG loans, but also by purchasing Tasmanian artworks.

We shall very soon be swapping some of our older TMAG loans for more contemporary TMAG works. These have been selected and will be hung soon.

Significantly, we are delighted to have made our first Government House contemporary purchase: artist Belinda Casey's *Strong Place, Strong Baskets*. As you see, this work is jointly titled in Tebrakunna, the language of North-Eastern Tasmania.

I first saw and much admired this work at Mannalargenna Day. It now has its permanent home here.

May I now turn to our second launch, Leisha Owen's illustrated children's book *We Live at Government House*. There is a story behind this story, which is rather interesting.

In 2018, a Tasmanian children's book author accepted a commission to write and illustrate a book about Government House. That commission progressed for some time, but the author then withdrew.

Later in 2019, another Tasmanian children's book author was commissioned. That too progressed, but again the author had to withdraw.

Fortunately, Leisha, who is a long-time artist, volunteered to take on the work. We are very pleased that she did. She has created this beautifully illustrated first Government House Tasmania children's book. You will notice that all the scenes are outside. Happily, an indoors sequel is now underway.

David, over to you ...

[David invites Belinda to the lectern ... and then Leisha]