

**LOAVES AND FISHES TASMANIA ROKEBY KITCHEN OPENING  
SPEECH BY  
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC  
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA  
THE GRACE CENTRE, ROKEBY, THURSDAY 27 JULY 2023**

Thank you, Demort. [*HE introduced by MC, Mr Demort Cotuli, Senior Pastor, Grace Church Rokeby*]

I begin by paying 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 continued connection to land, sea and waters.

I am delighted to be part of this official grand opening of the new Rokeby Kitchen of Loaves and Fishes Tasmania. It is a testament to your energy, culinary creativity and commitment that this is taking place just five years – to the month – of your Devonport founding in July 2018, and that Loaves and Fishes now distributes about 60 per cent of Tasmania’s emergency food relief.

We know too that your originating story is not that much older, when in 2014 the two ‘A-s’ – Aaron and Andrew – got together to do something about food waste, school breakfast programs and cooking help for families unable to do it for themselves. What an important and valuable initiative, and you and your colleagues and all volunteers are to be congratulated.

But Loaves and Fishes does more than feed thousands of vulnerable Tasmanians and rescue tonnes of surplus food from waste. You also provide employment for vulnerable young Tasmanians interested in hospitality and cooking; cater for a range of corporate functions and community events; and partner with leading brands to produce food for-profit to fund your emergency food relief work.

I congratulate you all on what you do for our Tasmanian communities.

At Government House, we are also committed to helping our fellow Tasmanians with that most basic need – food that is fresh and healthy.

Our association with Loaves and Fishes is quite recent. As the inaugural Patrons of Toast for Kids, last August, Don and I attended a Charity Gala Ball in Devonport. Loaves and Fishes were the recipient of the funds raised. At that Ball, I first met one of the two Andrews, CEO Andrew Hillier. We spoke about food security and Andrew mentioned the proposed new southern production kitchen here at Rokeby. At the end of August, Don and I attended the Taste and See preview event [here](#).

Around the same time, at Government House, we were considering a community garden project. We joined Eat Well Tasmania and School Food Matters to establish our Community Garden. Our first planting occurred in December last year. An innovative program resulted with the involvement of Carl Saunder, Julie Dunbabin, Ainstie Wagner, our Executive Chef and Community Engagement Facilitator, and her Kitchen Team, Tara Edmondson, our Estate Gardens Manager, and her Garden Team. Loaves and Fishes also became involved in the project after Ainstie met with Andrew and Aaron to discuss the School Lunch Project.

Produce from our Community Garden collected weekly supports this Lunch Project. There are currently 7,500 healthy nutritious meals being provided to 30 schools around Tasmania weekly.<sup>1</sup>

At Government House, we also provide opportunities for school-based and full-time trainees to see the work being done in our garden. Shortly, students from Bayview College will come fortnightly to gain skills in growing and cooking local healthy food.

So, I am delighted to be part of this grand opening. As the projects develop and expand, particularly now with the opening of this Rokeby kitchen, more Tasmanians will benefit.

To everyone at Loaves and Fishes, many congratulations, and we look forward to working together well into the future. Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> Email from Aaron Kropf to9 Ainstie Wagner dated 24/7/2023.