

**TASMANIAN BUDGERIGAR SOCIETY 90<sup>TH</sup> ANIVERSARY**  
**ANNUAL WINTER SHOW**  
**ADDRESS BY**  
**HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC**  
**GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA**  
**KENSINGTON HALL, GLENORCHY, SATURDAY 24 JUNE 2023**

Good afternoon. It is a pleasure to be here today, both to mark the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tasmanian Budgerigar Society and to close your Annual Winter Show.

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 continued connection to land, sea and waters.

To reach your milestone, 90 years, is a testament to the enthusiasm of your club. Your members have shared these years with your budgerigars since 1933. I understand that your society is the longest established budgerigar enthusiasts club in Australia, and possibly the entire Southern Hemisphere. That is a marvellous achievement!

Preparing for this speech, I have learnt that budgerigars are so much more than colourful pets; they are intelligent, social creatures that have the special ability to bring joy and companionship. I have also learned that budgies are monogamous; that when their partner dies, their behaviour changes; and that they have a high level of emotional intelligence.

I have also learned that budgies can see ultraviolet light; have an exceptionally high image processing frame rate compared to us humans , and can fly up to 100km in a single flight.<sup>1</sup>

I have also learned, on further investigation, that there is a link between royalty, budgerigars, and Tasmania.

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<sup>1</sup>

Budgerigars first arrived in England in 1840, which I have no doubt you all know. John Gould and his wife and illustrator, Elizabeth, returned from Australia with a pair of budgerigars, which were among a small number of birds to survive the long journey back in the hull of the barque, *Kinnear*.

John and Elizabeth had travelled to Hobart and stayed with Sir John and Lady Franklin. As she was pregnant, Elizabeth remained in Hobart at the old Government House for 11 months. She illustrated John's research with pictures of Australian birds, whilst John travelled to the mainland researching and recording other Australian birds.<sup>2</sup>

We do not know if Elizabeth's illustrations were ultimately published in John Gould's very famous book, *Birds of Australia*.<sup>3</sup>

We do know that, being a rare and beautiful creature at the time, Queen Victoria was gifted a pair of budgerigars in 1845. From that time, England could not get enough of these beautiful birds; they became collectible items, especially with the aristocracy. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, budgies were being exported from South Australia in high quantities.

On one occasion, Mr Foglia, South Australia's leading bird trader, sold an amazing 16,000 budgerigars to a single dealer! Mr Foglia remarked "it took three of us three days from 7 o'clock in the morning to 7 o'clock at night to count them!". In the following years, Mr Foglia exported up to 40,000 budgies a year. Later, export was banned in 1894 to protect the species.<sup>4</sup>

The fever of excitement surrounding budgerigars in England did not abate. The Budgerigar Club was formed in Great Britain in 1925. Most of the founding members were from the aristocracy. In 1930, the Budgerigar Club invited King George V to be Patron of the Club. King George had his own budgies, kept in an aviary at Sandringham. His Majesty accepted the invitation on the

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<sup>2</sup> <https://australian.museum/learn/collections/museum-archives-library/john-gould/elizabeth-gould-1804-1841/#:~:text=John%20Gould%20was%20reportedly%20devastated,publications%2C%20he%20would%20never%20remarry.>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.australiangeographic.com.au/topics/wildlife/2020/07/budgerigars-australias-colourful-clever-and-much-loved-avian-gift-to-the-world/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.adelaidenow.com.au/lifestyle/sa-weekend/sa-weekend-south-australias-littleknown-role-in-taking-the-humble-budgerigar-to-the-world/news-story/bc786b8c6891295a6317920504536f2d>

condition that the title of the “Club” be changed to the Budgerigar Society. This duly occurred. King George remained Patron of the Society until his death in 1936.<sup>5</sup>

The royal connection has continued. The late Queen Elizabeth was gifted a pair of budgerigars as a child. Those birds expanded to a flock of over 100 budgies. They were kept as free flying birds that returned to their cages at Windsor Castle, as and when they wished.<sup>6</sup> From this history, I can now appreciate that there is a clear connection between the Crown and the budgie.

For 90 years, members of your Tasmanian Budgerigar Society and fellow budgerigar enthusiasts have come together at regular meetings to show your birds, exchange knowledge and expertise, and learn from each other. Your Society has provided a valuable resource for new members and has offered guidance on nutrition, housing and socialisation techniques.

Your Society is committed to promoting responsible ownership and ensuring the happiness and wellbeing of budgerigars.

I shall shortly have the great pleasure of presenting the major awards for your 2023 Tasmanian Budgerigar Society Annual Winter Show.

Before this, may I congratulate you on your significant milestone of 90 years. It is an historic and fine achievement!

### **Closing remarks for Annual Winter Show**

Thank you for including me in your Annual Winter Show. Thank you also for a wonderful afternoon, getting to know your beautiful birds, and of course, you all.

It is now my great pleasure to announce that the 2023 Tasmanian Budgerigar Society Annual Winter Show is now closed.

Thank you.

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<sup>5</sup> Communication between Mr Steve Walkley and ADC 9 June 2023

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.vogue.co.uk/arts-and-lifestyle/article/inside-windsor-castle#:~:text=Her%20Majesty%20first%20received%20a,more%20than%20100%20colourful%20birds.>