

**LAUNCH OF THE
GOVERNMENT HOUSE COMMUNITY GARDEN PROJECT
ADDRESS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, WEDNESDAY 30 AUGUST 2023**

Good morning, everyone, and a warm welcome to you all to the launch of the Government House Community Garden project in partnership with Eat Well Tasmania, Loaves and Fishes Tasmania, and School Food Matters, a significant and worthwhile community initiative.

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.

This community garden project is a team effort.

I thank Carl Saunder and his team from Eat Well Tasmania for all you do in Tasmania to encourage healthy eating. I also thank Andrew Hillier and his team from Loaves and Fishes Tasmania for providing meals to communities in need and providing employment and volunteering opportunities for students.

Also, thank you to Julie Dunbabin and her team from School Food Matters for providing school children with hot healthy lunches.

This community garden initiative not only provides produce to community groups and programs, but also involves school students, who will learn about planting, growing and harvesting vegetables and herbs, and will take this knowledge home.

They will also gain valuable experience in volunteering and learn about community food distribution.

This project would not have been realised without the efforts of our Government House team. First, I thank Ainstie Wagner, who has connected us with community organisations that will use our garden and produce and ensure benefit to the community. Thank you also to Ainstie and her team for all the meals you cook for our community.

Second, I thank Tara Edmonson and her team for their expertise and hard work ensuring successful planting and plentiful produce. You will also work with and guide student volunteers.

Coincidentally, tonight Government House is hosting a book launch of three books for the University of Tasmania and the Peter Underwood Centre. One book is co-authored by six researchers associated with the Peter Underwood Centre, titled *Education and Equity in Times of Crisis*. As I was preparing for the launch of the books, I came across a section headed, "School Meal Programs" and the benefits of them. It reads with references to research... "The provision of school meal programs and participation of children and young people in these programs are associated with a wide range of benefits that can "positively impact social, behavioural and educational outcomes for children."

So, research recognises the benefits of school-based meal programs, like our School Food Matters program.

In conclusion, may I thank you all for being here today for this launch and we all look forward to seeing our community garden grow and flourish.