

**PAKISTANI AUSTRALIAN CULTURAL ORGANISATION
76TH ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE DAY OF PAKISTAN
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, THURSDAY 17 AUGUST 2023**

[Vice-Regal Salute is played]

Good evening and a very warm welcome to this reception to mark the 76th Anniversary of the Independence Day of Pakistan, 14th August 1947.

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.

Don and I are very pleased to host members and friends of the Pakistani Australian Cultural Organisation to celebrate this significant occasion. As many of you will know, we also enjoyed marking your 75th celebration last year.

Pakistan's links with Government House extend back to 1947. In October of that year, the then Governor, Sir Hugh Binney, and Lady Elizabeth Binney hosted a visit by Pakistan's first Trade Commissioner in Australia, Mr A. D. Azhar.¹ He was part of a delegation visiting Tasmania for the United Nations International Week.

A few years later in 1951, a rather unique event took place. The Governor and Lady Binney attended a dinner hosted by the High Commissioner of Pakistan, here in Hobart. That dinner took place aboard the Pakistani frigate, HMPS *Shamsher* which, together with its companion vessel HMPS *Sind*, was berthed on our waterfront.

¹ *The Mercury*, Monday 13 October 1947, page 5.

The vessels were paying a Jubilee visit to Hobart as part of a combined fleet representing Australian and Commonwealth warships. It was a large fleet. In total, there were more than three thousand five hundred personnel. Receptions, dances, tournaments and other entertainments were arranged for them while in Hobart.

A *Mercury* newspaper article stated, and I quote: “A thousand young women are wanted as partners for the naval ratings.”!²

Governor Binny entertained the fleet officers, here in the Ball Room. We can reflect back on those social occasions, when your country was still newly independent.

Today, Pakistan is a thriving member of the Commonwealth of Nations. It was a founding member of the modern organisation in 1949 with the UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, India, and then-Ceylon.³

In Tasmania, your community is vibrant. As your PACO [Pakistani Australian Cultural Organisation] Chair, Huzaifa Fakhruddin, said in requesting this reception, your Board members are working to bring together “Australian and Pakistani culture in our local community.”⁴

Your Chair also said that PACO is “a beacon of unity and diversity, bringing together people from all walks of life, with a mission to foster a deep sense of community among Pakistani Australians and to facilitate a rich exchange of cultural experiences between Pakistan and Australia.

“[This is achieved] through various events, programs, and initiatives, the organisation striving to strengthen cultural ties, promote mutual respect, and celebrate the unique heritage and traditions of both nations.”⁵

² *The Mercury*, Wednesday 28 February 1951, page 8.

³ [What Is the British Commonwealth? - Commonwealth History \(townandcountrymag.com\)](https://www.townandcountrymag.com), accessed 16 August 2023.

⁴ March 2023 email to admin@govhouse.tas.gov.au.

⁵ Huzaifa email to David Owen 16 August 2023.

PACO, as a relatively new organisation, actively engages in promoting cultural festivals and events; community outreach; and networking and support.⁶

Tasmania is fortunate to have a growing and diverse multicultural community. That harmony here is exemplified through the operations of our Multicultural Council of Tasmania, of which Huzaifa is a Board member.

May I conclude by observing that Government House regularly hosts official visits by High Commissioners and Ambassadors, who are resident in Canberra. They enjoy visiting Tasmania, not only to discuss business and other opportunities, but also to enjoy our magnificent scenery.

When these diplomats visit, they stay here for two nights, in our grand Royal Suite. In most other States, they stay in hotels. So, the experience here is not to be missed.

The previous visit of a High Commissioner for Pakistan, Mr Abdul Malik Abdullah, was in 2013. So – with our Tasmanian Pakistani community developing, perhaps we might be able to enjoy and mutually benefit from another official visit before too long.

Now, please enjoy this reception marking and celebrating the 76th Anniversary of the Independence of Pakistan.

Thank you.

⁶ Ibid.