

**RECEPTION TO MARK THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE FOUNDING OF THE HOBART IONIAN CLUB
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
BALL ROOM, TUESDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2023**

VICE-REGAL SALUTE

Good evening, everyone, and a very warm welcome to Government House for this reception to mark the 75th anniversary of the founding of our Hobart Ionian Club.

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.

As you know, the first Ionian Club was founded in 1946 in Launceston by Phyllis McDonald, as a friendship group for women. On her arrival in Launceston, Phyllis felt a sense of isolation and saw a need for a club where newcomers would feel welcome and would be able to support each other and share their culture and social interests.

May I note that Phyllis McDonald's niece, Julie Roughton, is here with us this evening. She is also your President which adds to the history of this occasion.

Ionian Clubs were subsequently formed throughout Australia and were also established in Christchurch, Auckland and the UK in the late '90s and early 2000s.

Our Hobart Ionian Club was the third club to be established, following Sydney in 1948. First known as the Newcomers, the name was changed to the Interstate and Overseas Club. On 1st September 1948, the members decided to affiliate with the Ionians.¹ When preparing for this speech, I came across a history of our Hobart Ionian Club in our Government House records "condensed and potted" by Sheila E. Williams and "revised" by Jill Wilson. I discovered that I have a personal interest in tonight's event. I was surprised to read that my late mother was an original committee member in 1948. In that history document,

¹ Hobart Ionian Club, condensed and potted by S.E. Williams Hon. Secretary 1961/62 and revised by J. Wilson Hon. Secretary 1976.

a description of Ionians reads that in their lighter moments they lived it up. “They were good mixers, played a hot lyre, and also made valuable contributions to the communities into which they wandered.”²

As you all no doubt know, the Ionian name was chosen because the original Ionians were Hellenic exiles who settled on a group of Mediterranean islands that became known as Ionia and brought with them their art and culture and absorbed the new ways of the places settled. The Ionian Club was to be cultural and social and as the members would be new to the area it was thought the name Ionian would be appropriate. The Ionian Crest incorporates the lyre. “As an attribute of Apollo, the god of prophecy and [music](#), the lyre to the ancient [Greeks](#) symbolized wisdom and moderation”³ and so, with that in mind, tonight, in honour of your 75th birthday, we will shortly hear a performance, not on the lyre but on the piano, by noted pianist Ingrid Leibbrandt and vocalist Allison Farrow.

May I congratulate you on your 75 years of operation and on your contributions to our community. This is a milestone for any organisation. I look forward to the continuation of our Hobart Ionian Club over many years to come.

Please enjoy the special musical performance, and the reception.

Thank you.

² Ibid page 4.

³ <https://www.britannica/art/lyre> accessed 26/9/2023.