

LAUNCESTON HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY INC
OPENING OF THE EARLY SPRING SHOW TO MARK
THE SOCIETY'S 185TH ANNIVERSARY
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
EVANDALE MEMORIAL HALL, SATURDAY 2 SEPTEMBER 2023

Good afternoon to you all. As your Patron, may I also extend a very warm welcome to all the members of the Launceston Horticultural Society on the opening of this 185th anniversary flower 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.

Congratulations again to the winners of the Anne Williams Clark Award for Long and Outstanding Service, the Grand Champion Daffodil and the Grand Champion Camellia.

As well as being your Spring Flower Show, this event marks the 185th anniversary of the Launceston Horticultural Society (LHS). This is Australia's oldest continuously operating horticultural society. The LHS was modelled after the Royal Horticultural Society of London that emerged from the horticultural movement in England in the 18th and 19th centuries. Ronald Gunn, who had previously collected Tasmanian flora for London herbariums and gardens, was the first president of the LHS and was elected at the inaugural meeting held on 4 July 1838. The first show was held in December of that year.

It may be of interest to you that the LHS predates Government House in Hobart. The main neo-gothic building itself was completed on the current site over the period 1855 – 1858, when then Governor Sir Henry Fox Young and his family took up residence. Government House still had some final finishings to complete which took another two years.

This Government House comparison puts into perspective the longevity of the LHS.

Early objects of the Society were to ‘spread a taste and love of gardening among the rising generation’¹. Horticultural shows were one of the key ways to do that. Initially, the focus was on fruits and vegetables to support the fledgling colony. Later, the focus quickly changed to broaden the appeal of the shows. LHS members joined non-members to exhibit at shows and competition for prizes was fierce.

Despite that fact, gardeners are willing to share their knowledge, both to experienced and novice gardeners. This connects members of the community and encourages others to propagate exhibited species.

Winning a Horticultural Society prize is always an exhibitor’s aim. However, the satisfaction for exhibitors of sharing their work with others and providing a focus for social activities continues to be a major driver for the show organisers and exhibitors.

May I conclude and congratulate all members of the LHS for maintaining your long tradition of horticultural excellence with this 185th exhibition and keeping with the original objectives of your Society. 185 years is a very significant achievement for any organisation and is especially significant when the event is run by and for volunteers. I now have the great pleasure to formally declare open this 185th anniversary flower show of the Launceston Horticultural Society.

Thank you.

¹ Email Erica Maxwell / David Hughes 16 Aug 23