

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES (MAYORAL) DINNER**  
**REMARKS BY**  
**HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC**  
**GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA**  
**BALL ROOM, GOVERNMENT HOUSE, FRIDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2023**

Good evening, everyone. I warmly welcome you all to this inaugural Mayoral Dinner at Government House.

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.

It is my great pleasure and privilege to welcome you all here tonight. This gives me the opportunity to acknowledge and recognise your leadership and dedication as mayors and councillors across our 29 State municipalities.

As leaders in local government, you are responsible not only for governance, but also for community development. You are advocates for change and champions for your constituents. You understand the challenges and opportunities not only for your communities, but also for our State as a whole. Thank you all for your commitment and service to your constituents and to your communities.

As most of you are aware, I have constitutional and ceremonial roles as Governor, but my community engagement role is certainly my largest time commitment. Through community engagement, I have the opportunity and privilege to visit all our municipalities.

So far during my two years as Governor, I have visited 18. I have found that each is unique and different. I have also observed that you share a wonderful commonality of resilience and community spirit. These strengths are precious and unite our State. And on these visits, I have done many different activities, including riding in the back of a tractor, cuddling a wombat, dancing with residents of aged care facilities, reading stories to children, eating countless scones and watching my Aide eat her body weight in oysters!

In my community engagement role, I have tried to focus on some specific social and community issues. From the outset of my appointment, I have prioritised awareness on the impacts of family violence on women and children.

Through meetings and events here at Government House, I have aimed to support our Hobart Women's Shelter by hosting working groups and fundraising events. The support from local government and community members across our State at these events has been outstanding. I know that various councils have continuing discussions with the Shelter about ways to assist.

I have also placed support for young people at the centre of my community role. I have tried to emphasise education, including food education and food security.

This aligns closely with our recently launched Government House Community Garden. The garden initiative is a partnership with Eat Well Tasmania and is in conjunction with the School Food Matters Lunch Project and Loaves and Fishes Tasmania. Over 6000 lunches per week are provided to students in 30 schools.

The School Food Matters Lunch Project is important because research shows that hungry children cannot learn effectively. Through Loaves and Fishes, our produce also provides emergency food relief statewide.

Shortly, I would like to introduce our Executive Chef and Community Engagement Facilitator, Ainstie Wagner. She will briefly expand on this and other community work that Government House is engaged in and our sustainability practices.

On the same theme of using all our produce, please look at the centrepiece of your table. One of our macrocarpa cypress trees fell down during a storm and our Will Zenke used the tree wood to make these beautiful vase holders.

May I conclude by thanking you all for travelling to be here. I look forward to my remaining council visits and meeting the mayors and their communities during the next two years of my term. Tonight, please enjoy the company of your colleagues and the opportunity to connect, discuss community issues, and share ideas.

Thank you. Ainstie ...