

**140TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HOBART FIRE BRIGADE
AND PRESENTATION OF AWARDS
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
HOBART FIRE BRIGADE CLUB ROOMS, MONDAY 23 OCTOBER 2023**

Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to this celebration of the 140th anniversary of our Hobart Fire Brigade. Today, I shall also have the honour of presenting awards.

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.

We are all aware of the essential work done by our firefighters. Although many of us have never actually seen you in operation, we all know when you are needed.

Yours is an occupation that demands high levels of physical fitness and courage. May I note with sorrow that 15 firefighters have been killed or died while on duty. The first was in 1859. I am heartened by the fact that our last fatality on duty occurred in 1997.

Our Hobart Fire Brigade Board and Launceston Fire Brigade Board were established by the *Fire Brigade Act* of 1883. Each Board was allocated responsibility for the surrounding suburbs in their cities.

Both Boards had duties to, quote “establish and maintain an efficient Brigade for the extinction and suppression of fires, and for protecting life and property from loss and damage thereby...”¹

In 1885, the Report of the Hobart Fire Brigade Board to Parliament indicated that the Brigade had attended 13 fires and 10 alarms in the previous year. This activity had expended its allocation of just over £583. The Board did report, however, “their satisfaction at the zealous manner in which the men composing

¹ Section 10 Fire Brigade Act 1883.

the Brigade worked on all occasions – the fires attended by them having been got under control rapidly and efficiently.”

Our Tasmania Fire Service and the Hobart Brigade maintain those same standards that were expected and demonstrated more than a century ago.

I congratulate all here, whether career or volunteer, firefighter, or administrative staff, on reaching the significant milestone of 140 years of operation.

Shortly, I shall be presenting some awards to members of our Tasmania Fire Service. Some are awards under the Australian National Honours and Awards System. In addition, a number will be the newly approved Tasmania Fire Service Long Service Medal. Earlier this year, Chief Officer Dermot Barry approved the new Tasmania Fire Service Honours and Awards Guidelines. Those guidelines have brought our TFS into line with Tasmania Police and Ambulance Tasmania in providing the award of Long Service Medals to members who meet the defined award criteria.

Work with the Emergency Services is challenging and demanding and very different to other employment. You are expected to work whenever and wherever you are needed. You place yourselves at risk for the benefit of others and do so willingly and courageously. These new Tasmania Fire Service awards go, at least some way, towards recognising these additional responsibilities in a visible way.

May I congratulate each and all of our Tasmania Fire Service Members who will receive awards and medals today. These awards are not only well deserved, but also represent the thanks and acknowledgement of our grateful community.

Thank you.