

AFL TASMANIA
MORNING TEA TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE
TASMANIA DEVILS AFL INCLUSION TEAM 2023 AND THE
TASMANIA DEVILS WHEELCHAIR AFL TEAM 2023
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, TUESDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2023

Good morning. I warmly welcome you all to Government House for this reception on behalf of AFL Tasmania, to celebrate the achievements of our two Tasmanian teams, the Tasmania Devils AFL Inclusion team, who won the 2023 AFL National Inclusion Carnival, and the Tasmania Devils Wheelchair AFL Team, who won the 2023 Wheelchair AFL National Carnival Division 2.

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.

I was very pleased to accept the request from AFL Tasmania's Anthony Osborn to host our two AFL teams today. Our Tasmania Devils Inclusion team won the Division 1 final against South Australia in Brisbane last month.¹

You came from behind and pipped the reigning champions by four points, and in the final minute of the match. That is a classic way to win any footy game, let alone a Grand Final.²

The team was co-captained by Craig Blaschke and Justin Nilon, coached by Darrin Geard and supported and managed by AFL Tasmania's Barry Gaby and New Horizons Tasmania's Belinda Kitto.

May I extend huge congratulations to every team member, to your support staff and to your coaches and everyone involved, including New Horizons Tasmania.

¹ They won on Friday 13 October 2023.

² Anthony Osborne 16 November 2023 email to Neroli Fehlberg.

Further congratulations also go to the four players named in the All-Australian team: Craig Blaschke, Bailey Menzies, Brayden Cowell and Jordyn Blizzard, and also to Darrin Geard, who was named as coach.

I am sure that Damian Gill, Head of AFL Tasmania and Pip Leedham, New Horizons CEO [*both attending*] and colleagues are thrilled to be part of what is Tasmania's first Inclusion Carnival premiership. In fact, I am advised that this is "Tasmania's first truly national open-age Australian Football premiership ever."³

The annual Inclusion Carnival provides a memorable opportunity for athletes with an intellectual disability⁴. It is an important sporting and social occasion.

Also, congratulations and well done to the Tasmania Devils Wheelchair AFL team for winning the 2023 Toyota Wheelchair AFL National Carnival Division 2 for the first time, earlier this month. In the Grand Final, you comprehensively defeated New South Wales/ACT by 33 points in Melbourne.

Congratulations go to Josh Christian, team captain, named best afield in the Grand Final; and also to coach Joe Chivers and to every team member on a memorable victory.

May I conclude by thanking both AFL Tasmania and New Horizons Tasmania for strongly supporting these annual sporting events. And as the Governor of our State of Tasmania, I speak on behalf of all Tasmanians and say again, well done to all who played and also to all who supported the players. Two Grand Final trophies [*on display*] are terrific to bring home to our wonderful Island State!

And now Don and I look forward to chatting to you.

Thank you.

³ Anthony Osborn 23 October 2023 letter to David Owen.

⁴ The term used in Anthony's letter para 3; assume it's ok to use to the players?