

DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S GOLD AWARDS 2023
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, FRIDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2023

VICE-REGAL SALUTE

Please be seated.

Good evening, everyone. I warmly welcome you all to Government House for this year's presentation of the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards to 16 exceptional young people.

I shall also present a Long Service Award to a volunteer to recognize 10 years of service to these Awards in Tasmania.

May I begin by acknowledging the Muwinina people upon whose Country we gather this evening. We honour them and today's Tasmanian Aboriginal Community as ongoing custodians of Country. I recognise their enduring culture and continued connection to land, sea, and waters.

Prince Philip's original vision for these Awards was simple yet profound: to empower young people to challenge themselves, to discover their potential, and to become responsible citizens of the world. This program, designed to encourage personal development, community service, and outdoor exploration, has realised that vision.

These Awards have four key pillars: Skills, Volunteering, Physical Fitness, and, for Gold Awards, the Adventurous Journey. These four pillars form the foundation upon which young participants build character, resilience, and a sense of purpose.

In the Skills section, participants explore their interests, honing their abilities and fostering creativity. This not only equips them with valuable skills for the future but also ignites a lifelong love for learning.

The Volunteering component encourages participants to give back to their communities. By engaging in acts of service, they develop a sense of empathy, responsibility, and a connection to their community. This spirit of giving is an enduring legacy of these Awards.

Physical Fitness is the third integral part of the program and encourages participants to adopt a healthy lifestyle, promoting physical and mental wellbeing. This focus on fitness and wellness is particularly important today, when so many young people are grappling with health-related issues.

Finally, the Adventurous Journey, for Gold Awards, takes participants into the outdoors. It challenges them to step out of their comfort zones, navigate unfamiliar terrain and work as a team. These experiences forge bonds and teach invaluable life skills.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Awards are not a one-size-fits-all program. Each Award involves a personal program. The unique nature of the Awards encourages young people, ranging in ages from 14-24, to explore their individual interests and talents. This self-discovery process builds confidence and self-esteem.

The Awards instil in young people the belief that they can make a difference, that they can shape a better future for themselves and their community.

We express our gratitude to the late Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, for an enduring legacy of empowerment and service to the youth around the world.

We know that Prince Edward was conferred the Dukedom of Edinburgh by King Charles III, in March this year. Prince Edward has been associated with these Awards for many years, first as a participant, and more recently, with an increased role after his father's death. He was in Australia earlier this week to present Gold Awards in Sydney.

In conclusion, congratulations to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award staff in Tasmania and to all the Award recipients.