

**INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF LAW ASSOCIATION
CHIEF EXECUTIVES (IILACE)
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, TUESDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2023**

Good evening. I warmly welcome you all to this reception.

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 congratulate you on the 25th anniversary of your International Institute of Law Association Executives.

May I commend your impressive conference program, with topics addressing the balance between defending fundamental rights, while helping authorities to access information; balancing leading with delegating; and the importance of trust in the profession.

May I also note that your social program looks good too, including a trip to our fabulous MONA; Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary; and an optional post-conference tour to the Tasman Peninsula.

Given that many of you are international delegates, I shall stay with your social program and give you a brief sketch on our island home. We are the world's 26th largest island. Our population density is low, with about 550,000 people living in an area about the size of Sri Lanka. By contrast, that island nation has a population of around 22 million.

We are renowned for our clean air, high quality produce, accessibility to walks and large areas of World Heritage-listed wilderness. In fact, around half of our State is set

aside for national parks and reserves.¹ Our Wilderness World Heritage Areas cover almost 20 percent of our island and includes many Aboriginal sites.²

Our island story is ancient, with some 40,000 years of continuous Aboriginal heritage and culture. Our story has also been divisive. Our Aboriginal population diminished over a 30-year period of conflicts, especially during the Black War in the 1820s to 30s. The spread of infectious diseases also had fatal consequences. Currently, we have some 30,000 Tasmanians who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.³

We are proud that Hobart has long been recognised as a principal gateway to Antarctica. We are the base for our Australian Antarctic Division and our University of Tasmania Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS). The Australian icebreaker *Nuyina* is based here. Also, the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic and Marine Living Resources Secretariat is headquartered here.

Our European cultural heritage is rich and includes:

Australia's first novel, titled *Quintus Servinton*, which was written by a Van Diemen's Land convict, Henry Savery, in 1830.⁴ He began writing the novel in his prison cell in Hobart, while serving time for forgery.

Second, we claim that the movement for our Australian Federation was started in Tasmania in the 1850s. Sir William Deane, former High Court Judge and Governor-General, fairly dubbed Tasmanian lawyer and politician Andrew Inglis Clark as 'the primary architect of our constitution'.⁵ Significantly, Clark modified Hare's electoral system to achieve our Hare-Clark system of voting, still used today.

We also claim to have been very inventive, with a long list of inventions, including the portable sheepyard and handler, which fits a sheep snugly into a wheelbarrow; the fibreglass Igloo Satellite Cabin for Antarctic Living; the world's first composite beam

¹ <https://parks.tas.gov.au/about-us/managing-our-parks-and-reserves/reserve-listing> accessed 22 Mar 2023.

² [The Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Areas | Discover Tasmania](#), accessed 19 May 2022.

³ <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples/census-population-and-housing-counts-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-australians/latest-release>

⁴ <https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/quintus-servinton#:~:text=Quintus%20Servinton%3A%20A>, accessed 19 May 2022.

⁵ <https://www.utas.edu.au/library/exhibitions/clark/work.html>

strengtheners for bridges and houses; the world's first laminated tennis racket; the wave-piercing catamaran; and the Dynasphere lightning protection system.⁶

In the medical field, our Menzies Institute for Medical Research has made significant medical breakthroughs, including in the area of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

In the Arts, we have a fine Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery and Maritime Museum, as well as our famous MONA, on your program, and which has become quite an international cultural success. In Launceston, we have the fine Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery.

And I note that Tasmania claims more heritage-listed stone buildings than the rest of Australia together.

May I conclude by noting that – given many of you are international delegates – this Government House has a somewhat international flavour. Since the late 1980s, we have hosted hundreds of diplomats. Ambassadors and High Commissioners and their partners stay here at Government House while on their official visits to Tasmania. This does not happen elsewhere in Australia.

Last week for instance, we hosted the High Commissioner for India. This year we have also hosted the Ambassadors of Ukraine, Denmark, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the USA, and the High Commissioner for the UK. The Ambassador of Norway is due next month.

These well organised and busy visits to our State give us the opportunity to promote Tasmania's business, education and cultural activities.

Well, that is enough from me about my somewhat biased view of Tasmania.

I hope that you all enjoy your stay.

Now please do enjoy the reception.

Thank you.

⁶ *Tasmanian Inventions & Innovations*, Launceston, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, 1987, various pagings.