

**CITY OF CLARENCE  
RICHMOND BICENTENARY  
SPEECH BY  
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC  
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA  
RICHMOND BRIDGE EASTERN SIDE, SUNDAY 10 DECEMBER 2023**

Good morning to you all. I thank you, Mayor Blomeley and colleagues, for inviting me to officially launch this Richmond Bicentenary with the laying of the foundation stone of Richmond Bridge to commemorate this 200th anniversary.

May I begin by acknowledging the Mumirimina people upon whose Country we gather, who flourished on Country as part of the Oyster Bay people. 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.

One hundred years ago, a major celebration took place, at this site, to mark the centenary of the Bridge, in December 1923. There was then what was called, "an old-time pageant"<sup>1</sup>. It must have looked something like today's wonderful community parade along Bridge Street, across this historic bridge and to these lawns.

One hundred years ago, right here, the re-enactment procession was led across this bridge by a man, colourfully described as wearing, quote, "a period-hat above side-whiskers of the same ... breeches, top boots, and all, on a staunch horse."

Following him were Richmond townfolk described as wearing, quote, "long flowered silk coats and satin breeches and surmounted by three-cornered hats, [strutting across] the sombre old bridge [as] when it [had been] a young biscuit-coloured structure."<sup>2</sup>

This 1923 *Mercury* article which I have quoted, went on to say that some of the costumes, of the ladies, in particular, had probably been handed down through

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<sup>1</sup> *Mercury*, Monday 10 December 1923, page 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

the generations and were the original clothing “of costly silk and beautiful design”<sup>3</sup>, as worn by townsfolk who lived here in the 1820s.

The centenary procession included “vehicles ancient and modern” – and today also, there is the vehicle display, this afternoon, at the Recreation Reserve and Village Green.

From today and right through to March next year, there will be much to enjoy and also to mark this Richmond Bicentenary.

Richmond, we are all proud to know, is one of the most significant cultural towns in Australia. Yet as we have heard from Theresa (Sainty), and we can see in the Courthouse exhibition “A People Forgotten”, within 15 years of Richmond’s establishment, no Mumirimina people remained here on their lands.

There was convict hardship and suffering here too.

In addition, there were long periods when the people of Richmond considered that their economic prosperity lagged unfairly behind Hobart and its surrounds.

But clearly the people living and working here and being inspired by the beauty of the Coal River Valley, have over time and with flair created the Richmond we now celebrate. The town is visually beautiful, a major tourist destination, and an enviable place to live.

In the months ahead, there is a busy program, including the history festival, the convict muster, the heritage farming expo, and the grand finale in March, the Village Fair and Street Party.

May I conclude by thanking Brendan and colleagues again for this opportunity to be with you for the start of your festivities and reflections. I now have the greatest pleasure to declare the Richmond Bicentenary officially launched.

Thank you.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.