

MANNALARGENNA DAY FESTIVAL 2023
SPEECH BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
TEBRAKUNNA COUNTRY, LITTLE MUSSELROE BAY
SATURDAY 2 DECEMBER 2023

Thank you, Chair Nick [Cameron, Melythina Tiakana Warrana [= ‘Heart of Country’] Aboriginal Corporation.¹ [introduced HE]

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land: the Pairabeena people. I acknowledge today’s Tasmanian Aboriginal Community as ongoing custodians of Country. We appreciate the deep connections Aboriginal people have with Country and with their stories that continue to be celebrated in cultural practices. May we all listen to these stories, and the voices of First Nations people. We thank you for your continued custodianship of Country through cultural practices and advocacy for truth-telling and healing Country.

Don and I feel privileged to be here today, surrounded by Tebrakunna Country. This Festival honours and celebrates the life of Mannalargenna and his people. Mannalargenna was the leader of the Pairregeenne clan and Tebrakunna. He was the direct ancestor of the majority of Aboriginal People in Tasmania today. The truth of his betrayal by George Augustus Robinson, who had been commissioned by Governor George Arthur, is a confronting story. It is a part of our history that we should consider in the survival of Aboriginal Tasmanians and their culture beyond colonisation.²

The day’s program aligns with the vision of the Melythina Tiakana Warrana Aboriginal Corporation: to preserve custodianship and pass on cultural traditions, practices and knowledge, acting on the understanding that the Land is sacred,

¹ Melythina Tiakana Warrana [= ‘Heart of Country’] Aboriginal Corporation https://mtwac.org.au/?page_id=209 accessed 27 Nov 23

² <https://www.oric.gov.au/publications/spotlight/breathing-mannalargenna> accessed 27 Nov 23

Culture is precious and that the descendants of Ancestors from the Country of tegrakna are a unique people.³

I am honoured to officially open this Tebrakunna Art Exhibition. This is a group exhibition of four of our highly talented Aboriginal visual artists: Annie Ellis; Lisa Kennedy; Belinda Casey and Mandy Quadrio.

Annie Ellis's ancestral grandfather is Mannalargenna.⁴ Her works are filled with sadness and sorrow, but equally with the strength of survival and belonging, and with unbroken continuity. She is a direct descendant of the Pairebeene People of north-east Tasmania. Annie celebrates her grandfather and her grandmother's people, the Tyereelore. The Tyereelore could not find their much-loved ochre on the island so, instead, started making and wearing red pointed hats.

Artist Lisa Kennedy is a descendant of the Trawlwoolway people of north-east Tasmania. Born in Melbourne, Lisa is a graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts. She is an author and illustrator of many children's books. She has recently illustrated the enchanting *Sea Country*, written by Aunty Patsy Cameron. Lisa finds her most meaningful work is in collaboration with Elders to visually express the often-hidden voices of Ancestors and Country in a way that is accessible to many.⁵

Burnie-born Belinda Casey is a proud palawa woman. Her ancestral grandmother is Fanny Smith. Belinda was a selected finalist in the 2022 Hadley's Art Prize, for the best portrayal of the Australian landscape.⁶ Last year at Mannalargenna Day, I viewed her work *relipianna melaythenner relipianna timmarerer* (Strong place, Strong baskets). This was the first of a series of acquisitions of the Government House Art collection, of Tasmanian Artists.

Mandy Quadrio is a Brisbane-based artist who works across sculpture, installation, and mixed media. Her art brings forward First Nations histories and self-representation.

³ <https://mtwac.org.au/> accessed 27 Nov 23

⁴ First paragraph of Annie Ellis bio of the official artists' bios document supplied by Jo Cameron.

⁵ <https://magabala.com/collections/lisa-kennedy> accessed 27 Nov 23

⁶ [About - Hadley's Art Prize \(hadleysartprize.com.au\)](https://www.hadleysartprize.com.au/), accessed 29 November 2022.

In her work, Mandy seeks to illuminate Indigenous histories through close attention to material cultures and the aesthetic traditions of Tasmania. She reimagines cultural artefacts and found objects to achieve public and personal meaning. Her work draws attention to historical, cultural, and political events ignored and buried in Australian colonial histories. Asserting the strength of her palawa ancestors, Mandy's investigation of socio-political realities reveals the ongoing nature of Aboriginal resilience and her adaptable and ever-changing cultural existence.⁷

May I commend and thank the Melythina Tiakana Warrana Aboriginal Corporation for all their efforts, and for another Mannalargenna Day here on Tebrakunna Country. I also thank the artists represented in this year's exhibition for their work and their willingness to share it with us. The exhibition is a fine example of the quality of our Tasmanian Aboriginal Cultural Artists.

I now have the honour and pleasure to formally open the 2023 Tebrakunna Art Exhibition.

Thank you.

⁷ Email Jo Cameron / Paula Chatwood 21 Nov 23