

RECEPTION TO MARK THE ROYAL HOBART REGATTA 2024
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
DRAWING ROOM, THURSDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2024

Good evening, everyone, and a very warm welcome to Government House for this reception to mark our 2024 Royal Hobart Regatta, and its 186th year of operation.

I begin by acknowledging the Muwinina people upon whose Country we gather, who flourished on Country as part of the South-East Nation of Aboriginal 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.

As everyone comes back to work and school each new year, we know that our Royal Hobart Regatta will be in full sail. Many in our community will use the weekend and the Monday public holiday to attend and enjoy the many Regatta events, competitions, music, displays and activities.

We mark this 186th anniversary of the Regatta, but I am informed that there are records dating back as far as 1818 of water-based events around the site and dates. The original date was in December to mark the supposed anniversary of the discovery of the Island by Abel Tasman. This day was formally established by Lieutenant Governor Franklin for the community to come together in harmony.

Governors have always given their patronage to this event, with two notable exceptions: for the 1843 event, Lieutenant Governor Franklin upset the Committee by requesting a more stringent approach to the provision of free beer. He was not invited to be patron that year. Later in 1855, Governor Fox-Young complained about the amount of rubbish being left behind and the impact on his tree plantings on the Domain. He was similarly not invited to be patron.

I am very pleased to aim for and to continue a much more amiable association between Government House and the Royal Hobart Regatta Committee. This has certainly been the case for many years. Late last year, we hosted the Royal Hobart Regatta Association for afternoon tea and presented life memberships and other awards. That event marked another milestone for the Regatta Association. The first female was granted Life Membership, Mrs Helen Lane. Congratulations, again, Helen, for that richly deserved award.

This year the Regatta is bigger than ever and features many long-standing events and quite a few new ones. Your 2024 Program is full for the three days starting Friday with Family Day, culminating on the Monday Public holiday with 'Come and Try Day'. Activities are available for all ages and abilities for the whole day. There have been competitors in these Regatta events who have gone on to try for Olympic glory! With more than 500 competitors, we may well have another champion in the making participating this year.

Flagship of the Regatta this year, HMAS *Diamantina*, a Huon Class Minehunter, will be open to the public on Saturday. As always, we have support from our Australian Army Band – Tasmania. The Australian Navy Band will ensure that the usual party atmosphere will be maintained.

We are very fortunate to have our Navy and Army Bands regularly at events here at Government House. We thank them for their willingness to support our Tasmanian community whenever they can.

To our Royal Hobart Regatta Association and your Regatta Organising Committee, may I thank you on behalf of our grateful community. Also, to all the sponsors who so generously give their support to our Regatta, I also extend our appreciation.

Importantly, I understand that there are more than 110 volunteers who have given, and continue to give, their time, energy and effort over an extended period to make this year's Regatta a success. You are the truly appreciated and acknowledged. Without you, the Regatta could not go ahead. We thank you for all that you do.

And now, please, join Don and me for some refreshments.