

**RECEPTION TO MARK THE SESQUICENTENARY
OF THE CONSECRATION OF ST DAVID'S CATHEDRAL
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
BALL ROOM, FRIDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2024**

VICE-REGAL SALUTE IS PLAYED

Good evening, everyone. May I extend a very warm welcome to you all to Government House for this reception to mark the sesquicentenary of the consecration of St David's Cathedral.

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.

A year after the arrival of the first ships at Risdon Cove in 1803, the first chaplain arrived with Lieutenant Governor Collins. This was the Reverend Robert Knopwood. He was expedition chaplain and, from his arrival until his relief in 1823, he was the only chaplain in the colony of Van Diemen's Land.

Records indicate that the first church in the Colony, constructed of wood, was erected over the grave of Lieutenant Governor Collins at the Hobart Cemetery. This is now St David's Park. This church was never consecrated. It is also not clear whether it was used for worship. In any case, it was blown away in a storm in 1812. Not a particularly auspicious start to organised religious observances in our State.

Collins was honoured by a new church constructed on the corner of Murray and Macquarie Streets. St David's Church was named in memory of Collins with the laying of the foundation stone in 1817.¹ It took some time to build the church and in 1823 it was consecrated.

In 1842, Hobart was declared a city and the existing St David's Church became St David's Cathedral. The Reverend Francis Russell Nixon was appointed first Bishop of Tasmania by Letters Patent issued by Her Majesty Queen Victoria.

In 1868, the foundation stone of a new cathedral was laid by His Royal Highness Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh. Governor Thomas Browne, Premier Sir Richard Dry and a gathering of clergy and laity attended the service, which was led by the second Bishop of Tasmania, the Right Reverend Charles Bromby. On 3 February 1874, Bishop Bromby consecrated the nave of the new Cathedral following a procession from the old Cathedral. The old St David's Cathedral was pulled down in September 1874.

In 1892, work on the Cathedral Tower began. In 1894 the Chancel and Nixon Chapel were consecrated. Later, however, some issues with the Chancel construction emerged before the works were even completed. This required that the Chancel be reconstructed in 1908, as it was identified as in danger of collapse.

¹ <https://saintdavids.org.au/history/> accessed 30 Jan 24

The Cathedral was not finally completed until 1936 – some 68 years after the commencement of the new Cathedral in 1868.²

The Cathedral was built in the Gothic Revival style, similar in construction to Government House, which was built between 1854 and 1857. The Cathedral's distinctive features include an arcade entrance with a large west window and buttressed turrets, a square tower made of Oatlands stone and a close on the southern side.³

We are all delighted to know that this Cathedral is now in excellent repair. It is in constant use for services as well as community events. The Cathedral is a central point in Hobart, not only for worship, but also for commemorative events such as ANZAC Day and Battle of Britain services. It is a quiet retreat from the noise and bustle of the city. It is a place for prayer, quiet meditation and contemplation.

I congratulate everyone involved with our Cathedral. We celebrate this sesquicentenary of the original consecration of the Nave. I commend and thank you for all your work to ensure that our Cathedral is fit for purpose and will remain this significant Hobart landmark for another 150 years.

Now, please join Don and I for some refreshments.

² <https://collections.museumsvictoria.com.au/articles/2464> accessed 30 Jan 24

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_David%27s_Cathedral_Hobart accessed 31/01/2024.