

**TASMANIAN POLAR NETWORK**  
**REMARKS BY**  
**HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC**  
**GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA**  
**BALL ROOM, WEDNESDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2024**

**VICE-REGAL SALUTE IS PLAYED**

Good evening and a very warm welcome to you all to Government House for this reception to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tasmanian Polar Network. I particularly welcome our former Honorary Antarctic Ambassador and current Tasmanian Antarctic Patron, Sir Guy Green.

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.

There are many good reasons why we are fortunate to have had the Tasmanian Polar Network established in Hobart for these past thirty years. Most significantly because the identity of Hobart has always been closely linked to the Antarctic.<sup>1</sup>

As we know, Hobart became a major centre for whaling and sealing in the Sub-Antarctic and Southern Ocean in the early 1800s.

In 1840, British explorer Sir James Ross used Hobart as his base for exploring the Antarctic in search of the South Magnetic Pole with his ships *HMS Erebus* and *HMS Terror*. While here, the vessels were moored between today's Regatta Ground and the Tasman Bridge. This is why the waterfront curving these points is called Ross Bay.

---

<sup>1</sup> Suggested speaking notes provided by Dr Tara Martin, Director Antarctic Tasmania.

Sir James Ross was fully supported by then Lieutenant-Governor Sir John Franklin. The two men knew each other well. In the words of Michael Palin – of Monty Python fame – in his book on *HMS Erebus*, I quote: “When the strikingly handsome James Ross first encountered the round-faced, chubby, prematurely balding John Franklin, Ross must have regarded Franklin as something of a hero.”<sup>2</sup>

Also, Rossbank was the name given to the Observatory in which the magnetic instruments were housed. The instruments were very sensitive to adverse magnetic fields. This is why the Observatory was developed on this site, with its deep sandstone substratum.

This is also why Government House is here – not only for its prominence and view, but because of the quarry of high-quality sandstone nearby.

As we all know, Australia’s first Antarctic expedition, led by Sir Douglas Mawson, left from Hobart in 1911. That three-year expedition is considered the world’s first scientific expedition to the Antarctic.

In December 1911, Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen became the first person to reach the South Pole. He then famously sent his Hadley’s telegram to King Hakon VII of Norway.

May I report that the Norwegian Ambassador to Australia, Her Excellency Ms Anne Grete Riise, who made her formal visit to Tasmania and stayed here last December, took great delight in talking about Amundsen in Hobart!

Our Australian Antarctic Division’s current headquarters were opened by then Prince Charles in 1981. Until then, the AAD’s headquarters had been in Melbourne, although Hobart had long been the departure point for Australian ships servicing Australia’s Antarctic and sub-Antarctic stations.

The AAD’s move to Hobart coincided with the establishment in Hobart of the CCAMLR’s secretariat. Since then, each year the Member States and Acceding

---

<sup>2</sup> Michael Palin, *Erebus: the Story of a Ship*, London, Hutchinson, 2018, page 22.

States meet here in Hobart, and Tasmania's Governors formally open proceedings and enjoy hosting an evening reception.

May I also mention that in 1984, the headquarters of our CSIRO Division of Fisheries Research and the Division of Oceanography (now the CSIRO Environment Business Unit) were established in Hobart.

With the establishment here of these organisations, significant opportunities were presented to local industry. A number of Tasmanian businesses embraced these opportunities, specialising in niche products and services designed to meet the needs of the Antarctic sector. Hence, the establishment of the Tasmanian Polar Network (TPN), in 1993, with the assistance of our Tasmanian Office of Antarctic Affairs – now Antarctic Tasmania.

Tasmania's high-quality scientific, policy, logistics, advanced manufacturing, and technological capabilities, together with Hobart's port and airport logistics and supply infrastructure, ensure that Tasmania will continue to be a natural hub of Antarctic activity and international engagement.

Our Antarctic sector is well supported by the TPN. It is a significant employer making a significant contribution to our Tasmanian economy. Most importantly, it helps protect and safeguard the proper management of this vitally important continent. We thank you for that. Of note, the TPN is unique in that none of the other Antarctic gateways (Christchurch, Cape Town, Ushuaia or Punta Arenas) have similar organisations that bring all the parts of the sector together, provide a single contact point for an extensive range of specialist goods and services, coordinate and supply assistance for any kind of cold-climate need and represent the sector internationally.

Also of note, last November, TPN welcomed under its umbrella the new Antarctic Women's Network, which was launched by Premier Rockliff to support women in the Antarctic and Southern Ocean sector. This provides opportunities for showcasing women's work in the Antarctic and Southern Ocean to help attract more women into this workforce.<sup>3</sup> This initiative should further cement

---

<sup>3</sup> Richard Fader, Chair of the TPN quoted in 19 February 2024 email to David Owen.

Hobart's position as a leading hub for Antarctic science, education, and logistic support.<sup>4</sup>

It goes without saying that we are all very proud of Hobart's position as an Antarctic gateway and a world centre of Antarctic activity.

David ...

*[invites TPN CEO Richard Fader to the lectern; followed by the Premier as Minister for State Development, Trade and the Antarctic]]*

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.