

**MULTICULTURAL COUNCIL OF TASMANIA  
HARMONY WEEK 2024  
REMARKS BY  
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC  
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA  
GOVERNMENT HOUSE BALL ROOM, THURSDAY 14 MARCH 2024**

**VICE-REGAL SALUTE**

Good evening and a very warm welcome to Government House to members of the Multicultural Council of Tasmania for this reception to mark Harmony Week 2024.

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.

First, may I thank our musicians, Roman and Umesh, for their performance this evening.

May I say how pleased I am to be able to host your Council here at Government House. This continues the long association between this Vice-Regal office and your Council.

You may be aware that I am the Patron of several multicultural organisations, including the International Wall of Friendship, the Migrant Resource Centre and the Refugee Legal Service. These Patronages, I believe, strongly represent and benefit our diverse society.

According to our Tasmanian Multicultural Policy, there is a long history of migration to our island State. Our island is home to people born in 177 countries. We have

159 identified languages spoken in Tasmanian homes. According to the 2021 Census, more than 85,000 Tasmanians were born overseas.<sup>1</sup>

We value their experiences, cultures and traditions. That diversity enriches us all, socially and economically.

Recent media reporting, however, still indicates that we have some way to go in welcoming and making feel safe members of our migrant community.<sup>2</sup> There is no place in our society for racism or any other forms of discrimination and that is something that the Multicultural Council of Tasmania is working hard to remedy.

May I acknowledge that your 2023 Annual Report<sup>3</sup> indicates that your Council represents an impressive 85 member organisations from across our State, advocating for the interests of our Tasmanians from culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds.

Your Council has been in operation for more than 40 years. During that time, you have had a significant impact promoting social cohesion and representing multicultural communities across Tasmania. May I acknowledge the work done by your Council to link our communities and to showcase the benefits of multiculturalism for all.

Our Tasmanian Government's Statement 'Our Multicultural Island – Tasmania's Multicultural Policy' expresses:

“Our vision is for a harmonious, inclusive and respectful Multicultural Island where Tasmanians of all cultures, languages and faiths have an equal opportunity and responsibility to belong, contribute, achieve and succeed.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/snapshot-tas-2021>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-03-09/tasmanian-migrant-communities-say-racial-abuse-on-the-rise/103560578> accessed 9 Mar 24

<sup>3</sup> [https://mcot.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Final\\_MCOT\\_Annual-Report-2023Web.pdf](https://mcot.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Final_MCOT_Annual-Report-2023Web.pdf) accessed 5 Mar 24

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0026/240938/Our-Multicultural-Island-Policy-2019.pdf](https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0026/240938/Our-Multicultural-Island-Policy-2019.pdf) p6 accessed 5 Mar 24

Your Council contributes to this vision by organising events across our State to celebrate Harmony Week, which celebrates our diversity and brings Australians together from all their different backgrounds.

Harmony Week also embraces the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Harmony Week is about inclusiveness, respect and belonging for all Australians, regardless of cultural or linguistic background, united by a set of core Australian values.

Orange was chosen as the colour to represent Harmony Week<sup>5</sup> because it ties to meaningful conversations and symbolises social communication. During this week, we may choose to wear something orange to demonstrate our support for this celebration.

May I conclude by expressing my appreciation and thanks for our Multicultural Council of Tasmania for all your important work and support for our diverse community. Your work and advocacy are invaluable in building an inclusive Tasmanian society.

May I wish you all the best in all your valued endeavours. May I also wish you all a joyful celebration of Harmony Week 2024.

Thank you.

David ...

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.harmony.gov.au/about> accessed 5 Mar 24