

**WOMEN'S LEGAL SERVICE TASMANIA
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2024 FUNDRAISING LUNCH
ADDRESS DELIVERED BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE BALL ROOM, FRIDAY 8 MARCH 2024**

I warmly welcome you all to Government House for this inaugural International Women's Day (IWD) lunch, and a fundraiser for our Women's Legal Service Tasmania.

I begin by acknowledging the Muwinina people upon whose Country we gather. We honour them, and today's Tasmanian Aboriginal Community, as ongoing custodians of Country.

Some of us may not know that the responsibilities of the Governor fall across three broad areas, constitutional, ceremonial and community engagement. This lunch is part of my broader community engagement role. As Governor, supporting women's issues is one of my key community priorities.

As we know, the statistics for women suffering violence are shocking. One in two women has experienced sexual harassment in their lifetime; one in three women has experienced physical violence since the age of 15; one in four women has experienced emotional abuse since the age of 15; and one in five women has experienced sexual violence since the age of 15. Disturbingly, on average, one woman a week is killed by her current or former partner.¹ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience disproportionate rates of violence and are 31 times more likely to be hospitalised due to family violence-related assaults.²

Sadly, these statistics mean that that some of us in this room are likely to have suffered harassment or some form of violence and demonstrate and confirm the need for the critically important services that the Women's Legal Service

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2017 quoted in ANROWS change the Story.

² <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/quickfacts>, accessed 29/02/2024.

Tasmania (WLST) provides to women in Tasmania. This is a free service to women needing legal advice, social work support and financial counselling.³

Women who would not otherwise have access to the justice system, in particular women who experience violence, disadvantage and injustice, are supported by the Service. Advice is given on matters such as family law, family violence, emotional, physical, and financial abuse, restraint orders, and more.⁴

All funds raised today will go to WLST. And just in case you do not know, you can make tax-deductible donations to this important community legal service.

Not only are we here today to support WLST, IWD gives us opportunities to celebrate the achievements of women, to continue to champion equality, and, to celebrate the determination of women who contribute to the goal of gender equality. This goal is vital, as there is a link between gender inequality and family violence.

So, today, we celebrate the achievements of women, your own achievements and those of friends and colleagues. May we, of course, celebrate our four panel members, Professor Gillian Biscoe AM, a local and global leader; Monique Brumby, an award-winning musician and Tasmanian treasure; Professor Emma Lee, a proud trawlulwuy woman, a leader in indigenous rights and academic; and our own Government House Ainstie Wagner, amazing chef and community engagement facilitator. We are delighted that Judy Tierney OAM, our well-known and award-winning journalist, is our panel's facilitator.

We are very pleased that these women leaders have agreed to be part of our fundraiser lunch.

Please enjoy the lunch and thank you for coming today to help raise funds for our invaluable Women's Legal Service Tasmania.

³ WLST Annual Report 2022-2023

⁴ Ibid.