

**SCOTS UNITING CHURCH
SCOTS-MEMORIAL CONGREGATION
BICENTENARY OF CONTINUOUS WORSHIP ON SITE
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
SCOTS UNITING CHURCH, SUNDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2024**

Good morning, everyone. It is an honour to join you here today to mark 200 years of continuous worship at Bathurst St, Hobart, originally in Scots Kirk, St Andrew's Presbyterian Church and now in Scots Uniting Church.

May I begin by acknowledging the Muwinina people upon whose Country we gather. I acknowledge today's Tasmanian Aboriginal Community as ongoing custodians of Country. I recognise their enduring culture and deep connection to land, sea, and waters.

This bicentenary is an historic milestone reflecting the endurance of faith and worship. It also celebrates the community, and the connections formed within the churches that have housed the congregations over these 200 years.

The journey to this site began in 1824 when the Reverend Archibald Macarthur, a young minister and talented orator from Edinburgh, led the first service in the then humble Scots Kirk, now known as St Andrew's Hall. This was a small kirk of freestone built at the rear of the Bathurst St allotment. It was built by convict labour and became a place of prayer, community and belonging for Scottish settlers¹.

As the congregation grew, a more spacious building was needed. The foundation stone to St Andrew's Church, now known as Scots Church, was laid in April 1834 before a large crowd. Interestingly, the laying of this foundation stone ceremony was overseen by His Excellency Lieutenant Governor George Arthur. During this ceremony, a bottle filled with coins from current and previous reigns, was buried under a special commemorative plate. The plate remains to this day. This act

¹ <https://www.scotschurch.com.au/the-scots-kirk/>

symbolised the church's connection to the community and the connections between the church and the history of Tasmania²

St Andrew's was completed in 1836. Newspaper records of the time reported that it was most beautiful. It quickly became a place of communal spirit and fellowship³.

In 1934, the congregations of St Andrew's and Chalmers Church, which had been on the corner of Bathurst and Harrington Street, merged, forming the Scots Congregation. This merger was followed by another with the Memorial Church, leading to the formation of the Scots-Memorial congregation of today.

And so today, as we celebrate the bicentenary of continuous worship and community connection, it is important to recognise the historical heritage of the Scots Church. This site has hosted some of the religious, social, and cultural life of Hobart for two centuries. Here, families and friends have come together to wed, baptise, celebrate, connect, support, and ultimately farewell each other.

I hope the values that have shaped your congregation continue to guide you into the future. Now, it is my honour to unveil the commemorative plaque to mark this significant milestone. May I extend to you all my congratulations, and I wish you all a most joyous celebration.

Thank you.

[Unveiling of plaque]

² The Colonist and Van Diemen's Land Commercial and Agricultural Advertiser. Tues 22 April 1834, pg 3.

³ <https://www.scotschurch.com.au/st-andrews-church/>