

**2024 GUIDE DOGS TASMANIA GRADUATION
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
C3 CONVENTION CENTRE, THURSDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2024**

Good afternoon, everyone. I am delighted to be here today for this 2024 Guide Dog Graduation Ceremony and to see today's graduates behaving so beautifully.

May I begin by acknowledging the Muwinina people upon whose land 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, sky, and waters.

I welcome you all to this very special occasion to celebrate the achievements of these 19 exceptional working dogs as they embark on their careers. Today is also special because it is the largest graduation in Guide Dogs Tasmania's history.

Guide and Assistance Dogs are important in supporting people with low or no vision, disability, or illness to lead lives of greater independence. As I am sure you all know, training and raising these dogs is not a walk in the park – although, plenty of walks in the park are enjoyed.

It costs more than \$50,000 and two years to raise, train, match, and provide ongoing support to each dog that joins the training program.¹

Today's Graduates have spent about 18 months with their dedicated puppy trainers, going everywhere with them and helping them become well-socialised and comfortable. Their trainers also pass on important skills such as avoiding obstacles, stopping at kerbs and assistance roles.²

¹ [About Guide Dogs Tasmania](#), accessed 15 November 2024

² [About Guide Dogs Tasmania](#), accessed 15 November 2024

Some of these dogs will work as Guide Dogs, while others will serve as Facility and Companion Dogs. We have one Autism Assistance Dog and several Brood Dogs to breed the next generation of Guide and Assistance Dogs.³

As Patron, today's graduation also gives me the opportunity to thank everyone who helps Guide Dogs Tasmania, one of our State's leading not-for-profit organisations. May I also acknowledge the leadership team, all the volunteers, donors, and corporate partners who support the programs.

Guide Dogs Tasmania does not use any kennels, and all dogs are born into and live in volunteer homes during their training.⁴ More than 200 volunteers contribute annually to Guide Dogs' operations⁵ – what a wonderful effort.

May I also thank the Puppy Development Volunteers for their dedication, time, and effort. It is wonderful that so many of you are here today to reunite with the dogs you helped raise.

I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of all Guide Dogs Tasmania volunteers who care for Brood Dogs, provide temporary care for dogs in training, and work to raise awareness and funds.

Guide Dogs Tasmania relies on our community's support, so I also again thank donors and corporate partners.

May I conclude by congratulating today's guests of honour, our exceptional working dogs. Once again, thank you all for your support for Guide Dogs Tasmania.

³ Correspondence from Guide Dogs Tasmania, received 18 November 2024

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.