

**CHRISTMAS RECEPTION
'A CELEBRATION OF THE FESTIVE SEASON'
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, TUESDAY 17 DECEMBER 2024**

Good evening. I warmly welcome you all to Government House for this special festive and Christmas Reception. Most of you represent many of my 130 Patronages around our State, so this is an opportunity to thank you for all your work for our community.

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.

As we celebrate this festive season, may we reflect on achievements and events in our State.

On behalf of all Tasmanians, the Governor seeks to promote Tasmania by recognising achievement, encouraging endeavour, and acknowledging community contributions.

Many of the events we host here each week are held to recognise our volunteers' charitable work and selfless commitment. I am constantly amazed by the diversity of community activities and achievements and the enthusiasm of those involved.

These include patronages of well-known entities such as Red Cross Tasmania, Cancer Council Tasmania, Hobart City Mission, Guide Dogs Tasmania and the Royal Flying Doctor Service, as examples.

May I also mention the Governor's role in hosting events supporting various organisations.

One such event was the inaugural International Women’s Day lunch held in March. Nearly \$10,000 was raised for the Tasmanian Women’s Legal Service, which increased its services in the north-east of our State.

I am proud that our community garden initiative with Eat Well Tasmania and Loaves and Fishes, specifically for the hot lunches School Food Matters Program, continues to provide fresh produce weekly and also provides a space for school children to learn about growing fresh produce.

We also support our community by regularly donating food to the Hobart Women’s Shelter and the Sexual Assault Support Service. During Homelessness Week, we provide around 1,500 pre-made meals to the Hobart City Mission and the Salvation Army.

I also travel around our State on municipal council visits or to attend specific events. Recently, as Patron of the Mannalargenna Day Festival, I was honoured to open its tenth anniversary officially in the north-east. This Festival honours the shining memory of Mannalargenna, a formidable warrior and important leader, and his people. The Festival is a celebration of survival and culture and demonstrates the commitment to preserving custodianship and passing on cultural traditions, practices, and knowledge¹ at the heart of Country².

We have also seen many outstanding achievements from Tasmanians this year. May I mention a few.

In the Arts, Richard Flanagan won the prestigious Baillie Gifford Prize for Non-Fiction for his memoir, ‘Question 7’. He becomes the first author to win both the Baillie Gifford Prize and the Booker Prize. For many years, Richard has maintained the highest level of literary excellence. We are fortunate to have him as a treasured son.

¹ [Our Vision: Melaythenner Teeackana Warrana Aboriginal Corporation](#), accessed 2 December 2024.

² Melaythenner - Country, Teeackana Warrana - heart of, so this translates to heart of Country, or our heart within our Country. Source: email from Jo Cameron to ADC, 22 November 2024.

Botanical artist Lynne Uptin was awarded a gold medal at the Royal Horticultural Society Botanical Art and Photography Exhibition in London, an invitation only exhibition for a select few of the best botanical artists in the world.³

In the Law, we have our first Tasmanian High Court Justice, the Honourable Justice Robert Beech-Jones. He grew up in Savage River and attended Wynyard High School and Hellyer Matric College in Burnie.

In sport:

- Ariarne Titmus was recently crowned Tasmanian Athlete of the Year for the fourth time. At the Paris Olympics, she won two gold and two silver medals.
- Eddie Ockenden is Australia's first five-time hockey Olympian and was co-flagbearer at the Paris Olympics.
- Alexandra Viney represented Australia in rowing at the 2024 Paris Paralympic Games, earning her a place among Tasmania's top Paralympic athletes.

These athletes have excelled in their chosen sport and inspire our next generation of Tasmanian athletes.

Perhaps our proudest moment came with the announcement of Professor Richard Scolyer AO as Australian of the Year. As many would know, Professor Scolyer is fighting brain cancer while continuing to progress his research into immunotherapy and his advocacy of preventative treatments.

Richard lives by his mantra that we need to, I quote, 'be ambitious; think big, and be bold; contribute to society and enjoy it, take chances'. End of quote.

This festive season is a time of giving, receiving, and spending time with family and loved ones. It is also a time to reflect on how fortunate we are to live in peace and in this special and beautiful State.

³ <https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/hobart-breakfast/lynne-uptin-gold/104005630>.

To help us celebrate this festive reception tonight, we will now hear the Hobart Orpheus Choir perform a selection of Christmas Carols.

On behalf of our team at Government House, I wish you each and all a safe and enjoyable festive season.

Thank you.