

**ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY – SOUTHERN TASMANIA BRANCH
RECEPTION TO MARK COMMONWEALTH DAY 2025
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, TUESDAY 11 MARCH 2025**

Good evening, everyone, and a warm welcome to Government House to celebrate Commonwealth Day 2025. As Patron of our Royal Commonwealth Society – Southern Tasmania Branch, I am privileged to host this reception on behalf of the Society, and to read His Majesty The King’s Commonwealth Day Message.

We are all aware of His Majesty’s commitment to reconciliation, which has grown during his many visits to Australia. In October 2024, when His Majesty visited Australia, he referenced his position in his speech to Parliament House Canberra.¹

In reflection of his commitment and my own, may I acknowledge 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.

May I also acknowledge and express our appreciation for the pipers who played as you entered Government House. As you may know, my husband, Don, was born in Scotland, as were a number of you here. I am sure all the Scots enjoyed the rousing sound of the pipes as you arrived.

This year, we observe Commonwealth Day under the theme, ‘Together We Thrive’. This theme celebrates the enduring spirit of the Commonwealth Family, which has 56 independent member countries. These all share the values encapsulated by the Commonwealth Charter and the theme that all member nations walk together to uplift their citizens and build a future defined by opportunity and resilience in unity and peace.²

¹ <https://www.royal.uk/news-and-activity/2024-10-21/the-kings-speech-to-parliament-house-canberra> accessed 6 Feb 25

² <https://thecommonwealth.org/news/cd2025/together-we-thrive-announced-theme-commonwealth-day-2025> accessed 3 Mar 25

The Commonwealth is one of the world's oldest political associations, evolving from the former British Empire. It is a voluntary association of nations bound by a commitment to democracy, human rights, and shared prosperity. From the London Declaration 1949, which marked the birth of the modern Commonwealth, to the present day, the Commonwealth has embraced diversity and cooperation as its guiding principles.³

This evening, we are joined by representatives of various loyal societies and distinguished members of our community who continue to champion the Commonwealth values that unite us.

The presence of each of you here tonight is a testament to the continuing strength and unity of the Commonwealth, both globally and in our State and community. The Commonwealth network spans Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Americas, the Pacific, and Europe—this network that thrives on mutual respect, cultural exchange, and collaborative progress.

As we reflect on this year's theme, 'Together We Thrive', may we recognise that the Commonwealth's greatest asset is its people. Across our nations, we see innovation, resilience, and determination driving meaningful change. From climate action to technological advancements, education initiatives to economic development, we collectively try to shape a better future.

We must also acknowledge the leadership of His Majesty King Charles III, Head of the Commonwealth, with his unwavering commitment to the organisation's principles. May I now read His Majesty's Message:

Last October, leaders from across the Commonwealth came together in Samoa to reaffirm their "belief in the value of the Commonwealth as a trusted forum where diverse voices of our member states, the large and the small, the young and the old, come together as one family." These gatherings are important for helping all Commonwealth nations to tackle the challenges of the day, yet they also play another vital role. In these uncertain times, where it is all too easy to believe that our differences are

³ <https://thecommonwealth.org/history> accessed 6 Feb 25

problems instead of a source of strength and an opportunity for learning, the Commonwealth's remarkable collection of nations and peoples come together in the spirit of support and, crucially, friendship.

This year, the world reflects on the eightieth anniversary of the end of World War 2. More than one-and-a-half million men and women who served during the War came from across the Commonwealth to support the United Kingdom and its allies. On this special anniversary, we remember with particular pride and everlasting gratitude the untold sacrifice and selflessness of so many from around our Family of Nations who gave their lives in that dreadful conflict. The Commonwealth's ability to bring together people from all over the world has stood the test of time and remains as ever-important today. Leaders recently reiterated the importance of collaboration for peace and human rights, as well as for the restoration of Nature both on land and in the oceans.

As we mark this Commonwealth Day together, there is no more important task than to restore the disrupted harmony of our entire planet. For the sake of our younger generations' threatened future, I can only hope that the Commonwealth will continue its vital work to restore that harmony.

This is the end of His Majesty's message.

Tonight, as we celebrate the ties that bind us, let us reaffirm our dedication to the ideals of the Commonwealth. Let us continue to work together to build a more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable future for all.

Thank you, and please enjoy your reception.