

**RECEPTION FOR DELEGATES AND PARTNERS ATTENDING THE  
2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF  
THE AUSTRALIAN 49ERS ASSOCIATION INC  
REMARKS BY  
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC  
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA  
GOVERNMENT HOUSE BALLROOM, TUESDAY 1 APRIL 2025**

**VICE-REGAL SALUTE**

Good evening, everyone. I warmly welcome you all to Government House for this reception for members and partners of the Australian 49ers.

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.

It is a great pleasure to have you visiting Tasmania for your annual conference. As Governor, I host receptions for many national and international conferences, and we always enjoy the energy and conversations that conferences bring to our city and State.

I may be a little biased, but Tasmania offers a perfect venue for a meeting of minds—with our pristine landscapes, rich history, and vibrant industries. These are reflective of the entrepreneurial spirit that drives the 49ers. As you engage in discussions and share insights, you can enjoy some of what our State has to offer—from its fine food and wine to its unique cultural and natural heritage.

May I give you a brief sketch of our island home. We are the world's 26<sup>th</sup> largest island, with about 570,000<sup>1</sup> people living in an area about the size of Sri Lanka, with a population of around 23 million<sup>2</sup>. We are renowned for our clean air, high-quality produce, accessibility to walks, and for large areas of listed wilderness. Around half of our State is set aside for national parks and reserves.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.treasury.tas.gov.au/Documents/Population>, accessed 1/04/2025

<sup>2</sup> <https://data.who.int/countries/144>, accessed 1/04/2025

<sup>3</sup> <https://parks.tas.gov.au/about-us/managing-our-parks-and-reserves/reserve-listing> accessed 1/04/2025.

Our island story is ancient and complex with some 40,000 years of continuous Aboriginal heritage and culture. Our Aboriginal population diminished over a 30-year period of conflicts, especially during the Black War in the 1820s and early 1830s. The spread of infectious diseases also had fatal consequences. Currently, we have some 30,000 Tasmanians who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.<sup>4</sup>

Our European cultural and intellectual heritage is rich and includes:

- Australia's first novel written by a Van Diemen's Land convict, Henry Savery, in 1830. He began writing the novel, titled *Quintus Servinton*, in his prison cell in Hobart, while serving time for forgery of banknotes.
- We claim that the movement for our Australian Federation was started in Tasmania in the 1850s. Tasmanian lawyer and politician Andrew Inglis Clark has been described as 'the primary architect of our constitution'.<sup>5</sup> Significantly, Clark modified Hare's electoral system to achieve our Hare-Clark system of voting, still used today.
- Tasmanians have invented such things as the portable sheep handler, which fits a sheep snugly into a kind of wheelbarrow; the portable fibreglass cabin Igloo Satellite for Antarctic living; the world's first laminated tennis racket; the wave-piercing catamaran and the Dynasphere Lightning Protection System.<sup>6</sup>

In the medical field, our Menzies Research Institute Tasmania has made significant medical breakthroughs, including advancements in Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-people-census/2021> accessed 1/04/2025

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.utas.edu.au/library/exhibitions/clark/work.html>

<sup>6</sup> *Tasmanian Inventions & Innovations*, Launceston, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, 1987, various pagings.

<sup>7</sup> <https://125timeline.utas.edu.au/timeline/1990/how-menzies-helped-solve-sids-mystery> accessed 1/04/2025

In the Arts, we have a fine Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery and Maritime Museum, as well as our famous MONA, which you visited yesterday. And in Launceston, we have our Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery.

We are proud that Hobart has long been recognised as a principal gateway to Antarctica. We are the base for our Australian Antarctic Division and University of Tasmania Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS). The Australian icebreaker *Nuyina* is based here. Also, the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic and Marine Living Resources Secretariat is headquartered here.

I am sure you have heard enough from me, so may I conclude and wish you all an enjoyable time here. Please take the time to look through our State Rooms, and please enjoy your reception.