

**RECEPTION TO MARK THE VISIT OF THE  
SERVICE ADVISOR AND ATTACHÉ GROUP (SAAG) TO TASMANIA  
REMARKS BY  
HIS EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE CHRISTOPHER SHANAHAN  
LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA  
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, MONDAY 12 MAY 2025**

**VICE-REGAL SALUTE**

Good evening, everyone, and welcome to Government House for this reception to mark the visit of the Service Advisor and Attaché Group to Tasmania.

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 would also like to acknowledge Vice-Admiral Theodoros Mikropoulos, Deputy Chief of the Hellenic National Defence General Staff. My wife, Deanna, and I had the pleasure of meeting Admiral Mikropoulos and Greek Ambassador, His Excellency Stavros Venizelos, on Saturday when we attended the Commemoration Ceremony for 84<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Crete together.

It is a pleasure for us to host this reception in honour of the Service Advisor and Attaché Group during your 10-day Long Tour of Australia. On behalf of the people of Tasmania, I extend our warmest greetings to you all. I understand from your program that your most recent component visits to Victoria and Tasmania took you to RAAF Base East Sale and to HMAS *Cerberus*. Yesterday, you had a full day on a cultural visit to the historic Port Arthur site, and today you toured Anglesea Barracks and the Australian Antarctic Division.

You may know that Anglesea Barracks are the oldest continuously operated military establishment in Australia, with the cornerstone of the Officers' Mess laid in 1814. For reference, that is some 16 years before Port Arthur was established.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://armymuseumtasmania.org.au/the-barracks/> accessed 29 Apr 25

As most of you will not have been to Government House before, I thought that you might find it interesting to hear a little about the house and grounds. The main house is not quite as old as Port Arthur or Anglesea Barracks but is certainly of a similar era.

Designed by colonial architect, William Porden Kay, it is widely recognised as one of the finest examples of the neo-Gothic style and is one of the largest of its type in Australia. Built between 1855 and 1857 of sandstone quarried on site, the building has a Welsh slate roof. The pond that you may have noticed on your left as you came down the driveway was the site of the quarry and is now a peaceful garden area.<sup>2</sup>

Speaking of the garden, the house is situated on 15 hectares of land, comprising around 4.5 hectares of established gardens, as well as paddocks, produce gardens, cottages and stables.<sup>3</sup>

This evening is especially significant. It marks the first time that this distinguished group has been formally received in our State—and it is a great honour for Tasmania to do so. We are delighted to acknowledge your presence and to have the opportunity to celebrate the vital roles you play in international diplomacy and security.

Your work—strengthening understanding, building trust, and fostering cooperation between nations—is more important now than ever. As representatives of 25 countries across Europe, Asia, the Americas, the Middle East and Africa, your presence here tonight reflects the breadth and strength of Australia’s international partnerships.

The Service Advisor and Attaché Group stands as a powerful symbol of shared commitment—to peace, security, and the open exchange of ideas. The evolving role of Defence Attachés—now more complex and strategic in a changing geopolitical landscape—serves as a reminder of the importance of strong, principled engagement across borders.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.govhouse.tas.gov.au/government-house/living-history> accessed 29 Apr 25

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.govhouse.tas.gov.au/government-house/the-grounds> accessed 29 Apr 25

Tasmania is proud of its contribution to Australia's defence and strategic sectors, through innovation, research, and the training and deployment of skilled personnel. But just as importantly, we are proud of the hospitality and friendship we extend to our guests—qualities I hope you have already begun to experience.

In that spirit, I encourage you to enjoy the evening, engage with your fellow guests, and take with you fond memories of our island State. Please also take the opportunity to look around our magnificent State Rooms that will be opened to you shortly.

Thank you.