

**COUNCIL ON THE AGEING (COTA) TASMANIA  
RECEPTION TO MARK  
WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY (WEAAD) 2025  
REMARKS BY  
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC  
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA  
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, MONDAY 16 JUNE 2025**

Good evening, everyone. I warmly welcome you all to Government House for this reception to mark World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 2025.

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.

This month marks a decade since Tasmanians first began walking together under the banner of the Lifelong Respect Walks—a powerful and visible expression of our collective stand against elder abuse. These walks, held across Hobart, Launceston, and Devonport, send a clear message: we do not tolerate the abuse, neglect or exploitation of older Tasmanians. We choose instead dignity, inclusion, and lifelong respect.

Elder abuse is, sadly, prevalent. One in six older Australians is subjected to abuse each year, whether financial, emotional, physical, psychological, sexual, or through neglect. Too often, abuse is hidden in silence, kept out of sight by fear, shame, or a lack of awareness.

Tasmania has the highest proportion of older residents in Australia, with over 40% of our community aged over 50<sup>1</sup>. Addressing elder abuse is not only a moral obligation, it is essential to the social and economic health of our community.

COTA Tasmania's *Older Voices for Change* speaks from lived experience, with the courage to share stories that help illuminate what has too long been hidden. They

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<sup>1</sup> Email Kate Crawford / David Hughes 3 June 25

remind us of the power of storytelling and the strength that comes from breaking the silence. I acknowledge and thank you for being with us this evening.

Elder abuse is a community responsibility. Each of us has a responsibility to prevent abuse by staying connected, listening, checking in, and ensuring our systems protect the vulnerable.

Public awareness campaigns, such as 'Wear Purple', offer simple yet meaningful ways to show solidarity. Every purple shirt, shared message, and step in a Respect Walk builds a more informed and compassionate society.

As our State's peak body for older people, COTA champions the rights and interests of older Tasmanians.

This 10-year milestone is an opportunity to expect a Tasmania where in another 10 years, elder abuse is significantly reduced; and every older Tasmanian lives with the dignity, safety, and respect they deserve.

As Governor and Patron of COTA Tasmania, I thank you again for being here, raising your voice, and walking beside older Tasmanians not only today, but every day.

Now, please enjoy the reception.

Thank you.