

**RECEPTION TO MARK THE
2025 ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING OF THE
AUSTRALASIAN EPIDEMIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, THURSDAY 17 JULY 2025**

Good evening, everyone. I warmly welcome you all to Government House to mark the 2025 Annual Scientific Meeting of your Australasian Epidemiological Association.

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.

To all who have travelled to Hobart from across Australia, New Zealand and further afield, may I extend a warm welcome to Tasmania.

You have already been involved with pre-conference workshops and a full program today, including the Ian Prior Oration. Still, I hope you have had some time to experience some of our Tasmanian hospitality and see some of our capital city.

This year's conference theme, *"Embracing Change: Epidemiological Methods for the Future,"* is timely and vital. As we face an era of technological advancement, artificial intelligence, and real-time data monitoring, your discipline of epidemiology is evolving rapidly. Your conference program includes topics such as data ethics and statistical techniques in the age of big data, mental health, women's and children's health, cancer, and e-health trials using phone apps. You will also consider the design of surveillance systems that optimise machine learning to enable rapid forecasting of infectious diseases.

Our State has long been at the forefront of epidemiological and public health research, much of it driven by our Menzies Institute for Medical Research and the University of Tasmania.

Indeed, as highlighted in this afternoon's Ian Prior Oration by Professor Anne-Louise Ponsonby, Tasmania made important global contributions – from pioneering research on sudden infant death syndrome to ongoing work in multiple sclerosis and pollution-related health impacts. Professor Ponsonby played a pivotal role in the SIDS research, which was instrumental in changing international guidelines on infant sleep safety.

Other significant advances made in Tasmania include the eradication of hydatid disease in our state, the first use of general anaesthetic in surgery, the first successful internal heart massage through an incision, and the first use of fluoride in an Australian capital city water supply.

Your Association is a leading voice in promoting excellence and innovation and in fostering a strong, diverse, and engaged professional community. I am especially pleased that tonight's reception includes the presentation of Fellowships to recognise some of these achievements. To our new Fellows, I extend my heartfelt congratulations.

Thank you for the important work that you all do. May I also acknowledge your co-convenors for this year's conference, Brigid Lynch and Brooklyn Fraser, and your excellent choice of venue.

I hope your time here in Hobart proves intellectually enriching, professionally rewarding, and personally memorable.

It is a pleasure to host you this evening.

Enjoy your reception.