

**AFTERNOON TEA FOR BOWLS AUSTRALIA
TO MARK THE 180TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
FIRST GAME OF LAWN BOWLS PLAYED IN AUSTRALIA
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, MONDAY 28 JULY 2025**

Good afternoon, everyone. I warmly welcome you all to Government House to celebrate the 180th anniversary of the first game of lawn bowls played in Australia, right here in 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.

Back in 1844, well before this Government House was built, English migrant Frederick Lipscombe built a bowling green behind the Beach Tavern, which he owned, in Sandy Bay.¹

Then on 1st January 1845, he competed there against fellow Englishman Mr T. Burgess. This was the first recorded match of lawn bowls in Australia,² so making Tasmania the historic home of lawn bowls.

Mr Lipscombe was also a prominent member of the community, joining the City Council and representing Kingborough in the House of Assembly³.

His name is also on the Avenue in Sandy Bay that runs uphill from what was the Beach Tavern.

¹ Sullivan, Patrick (1986). *Guinness Bowls – The Records*. Guinness Superlatives Ltd. pp. 140–143, referenced in [Bowls Australia](#), accessed 17 July 2025.

² Ibid. and [History of Lawn Bowls](#), accessed 17 July 2025

³ The Tasmanian News, 14 May 1887, page 2, [accessed via Trove](#) 17 July 2025; [Frederick Lipscombe: Tasmanian Parliament](#), accessed 17 July 2025

In the 180 years since Mr Lipscombe and Mr Burgess played that first match, lawn bowls has thrived in Australia. It has fostered community, connection and wellbeing for generations of Australians, welcoming players of all ages, backgrounds and abilities in both social and elite settings.⁴

Bowls Australia represents nearly two million participants and 1,800 clubs nationwide, demonstrating the popularity of lawn bowls over these decades.⁵ I commend Bowls Australia on reaching this 180th milestone, and on your efforts to grow your sport.

Today, I understand Bowls Australia has launched a new strategic plan, setting an ambitious course for the future of your sport. You also have a campaign to see lawn bowls included in the 2032 Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games.⁶

May I wish you the best in working toward these goals, and in ensuring that bowls remains a popular, accessible and inclusive sport for generations to come.

Here in Tasmania, we are looking forward to welcoming hundreds of bowls players, officials, and supporters from around the country to our North West Coast for the Nationals later this year.

This will be the first time the competition has been held in our State. May I commend Bowls Australia for bringing these events to Burnie and Devonport this November.

Finally, thank you to everyone who has joined us for today's celebration, including Bowls Australia representatives, as well as players and officials who have joined us from around Tasmania and interstate.

Please enjoy your reception and take the opportunity to explore our beautiful State Rooms.

Thank you.

⁴ Email from Bowls Australia, 16 July 2025.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.