

**RECEPTION TO WELCOME DELEGATES VISITING HOBART AS PART OF
THE YOUNG LEADERSHIP DIALOGUE FACILITATED BY THE
AUSTRALIAN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP DIALOGUE
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, FRIDAY 8 AUGUST 2025**

Good evening, everyone. It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to Government House as part of the Young Leadership Dialogue facilitated by the Australian American Leadership Dialogue.

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.

We are delighted that you are holding your AALD Academy Program here in Hobart over a busy three days, I quote, "to explore key global challenges through a unique regional lens, engaging in discussions on heritage, culture, political leadership, Antarctic research, climate studies, sustainability leadership, and economic development." ¹

May I make a few remarks about Tasmania, particularly for our interstate and international delegates. We are the world's 26th largest island. Our population density is low, with about 570,000 people living in an area about the size of Sri Lanka, with a population of around 22 million. We are renowned for our clean air, high-quality produce, accessibility to walks, and for large areas of listed wilderness. In fact, around half of our State is set aside for national parks and reserves.²

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 30s. The spread of infectious diseases also had fatal consequences.

¹ <https://www.aald.org/2024/12/15/2025-aald-forum/> accessed 23 Jul 25

² <https://parks.tas.gov.au/about-us/managing-our-parks-and-reserves/reserve-listing>, accessed 8 August 2025.

Currently, we have some 30,000 Tasmanians who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.³

Turning to your program, you will have discussions on reconciliation and cultural leadership. You will visit historic places, including the Cascade Brewery, the Cascades Female Factory and the Port Arthur Historic Site, which will stimulate your discussions.

You will engage with our Terrapin Puppet Theatre, a leader in puppetry, storytelling, and community engagement, and learn about the significant value arts and creativity have throughout Tasmania. And through the Tasmania Football Club, or “Tasmania Devils”, you will learn that sport is not just entertainment, but about regional identity and pride.

You will also consider Defence and Security through a Tasmanian lens. You will learn about the Port Arthur tragedy in 1996, and how we reformed Australia’s laws on firearms in response to that tragedy. Our State’s maritime and defence sector is growing, and our educational institutions, including the Australian Maritime College, have a critical role in training the next generation of naval and defence professionals.

Finally, you will learn about Tasmania’s role as our Gateway to Antarctica and our science, diplomacy, and environmental stewardship. Our Australian Antarctic Division, our University of Tasmania Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies, and our CSIRO’s Oceans and Atmosphere Division are all headquartered in Hobart. Hobart is also home to the Secretariat for the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, known as CCAMLR, which stands as an example of multilateral diplomacy at its best.

We are honoured to host you all. May the insights you gain here not only enhance your leadership skills but also strengthen the bonds between our two Nations.

Thank you and enjoy your reception.

³<https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/IQS6>, accessed 8 August 2025.