

**MORNING TEA WITH STUDY TASMANIA AND HOBART CITY COUNCIL  
INTERNATIONAL STUDENT AMBASSADORS  
ADDRESS BY  
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC  
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA  
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, WEDNESDAY 20 AUGUST 2025**

I welcome all our International Student Ambassadors for 2025 to Government House.

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 and recognise their enduring culture and deep connection to land, sea, sky and waters.

The Commonwealth of Australia is a constitutional monarchy and a federation.

Our federal system means that we have three levels of government – Federal or Commonwealth, State and Local.

- The Commonwealth and each State have their own Constitution, or set of rules, which provides for the structure of government.
- Each State has its own Governor, and the Commonwealth has a Governor-General.
- The King is our reigning monarch and Australia's Head of State.
- The Governor is The King's representative in Tasmania and exercises the constitutional powers of Head of State in Tasmania. So, The King has no day-to-day role in Tasmania.
- The Governor is not elected.
- The King makes the appointment on the advice of our Premier.

- The role is apolitical and independent, and the Governor represents all Tasmanians, regardless of their political affiliations.
- The term of office is usually five years.

The Governor's role has three main areas, which I call the three 'C's':

## **1. Constitutional or Legal**

Our Constitution provides that both Houses and the Governor make up our Parliament.

- Before a bill or document setting out a proposed law becomes a law, it must be passed by both Houses of Parliament and then be brought to the Governor to give assent to the Bill by signing it. By giving Royal Assent, the Bill becomes an Act of Parliament and an enforceable law.
- I also chair Executive Council meetings about once per fortnight.
- The Executive Council consists of the Premier and his Cabinet.
- This meeting is where appointments of judges, magistrates, tribunal and senior statutory appointments are signed off, and regulations are signed off.

The Governor acts on the advice of her Ministers, unless exercising what is called a reserve power. Examples of reserve powers include appointment of the Premier, removal of the Premier, refusal of a dissolution.

I have been busy over the last few months with a request for an election and the appointment of the Premier after the election.

## **The second area of the Governor's role is:**

### **2. Ceremonial**

- I swear-in the Premier and Ministers and Supreme Court Justices.
- I recognise Tasmanians at investiture ceremonies for their service to our community, such as with the Order of Australia or bravery or service medals.
- I deliver speeches at important ceremonial events such as Anzac Day or Remembrance Day.
- I open Parliament after a general election.
- On behalf of the State, we host Ambassadors and High Commissioners from other countries, who visit and stay here about once per month. A formal dinner is held so that the Ambassador can meet members of our Tasmanian community.
- An example of my ceremonial role is when, in May 2023, I had the honour of representing our State at the Coronation of Their Majesties King Charles and Queen Camilla.

### **3. Community Engagement**

Turning to the third area of my role, community engagement, this is rewarding, interesting, and varied — from opening a Cuboree for scouts as the Chief Scout in Tasmania, to visiting each of the 29 municipalities in Tasmania. I have had the opportunity to visit various vessels, including submarines, navy ships, tall ships, and the Antarctic icebreaker RSV *Nuyina*. I also attend Statewide events for local organisations. I am currently a Patron of, and support, over 130 charities and not-for-profit organisations.

This is a valuable way of meeting people and community organisations all around our State.

So, there is no such thing as a 'normal' day in my day as Governor. Each day is unique, and each event on that day is distinct. For instance, one morning, I hosted a group of young school students to discuss my role. Later, at lunch, I hosted an Ambassador, and in the evening, I presented some awards. In between events, I have papers to read or speeches to work on.

## **Conclusion**

The role of Governor involves formality and tradition, balanced with modernity. As part of this modernity, I aim to increase access to Government House for as many diverse groups as possible and to enhance understanding of the role of the Governor.

Additionally, through our social media, I aim to enhance and increase access to information about my role and activities for people across our State.