

**RECEPTION FOR DELEGATES ATTENDING THE
85TH ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING OF THE
AUSTRALIAN ORTHOPAEDIC ASSOCIATION
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, TUESDAY 14 OCTOBER 2025**

VICE-REGAL SALUTE

Good evening, everyone. I warmly welcome you all to Government House for this reception for delegates to the 85th annual scientific meeting (ASM) of the Australian Orthopaedic 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.

May I extend an extra welcome to all our delegates from overseas. I am delighted that you join us in Tasmania, a place, in my unbiased opinion, of exceptional natural beauty, rich history, and warm hospitality.

May I, particularly for our international and national delegates, give you a snapshot of our island State.¹

Tasmania is the world's 26th largest island, around the size of Sri Lanka. Where Sri Lanka has a population of 22 million, Tasmania has about 570,000.

Our island story is complex, and of course ancient. It has 40,000 years of continuous Aboriginal heritage and culture. The Aboriginal population diminished over a period of 30 years during a period of conflicts, especially during the Black War in the 1820s to early 30s and the spread of infectious

¹ These facts about Tasmania are also referred to in previous speeches, including the International Seaweed Symposium 20/2/2022 and the National Bishops of Anglican Church of Australia reception 17/3/2023.

diseases. Today, we have around 30,000 people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander living in Tasmania.²

Today, about 45% of our total Tasmanian land area is protected within National Parks, reserves and the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. The latter covers almost 20 percent of the island and includes significant Aboriginal heritage and cultural sites.³

Tasmania has long been recognised as the principal gateway to Antarctica. We have the Australian Antarctic Division in Hobart and the Australian icebreaker *Nuyina* is based here. Also, headquartered here is the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic and Marine Living Resources Secretariat.

In your medical field, you may be interested to know that Tasmanians have been innovative. In 1944, Dr William McIntyre, a Launceston obstetrician, invented the infant respirator, a humidicrib prototype that provided a safe environment for sick or premature babies.

Later, in 1977, Dr Jim Frost designed a cot monitor to check on the breathing patterns of infants thought to be susceptible to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

In 1995, our University of Tasmania's Menzies Institute for Medical Research identified for the first time a baby's sleeping position as a major contributing cause of SIDS.⁴

Our Menzies Institute has other significant medical breakthroughs to its credit, including that:

- genetic markers are linked to men's risk of developing prostate cancer;
- higher vitamin D levels are associated with a lower relapse risk in multiple sclerosis;

² <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples/census-population-and-housing-counts-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-australians/latest-release>

Accessed 30 August 2023

³ <https://www.discovertasmania.com.au/experiences/stories/world-heritage-wilderness/>

Accessed 30 August 2023

⁴ Ibid.

- nerve cells in undamaged parts of the brain can remodel themselves in response to acquired brain injury; and
- platelets found in the blood kill the malaria parasite during the early stages of a malarial infection.

So, your meeting may be in Australia's smallest capital city, but one with a track record in medical science and research.

May I wish you all the best for your 85th annual scientific meeting, encouraging connection, between Australian orthopaedic surgeons and international colleagues, between clinicians, researchers, trainees and mentors, across subspecialties, and between your science and its impact on patients, communities, and society.⁵

Finally, may I thank the organising committee for their inspired choice of location for this year's meeting.

Please now enjoy your reception and also visit our State Rooms.

Thank you.

⁵ Email Scott Fletcher 3 Oct 25