

CONSULAR CORPS OF TASMANIA
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, THURSDAY 9 OCTOBER 2025

Good evening. I warmly welcome you all to Government House.

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 deep connection to land, sea and waters, and their ongoing commitment to community.

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all here. Among us, we have a range of Honorary Consuls, with 29 countries represented. This recognises the important global connections that our State has fostered and maintains.

As Honorary Consuls, you facilitate our diplomatic relations and economic partnerships that extend well beyond our shores.

You also coordinate official visits by Ambassadors and High Commissioners from your respective nations. The Ambassadors are always impressive, interesting and speak multiple languages. These visits are valued for establishing and strengthening ties, sharing cultural and international perspectives, and promoting our Tasmanian produce, industry, and arts to the world.

We always enjoy the Ambassadors' stays at Government House. On these visits, we hold a formal dinner, at which many of you have been guests. We showcase our Tasmanian produce on the dinner menu, and our chef explains the produce used. We also enjoy showing our visitors the tree plantings for Royalty and other dignitaries, of which Government House is very proud. We are the only Government House in the country that has such plantings.

Tonight, may we celebrate the outgoing Dean of the Consular Corps, Professor Nitin Verma, who has been the Honorary Consul for Timor-Leste in Tasmania since July 2006. He is well known to Government House through his

various roles and visits, including a recent visit with the President of Timor-Leste, José Ramos-Horta.

As Dean, Professor Verma has been a role model for the Consular Corps, establishing an advisory committee within the Corps and increasing the level of engagement with the community through various functions and events. He approached his Dean's role with enthusiasm and professionalism. We all thank him for his service.

We are pleased to welcome our incoming Dean, Frank McGregor, Honorary Consul for the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland. Mr McGregor has had the advantage of observing five Deans before him and may continue some of their approaches as he leads the Corps for the next two years. I wish you the best of success as Dean.

May I also take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the following for their service on behalf of their respective nations, as they retire as Honorary Consuls:

- The Honourable Peter Slipper, Honorary Consul for Brazil
- Mrs Milena Mills, Honorary Consul for the Czech Republic
- Mr Peter Sympkes, Honorary Consul for The Netherlands, and
- Ms Rachel Rose, Honorary Consul for Romania.

May we also welcome and extend our best wishes to new Consular appointments:

- Ms Ekaterina Skolidis, Honorary Consul for Greece
- Mr Martin Bicevskis, Honorary Consul for Latvia
- Major-General Greg Melick AO, Honorary Consul for Lithuania
- Ms Alice van der Woude, Honorary Consul for The Netherlands, and
- Mr Eoin Breen, Honorary Vice-Consul for Timor-Leste.

May I, on behalf of all of the Corps, acknowledge and thank Ms Ruth Baird, Director of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, as she departs for an overseas posting. The relationship between DFAT and the Corps has been very productive under Ruth's leadership, and all members wish her well in her diplomatic posting.

I also acknowledge the support provided by Ms Deanna Turnbull and her staff at the State Protocol Office. Without her, most visiting dignitaries and diplomats to the State might not have got beyond the Arrivals area at Hobart Airport!

The history of the Honorary Consular Corps in Tasmania stretches back to 1843. Countries that no longer exist have been represented in Tasmania and some Consuls have represented up to five countries! Tonight is an opportunity to celebrate the work of Honorary Consuls, and to wish you all the best for the coming year.

Thank you, Consular Corps, and now please enjoy your time here at Government House as we listen to Miffy and Rock on piano and violin.