

TASMANIAN SEAFARERS' MEMORIAL ANNUAL SERVICE
SPEECH BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
ESPLANADE WEST, TRIABUNNA, SUNDAY 19 OCTOBER 2025

Good morning. I am delighted to join you all here at the Tasmanian Seafarers' Memorial, Triabunna.

I begin by acknowledging the Palawa 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.

Thank you for inviting us to join you for this annual Memorial Service to honour and remember those seafarers who lost their lives in Tasmanian waters.

The Seafarers' Memorial is dedicated to all Tasmanian seafarers – civilian and members of the armed services during peacetime as well as times of conflict – who lost their lives at sea. It is also dedicated to all those seafarers, regardless of occupation or nationality, who lost their lives in Tasmanian waters.

While the maritime events are often tragic or unexplained, the plaques around the Memorial ensure that the memory of the lost lives on. This is important for surviving family members, friends and crew, who must deal with the sadness and devastation following a seafarer's death.

Happily, there are no plaques added to the Memorial this year. Every such year is to be celebrated.

We all know that the waters around Tasmania can be treacherous; none more so that the sometimes seemingly benign waters off our east coast where we stand today. Certainly not today.

The loss of a young local fisherman in rough weather off Maria Island on 19 December 1995, led to the establishment of this Memorial.

The young man took the place of a less experienced person in a dinghy being towed to land and was tipped out and drowned. Many local fishermen assisted with the search for the man.¹

The young man's plaque was the first to be laid at the Memorial. We hope that it continues to provide some comfort to his family, friends and colleagues.

Despite many technical improvements and increased safety awareness over recent years, seafaring remains a challenging and often dangerous undertaking.

We remember those who have been lost at sea. We feel for those who are left behind. And we hope for those who are on voyages on our oceans.

I wish you all fair winds and following seas.

Thank you.

¹ Personal communication from Kath Fergusson, 23 September 2025.