

DOVER HISTORY GROUP
OPENING OF THE EXHIBITION, 'WRECK OF THE GEORGE III'
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
DOVER MUSEUM AND GALLERY, SATURDAY 22 NOVEMBER 2025

Good morning, everyone. It is my pleasure and privilege to join you to open this 'Wreck of the George III' exhibition.

Thank you to the Dover District School students for your Acknowledgement of Country.

The *George III* was a convict transport vessel. In 1835, after its long voyage from England, it came to a tragic end, not far from where we stand today¹. The Captain decided to take a shorter route through the D'Entrecasteaux Channel, rather than Storm Bay. This was only one day before the voyage should have ended. The *George III* struck an uncharted rock, known to local whalers. The collision was followed by confusion, desperation, and great loss. 133 men, women, and children perished. The collision rock is now known as the 'George III' rock.

For those onboard — convicts, crew, guards, and families, the journey was one of uncertainty, hardship, and enforced displacement. Their final moments were within sight of land and are surrounded by conjecture about the conduct of the Captain and crew², in preventing over 100 convicts from leaving the hold. An enquiry was held but with no consequences.

This tragedy is one of the most significant maritime disasters in Tasmania's early history. For many years, the story of the *George III* has not been told. Exhibitions like this can help highlight the history.

This exhibition gives us the opportunity to understand what happened. We also get a glimpse of stories and relationships of those whose lives were cut short by the tragedy.

¹ ["George III" | Monument Australia](#)

² *Ibid*

Coincidentally, we have just come back from King Island and learned of many shipwrecks in the 1800s. In 1835, the *Neva* was wrecked with 224 dead, mostly female convicts.

May I acknowledge and thank the curators, researchers, local historians, volunteers and community members whose efforts and dedication brought this exhibition into being. I thank you all for your commitment to preserving the past and ensure that these stories endure.

May I also acknowledge any descendants of those aboard, for whom this history may feel personal. May this exhibition offer dignity and remembrance.

As Governor, I am honoured to now officially open the exhibition, 'Wreck of the George III'.