

**YOUNG LEADERS OF TASMANIA 2025 SCHOOL BUDDIES PROGRAM
GRADUATION CEREMONY
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, TUESDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2025**

VICE-REGAL SALUTE

Good afternoon, everyone. I warmly welcome you all to Government House to celebrate the Young Leaders of Tasmania School Buddies Program for 2025.

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.

This afternoon, we are recognising the young people who have promoted inclusion in our Tasmanian community by taking part in the School Buddies program. Together you have helped to promote understanding and to change peoples' perceptions of disability.

About one in five Australians lives with disability¹. I quote, "they should experience their human rights – with equity, justice, dignity and respect."²

May I commend Young Leaders of Tasmania and founder Keren Franks, on your work to develop a statewide program bringing together students with disabilities and their peers in an inclusive education environment. I also acknowledge the Department for Education, Children and Young People for their support.

Today, we congratulate students from Bellerive and Howrah Primary Schools, Clarence High School and The Friends' School who have attended fortnightly visits at the Southern Support School in 2025.

¹ [People with Disability Australia](#), accessed 13 November 2025

² Ibid.

In the North West, students from Cooee and Devonport Primary Schools and Reece High School have visited the North West Support School this year, and tomorrow the Northern Program will launch at the Northern Support School.³

Well done to all participants. You have not only made new friends but also developed your own skills.

On the impact of the program, may I share this quote from Clarence High School student, Alex:

“I have learnt that if someone has a disability, it does not define them. Because even if they learn differently or have other needs, we all feel the same emotions underneath.”⁴ End of quote.

Congratulations once again to everyone involved in the School Buddies program for 2025. I look forward to hearing about your experiences over afternoon tea.

It is now my pleasure to present you with your Graduation Certificates.

Thank you.

Paula ... *[DOS reads names of recipients]*

³ Information provided by Keren Franks to DOS, 5 November 2025

⁴ Ibid.