

**AUSTRALIA-JAPAN SOCIETY OF TASMANIA
RECEPTION TO MARK THE 55TH ANNIVERSARY
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, MONDAY 15 DECEMBER 2025**

VICE-REGAL SALUTE

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

I begin by saying that our thoughts are with the Jewish community, those who have lost loved ones, the first responders and all those affected by the tragic events that took place yesterday.

I acknowledge 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, sky and waters.

Tonight, we celebrate the 55th anniversary of the Australia-Japan Society of Tasmania. As Patron, I am pleased that the Society continues as a platform for cultural exchange and understanding of our respective cultures.

A common theme that has evolved in the history of this Australia-Japan Society is the notion of a *welcoming* between two cultures that share island living.

As Tasmanians, we consider ourselves 'islanders', separate from 'the mainland island' to our north. In Japan, everyone lives on an island, be it one of the major islands like Honshu or one of the smaller islands like Shikoku. We both support vibrant coastal and maritime cultures.

Tasmania has long welcomed visitors from Japan. Fishing boats that regularly visited from Yaizu gave rise to the Hobart-Yaizu sister city relationship. This was established in 1977 by then Lord Mayor Doug Plaister and his wife Fumiko. She sadly passed away in June this year.

The Society has always supported this sister city relationship. Robert Wedd, a Society life member who is with us tonight, attended the first meeting of the sister city committee.

Our link to Yaizu saw a program of school exchanges established by Maude Williamson. The first exchange was a visit from Yaizu to Taroona High School in 1988. These exchanges continue to this day and have contributed to the ongoing success of the sister city relationship.

The maritime connection continues with the annual visit of the *Umitaka Maru*, a scientific research and training vessel operated by the Tokyo University of Marine Science and Technology.

Yukiko Burns, another life member of this Society, initiated this special relationship. She is also present tonight. So too is Dr Masato Moteki, who spent a year with our Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies in 2007.

The Society continues to welcome students sailing on the *Umitaka Maru* with cultural activities and excursions.

Over the past 55 years, the Australia-Japan Society has worked to build bridges between our respective cultures and to bring people together. The relationship between Tasmania and Japan is now broader and deeper than ever, and I hope that we continue to grow this into the future.

Congratulations on turning 55! Please enjoy your reception.