

**RECEPTION TO MARK LOHRI AND THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF
THE PUNJABI SOCIETY OF TASMANIA**

REMARKS BY

**HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA**

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, TUESDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2026

VICE-REGAL SALUTE IS PLAYED

Namaskar, Sat Sri Akal, and a warm good evening.

I welcome you all to mark two significant and joyful occasions: the celebration of Lohri, one of the most cherished festivals of Punjab, and the second anniversary of your Punjabi Society of Tasmania.

May 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 enduring culture and deep connection to land, sea, sky, and waters.

Tasmania is quietly emerging as a welcoming home for a steadily growing Punjabi community. The close-knit relationships and sense of belonging that characterise our Tasmanian way of life resonate with the village and town traditions of Punjab. We share values of family and community.

We are also fortunate to benefit from strong and enduring connections between Tasmania and India, strengthened through visits and exchanges that continue to build understanding, friendship, and cooperation. We hosted His Excellency Mr Manpreet Vohra and his wife Naseem for a state visit in November 2023, and in December last year I met with Consul-General Dr Sushil Kumar when he visited Tasmania. These visits remind us of the importance of friendship, dialogue and cultural exchange.

As we celebrate Lohri, we observe a festival that has marked the changing of the seasons and the rhythms of the land for generations. Traditionally observed in January, Lohri is a harvest festival marked by lighting a bonfire, sharing songs and dances, and a joyful gathering of family and friends.

Tonight, we also mark the second anniversary of the Punjabi Society of Tasmania. In just two years, the Society has become a focal point for cultural celebration, community support, and engagement with Tasmanians. Congratulations to those who founded this organisation.

May the spirit of Lohri, of light, warmth, and renewal, continue to guide the Punjabi Society of Tasmania as it grows in the years ahead. And may it also inspire all of us to nurture the bonds of friendship and community that make Tasmania such a special place to call home.

Thank you, and now please enjoy your reception.