

ZONTA CLUB OF HOBART INC
AFTERNOON TEA TO MARK UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL DAY
FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SCIENCE
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
DRAWING ROOM, WEDNESDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2026

Good afternoon, everyone, and a warm welcome to Government House on this United Nations International Day for Women and Girls in Science.

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.

Today we mark this important international day and also celebrate our scientists of the future.

We know that women play a critical role in science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields (STEM). However, as the United Nations acknowledges, more needs to be done to remove the barriers and biases that prevent women and girls pursuing careers in STEM.¹

Globally, women make up just one-third of the global scientific community and in some countries fewer than one in ten researchers are women.²

This gender inequality can limit diversity of ideas and research, introduce bias in research, and risk overlooking key perspectives as we tackle global challenges.³

¹ [International Day for Women and Girls in Science](#), accessed 28 January 2026

² [UNESCO Call to Action to Close the Gender Gap in Science](#), accessed 29 January 2026

³ Ibid.

May I therefore commend Zonta International on its commitment to working towards equality for all women, including in STEM fields.

Each year Zonta provides awards to outstanding female STEM professionals from around the world. May I note that Tasmanian Kate Johnson has been nominated by the Zonta Club of Hobart and endorsed by Zonta District 23 for the 2026 International Awards.

Hobart Zonta also encourages young Tasmanian women to pursue careers in STEM through scholarships to Year 12 students who are committed to continuing STEM studies at university.

Today we acknowledge the three talented students who have been selected for 2026. They will be able to pursue their interest in science, mathematics and medicine thanks to the assistance provided by these awards.

May I congratulate Hobart Zonta and all the sponsors who have made the awards possible. And now, I am pleased to present this year's recipients.

David ...

[OS reads citations for the three recipients who will each come forward separately to accept their certificate from HE]

On conclusion of presentations:

May we have another round of applause for today's recipients. Congratulations once again, and I now invite you all to enjoy afternoon tea.