

**LAW COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA
SUPERANNUATION LAWYERS' CONFERENCE
ADDRESS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
CROWNE PLAZA HOBART, THURSDAY 26 MARCH 2026**

Good morning, everyone. I welcome you all to this 2026 Superannuation Lawyers' Conference, and a special welcome to Tasmania to our interstate delegates.

Your conference theme, 'A Rock and a Hard Place', reflects the challenges facing superannuation trustees and their advisers in the current regulatory and international environment. In opening, I need to confess that I know little about superannuation law apart from being careful to ensure my self managed fund is compliant and avoid fines and penalties! So, I am sure it is best that I do not talk about superannuation, but instead make a few remarks about our island State, particularly for our interstate delegates.

Tasmania is the world's 26th-largest inhabited island, about the size of Sri Lanka. Where Sri Lanka has a population of 22 million, Tasmania has about 570,000.

Our island story is complex and ancient with 40,000 years of continuous Aboriginal heritage and culture.

Our Aboriginal population diminished over a period of 30 years of conflicts, especially during the Black War in the 1820s to early 1830s and the spread of infectious diseases. Today, we have around 30,000 people who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander living in Tasmania.¹

Our island is the last remnant of the ancient continent of Gondwanaland, with a legacy of complex geology. We have our planet's largest exposure of dolerite, a beautiful example of which is the officially named Organ Pipes of our kunanyi/Mount Wellington.

¹ <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples/estimates-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-australians/latest-release/accessed> 24/06/2026.

About 45% of our total Tasmanian land area is protected within National Parks, reserves and the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. The latter covers almost 20 percent of our island and includes significant Aboriginal heritage and cultural sites.²

We have eleven major lakes and about 3,000 smaller ones, called tarns, many of which are in our central highlands.

Tasmania has long been recognised as a principal gateway to Antarctica. The Australian Antarctic Division is in Hobart, the Australian icebreaker *Nuyina* is based here, and the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources Secretariat is also headquartered here.

Tasmania has a rich cultural and intellectual heritage. May I mention some examples:

First, Australia's first novel titled *Quintus Servinton* was written by a Van Diemen's Land convict, Henry Savery, in 1830.³ He began writing the novel in his prison cell in Hobart, where he was doing time for forgery. Our forgers' legacy can also be found at Government House Tasmania, where we display an exquisite painting of Hobart Town by artist Knut Bull, a convicted forger of Norwegian heritage. Also, the ceilings in the ballroom and dining room were painted by another ex-convict forger, John Wiltson.

A second example is that the movement for our Australian Federation was started in Tasmania in the 1850s. Sir William Deane, former High Court Justice and Governor-General, fairly assessed Tasmanian lawyer and politician Andrew Inglis Clark as, quote, 'the primary architect of our Australian constitution'.⁴ Significantly, Clark modified Hare's electoral system to create our Hare-Clark voting system, still used today in Tasmania. Clark's contributions to Tasmania were recognised by the Hobart electorate being renamed to Clark in 2019.

² <https://www.discovertasmania.com.au/experiences/stories/world-heritage-wilderness/accessed> 24/06/2026.

³ <https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/quintus-servinton#:~:text=Quintus%20Servinton%3A%20A>, accessed 19 May 2022.

⁴ <https://www.utas.edu.au/library/exhibitions/clark/work.html>

Thirdly, Tasmanians have a long list of inventions. These include a fibreglass Igloo Satellite Cabin for Antarctic Living; the world's first composite beam strengthener for bridges and houses; the world's first laminated tennis racket; the wave-piercing catamaran, and the Dynasphere lightning protection.⁵

And may I add that Tasmania claims more heritage-listed stone buildings than the rest of Australia, together.

May I conclude with a tragic but remarkable Tasmanian story. In January 1975, the Tasman Bridge was cleaved in half by a tanker, with loss of life. One result was that a small ferry company began to operate across the Derwent to compensate for the loss of the bridge. The company also expanded to build boats. Today, that company, Incat, makes some of the world's largest, fastest, quietest commercial catamarans, which are in service in many countries around the world. Incat has just built the world's largest battery-electric ferry and has a contract to build three electric ferries for delivery to Denmark. So, out of little things, big things certainly grow!

May I wish you all a most successful and enjoyable conference in Hobart.

⁵ *Tasmanian Inventions & Innovations*, Launceston, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, 1987, various pagings.