

**MORNING TEA FOR MEMBERS OF THE AUSTRALIANA SOCIETY  
REMARKS BY  
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC  
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA  
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, TUESDAY 31 MARCH 2026**

Good morning, everyone. I warmly welcome you all to Government House. May I extend a special welcome to President Colin Thomas and Office Bearers from New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania and members from across Australia.

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 deep connection to land, sea, sky, and waters.

Your Society has supported acquisitions and conservation work for museums and cultural institutions across Australia. Here in Tasmania, we are especially grateful for your Society's work in identifying a chair that had been supplied to our first Government House Hobart by cabinetmaker, Joseph Woolley, in 1832. We appreciate the Society's role in ensuring this important piece of Tasmanian history will be preserved and returned to its historical home.

Your tour in Tasmania has been very busy, with visits to 49 historic properties and collections, as we have much to show. May I note that Tasmania claims more than half of Australia's pre-1850 buildings, giving our State a concentration of early colonial architecture and heritage landscapes.<sup>1</sup>

As your Society approaches its 50th anniversary, may I thank you for your work of heritage conservation and for visiting Tasmania. I am delighted that Government House Tasmania has a small part in your tour.

This House was built between 1855 and 1858, the second significant Government House in Van Diemen's Land. The House was designed by VDL Colonial Architect, William Porden Kay, and built from sandstone quarried on site, from the quarry pond you may have seen at the end of the drive.

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<sup>1</sup> Email Colin Thomas 24 Mar 26

Today, if you visit the Drawing Room, you can see two views of Old Government House, which was situated near Franklin Square in Macquarie St. On the window side, the small painting is by Haughton Forrest, which he painted from a model that Lady Franklin ordered built in 1837, here on loan from TMAG. In the painting, the walls were whitish timber, as depicted, but the roofs were dark tile rather than green.

The second is a delightful Knud Bull oil on canvas of Hobart and its surrounds, circa 1855. Old Government House is depicted as a long, low building in the centre of the painting. Knud Bull, a Norwegian living in London, was convicted of forging banknotes. This may explain why his works are exceptional for their detail. Please see if you can find the artist's signature.

In respect of the furniture in this House, while much of it was imported from London and Paris, some of it was made by Lawrence Butler, a cabinet maker and convict, who was granted a ticket of leave and ran a successful furniture workshop in the Sydney lumber yard.<sup>2</sup> Other pieces were made here in Hobart Town.<sup>3</sup>

You may be interested to see some furniture in the Governor's study. There are two cedar bookcases made within the colony, circa 1840, and originally located at the Old Government House. An arrow mark inside the left cupboard doors indicates that the bookcase was made for the Crown, while a KY shows that the timbers were originated from the King's Yard.

Also, there is a Tasmanian blackwood, casuarina and Australian cedar, oval, stretcher-base Library table. I quote from a 2025 Asset Valuation by Warwick Oakman. "This extraordinary casuarina, broad arrow stamped oval table, commissioned by Governor Arthur from the Sarah Island Lumber Yard in 1825, on the occasion of the separated powers from NSW, upon which all Vice Regal VDL/Tasmanian assent to legislation has been given ever since. Seminal to the importance of Tasmanian furniture and history. ref: J Hawkins research," [end of quote].

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<sup>2</sup> John Hawkins, 'The creation and furnishing of Government House, Hobart' *Australiana*, November 2008, 32 at 33.

<sup>3</sup> As it was called until 1880.

There are also two Australian cedar carver chairs, broad arrow c1835 and an Australian cedar stretcher-base table, broad arrow c1890.

For those interested, we can show you this furniture as part of a tour of the State Rooms. But for now, enjoy your morning tea.

Thank you.