

**AFTERNOON TEA TO MARK THE 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
WAY TO ST JAMES PILGRIMAGE  
REMARKS BY  
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC  
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA  
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, THURSDAY 23 APRIL 2026**

Good afternoon, everyone. It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to mark the 10th anniversary of our Way to St James, Cygnet Pilgrimage.

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.

When Father Michael Tate arrived in Cygnet, in 2015, he recognised that his Tasmanian church was built in a Spanish style dedicated to St James. As we all know, the church of St James, in Santiago de Compostela is the endpoint of one of the most famous pilgrimages in the world.

From Michael's observation came the idea to create a Tasmanian Camino pilgrimage in the tradition of the Camino de Santiago.

The first pilgrims set out in 2016. May we all acknowledge the extraordinary work done by many here today to set up the route, the signage, the food and drinks, the tents, the medical support, the evening music and sing-along for that first Camino.

Like its counterpart in Spain, this pilgrimage invites participants into a time of companionship and reflection.

The symbols of the pilgrimage include the pilgrim passport, the scallop shell, and the pebble carried and finally laid down as an act of release, of letting go of burdens at the journey's end.

The magnificent icon of St James created by Dr John Vella and its carriage along the streets of Cygnet, accompanied by singing pilgrims, to the Church service in St James, is memorable.

This year's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the pilgrimage welcomed a record 170 walkers, joined online by more than 1,400 pilgrims, around the world. The success of our Way to St James over the past decade is due to the dedication and hard work of many. Members of organising committees, volunteers, community supporters, and partners, including those connected with the Cygnet Folk Festival. I am sure we all acknowledge those who could not join us.

So today, as we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Way to St James, we honour not only a decade of pilgrimage but also the tradition that has found its home in the Huon Valley.

Congratulations to Father Michael Tate for the idea and for getting together a committee and volunteers. Congratulations to all those involved over the decade.

Please enjoy the afternoon tea.