

THE ART SOCIETY OF TASMANIA 135th ANNUAL EXHIBITION
SPEECH BY
HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
LADY FRANKLIN GALLERY, LENA VALLEY, FRIDAY 30 AUGUST 2019

Good evening and thank you for inviting Dick and me to attend and open the 135th exhibition of the Art Society of Tasmania.

Dick and I were unable to attend the opening last year due to prior commitments and so it's all the more pleasurable to be here now, as your Patron.

I will also have the honour of announcing the prizewinners, at the end of these remarks. With 44 finalists chosen to be hung and displayed, the decisions of the judges as ever will have been difficult and, I know, made only after considerable deliberations.

This afternoon I had what I thought was to be a sneak preview of the exhibition but instead I had the real pleasure of meeting many of the artists individually and heard about their work and was really able to appreciate and enjoy this eclectic collection of entries: ranging from sculpture, ceramics, oils, watercolours and acrylics of course, but also pastels, ink and pencil, scratchboard and oil and cold wax.

And in terms of subject: birds, landscapes, seascapes, still life and portraits.

I was really struck by the enthusiasm and passion of the artists I met. Well done to everyone who entered; and well done to the judges.

I'll conclude by referring again to the patronage of the Art Society of Tasmania. As you know, Tasmanian Governors have been patrons of the Society for a very long time.

There's also the Vice-regal connection established through the fact that Ancanthe, this gallery, was commissioned by Lady Jane Franklin and opened in 1843, to display local products and plants and encourage learning in Van Diemen's Land.

And on a slightly personal note, I have recently taken a good degree of interest in the Government House watercolour paintings of Lady Teresa Hamilton, who was in Tasmania from 1887 to 1892 when her Husband Sir Robert was Governor.

In 1891 Teresa attended the annual meeting of your organisation, when it was then still called "The Art Association" – and it was at that meeting that the decision was made to change that name to avoid any further confusion with another art group, hence the change to the "Art Society of Tasmania".¹

At that meeting, incidentally, Lady Hamilton was thanked for her, quote, "untiring energy displayed in her efforts to further the interests of the Association, she leaving no stone unturned to forward the work whenever practicable," unquote.

And the meeting the following year was the last attended by Teresa before her return to London, the vote of thanks on that occasion being that the members wished the Art Society of Tasmania to be, quote, "a memorial worthy of her who had done so much in the cause of art and education during her too short stay among them."²

And so there we have two women – Jane Franklin and Teresa Hamilton – who played their part in making the Art Society of Tasmania the respected cultural organisation that it is today. Which is just another reason I'm proud to be opening this 135th exhibition – with, now, the prizes to be announced...

[HE announcements per event run sheet]

¹ Tasmanian News (Hobart), Monday 16 November 1891 page 3.

² Daily Telegraph (Launceston), Monday 14 November 1892.