

**AUSTRALIAN RURAL LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
DRAWING ROOM, GOVERNMENT HOUSE, TUESDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2019**

Good evening and welcome to this reception for participants in Course 25 of the Australian Rural Leadership Program of the ARLF.

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land: the Mouheneener people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community, who have survived invasion and dispossession, and continue to maintain their identity, culture and Indigenous rights.

I would like to acknowledge among you our Tasmanian alumni, led by Caroline Brown and Jim Wilson, who provided the initiative to pitch Tasmania for this Case Study and subsequently organised the program.

And although the Foundation's CEO Matt Linnegar won't be here until Thursday, I would like to also make mention of him, for his having ultimately given the go-ahead for the Tasmanian Case Study.

The Australian Rural Leadership Program has a strong legacy in Tasmania, as evidenced by the alumni network that coordinated this program. Even so, I believe it's acknowledged that Tasmania has not been well represented in recent programs due to lack of interest from applicants – which your presence here is intended to correct, followed by another three events planned in Tasmania this year.

As Governor I applaud that wholeheartedly and congratulate the ARLP on making a determined effort to boost your profile in Australia's island State.

We may have only a small population – barely above the 500,000 mark – but that together with our overwhelmingly rural character suggests that we should be targeted with vigour, because rural leadership, or in some cases the lack of it, affects just about all of us.

In the four years that I have been Governor, Dick and I have travelled extensively throughout the island and we've engaged with many thousands of regional and

rural Tasmanians. We have paid official visits to almost all of the 29 municipalities in the State, usually spending a couple of days in each rural area visiting many rural and farm-based industries.

We have taken a particular interest in school farms – visiting school farms at Hagley, Sheffield and Tasman. And we have engaged with Aboriginal organisations in the North West, North East and the Huon.

Furthermore we work regularly with organisations like the Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania; Foodbank Tasmania; Rural Alive and Well (with whom you have a session tomorrow); CWA in Tasmania, and so on, and from them we know that there are a raft of socio-economic issues impacting negatively on rural communities.

So you may well learn about some of these while you are here. Functional illiteracy, for example, is estimated to affect 48% of Tasmanian adults. Our year 10-12 retention rates at 72% are 12% below the national average. Anything and everything we can do to reverse this is vital. And it seems to me that with your concept of leadership being to improve the lives of rural communities, you have one Tasmanian target right there – perhaps that could be built into a future course with Tasmanian involvement.

I have to say, your program looks most inviting! It's a wonderful and varied combination of professional development, informative and educational talks, socialising and shared reflection.

And we're very pleased that Government House Tasmania is an official part of your program. This building and estate symbolise much of the island's past and of course its present legal and constitutional arrangements.

The building itself was completed in 1858 to coincide with Van Diemen's Land becoming the self-governing Colony of Tasmania – although underneath us we have two much earlier remnants of foundations, dating back to 1827, which makes this site Australia's oldest for a Government House.

In conclusion, then, I invite you to have a look at some of our lovely State rooms while you are here. The furnishings and fittings are all original – imported from England and France – but interspersed with fine locally-made work, none more so than the magnificent huon pine floor in the Ball Room, which is as Tasmanian as you can get.

I wish you all the very best for your Tasmanian session.

Thank you.