

**COMMONWEALTH DAY 2019**  
**REMARKS BY**  
**HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AC**  
**GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA**  
**BALL ROOM, GOVERNMENT HOUSE, TUESDAY 12 MARCH 2019**

Good evening and welcome to this reception to Mark Commonwealth Day 2019, being the second Monday in March.

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

May I acknowledge among you:

- The Honourable Sue Hickey MP, Speaker of the House of Assembly;
- Barry Smith, President, Royal Commonwealth Society Southern Tasmanian Branch;
- Pamela Watkins, President, RCS Northern Tasmanian Branch;
- Kristie Johnston, Glenorchy City Council Mayor;
- Simon Fraser, Alderman;
- Alastair Douglas, Order of Australia Association Branch Chairman;
- Stephen Jones, Chairman Royal Over-Seas League.
- Margaret Campbell, Chieftan Tasmanian Caledonian Society.

I am old enough to remember when Commonwealth Day was called Empire Day and celebrated on 24 May; it was changed to Commonwealth Day in 1958 and remained memorable for children as “Cracker Night”, a celebration with bonfires and fireworks until government regulation reduced the availability of crackers and the tradition of bonfires on Commonwealth Day died out and with it the firework-related injuries to children in particular.

Her Majesty The Queen’s Commonwealth Day 2019 Message – together with the Act of Affirmation to the Commonwealth – was distributed at the weekend to the Office of the Governor-General and then to each State and Territory Government House. It explains the significance of the values shared by the Commonwealth and it is fitting that I read out the Message to you:



## **BUCKINGHAM PALACE**

**Commonwealth Day has a special significance this year as we mark the 70th anniversary of the London Declaration, when nations of the Commonwealth agreed to move forward together as free and equal members. The vision and sense of connection that inspired the signatories has stood the test of time, and the Commonwealth continues to grow, adapting to address contemporary needs.**

**Today, many millions of people around the world are drawn together because of the collective values shared by the Commonwealth. In April last year, I welcomed the leaders of our 53 nations to Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, and we all witnessed how the Commonwealth vision offers hope, and inspires us to find ways of protecting our planet, and our people.**

**We are able to look to the future with greater confidence and optimism as a result of the links that we share, and thanks to the networks of cooperation and mutual support to which we contribute, and on which we draw. With enduring commitment through times of great change, successive generations have demonstrated that whilst the goodwill for which the Commonwealth is renowned may be intangible, its impact is very real.**

**We experience this as people of all backgrounds continue to find new ways of expressing through action the value of belonging in a connected Commonwealth. I hope and trust that many more will commit to doing so this Commonwealth Day.**

**ELIZABETH R.**