

COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION IN TASMANIA (INC)
LINDISFARNE BRANCH
SPEECH BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA, SATURDAY 11 DECEMBER 2021

Good afternoon and thank you for your invitation to address the Lindisfarne CWA today.

I pay my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land: the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community. I recognise a history of truth, which acknowledges the impacts of colonisation upon our Aboriginal People. I stand for a future that respects and acknowledges Aboriginal stories, culture, language and history.

May I acknowledge among us:

- the Honourable Jacque Petrusma MP
- Nic Street MP, Member for Franklin
- Heather Chong, Deputy Mayor Clarence City Council
- Brendan Blomeley, Alderman, Clarence City Council
- Rosemarie Baker, CWA Southern Group President

This is my first engagement with our CWA in Tasmania. As your Patron, it is a privilege to be here with you celebrating this significant 80th anniversary.

I am delighted to engage with you as Tasmania's 29th Governor and the second female Governor. I hope there will be more to follow.

Looking back to the formation of your Branch, in October 1941, not surprisingly many of the activities of your new Branch were concerned with the grim realities of war. For example, at the second Branch meeting, in December 1941, members arranged what was described as "the conveyance of Lindisfarne children to the Christmas party given by the Clarence Council for the children of soldiers of the municipality on overseas service."¹

¹ Mercury, Saturday 6 December 1941, page 4.

Later, in March 1942, the *Mercury* newspaper reported that the Lindisfarne branch, comprising 29 members, held its monthly meeting in St. Aidan's Hall. A picture evening raised 5 pounds 17 shillings and 4 pence. Your branch decided to donate one pound 10 shillings each to the Australian Comforts Fund and to the Red Cross – both in support of our war effort.

Also at that same meeting:

- a Dutch auction of a lavender sachet, donated by the Divisional President Mrs Hopkins, brought in 10 shillings and 8 pence;
- a camouflage netting demonstration was provided;
- a decision was made to hold a pantry day in aid of the Victoria Convalescent Home; and
- bags for the Prisoners of War Appeal were distributed.²

Without doubt, the CWA found a true purpose and focus from its earliest days. Today your activities are flourishing. This is admirable – because time can catch up with organisations, once their original goals are achieved, and/or members reach an age where participation becomes difficult.

Today's CWA, whether here in Lindisfarne or at any of Tasmania's 36 branches, is thriving. Recruiting new and young members has been innovative, and in keeping with your stated vision of "Helping to improve the lives of women, children, and their communities, with a special focus on rural, regional and remote areas."³

This is emphasised at the national level, with the Country Women's Association of Australia declaring the aim of "advancing the rights and equity of women, families and communities in Australia." This is bold and forward-looking. I fully endorse this aim.

Your international organisation, the Associated Country Women of the World, has the stated aim of promoting "the voices of rural women, so that the problems they face and the solutions they raise are heard and acknowledged by international policy-makers and legislators."⁴

I thank you all for your dedication and your commitment. You make a real difference.

² Mercury, Saturday 7 March 1942, page 4.

³ [Home - Country Women's Association in Tasmania \(cwaintasmania.com.au\)](http://Home - Country Women's Association in Tasmania (cwaintasmania.com.au)), accessed 14 October 2021.

⁴ Associated Country Women of the World - ACWW, accessed 14 October 2021.

May I conclude with a reference to Government House, at the beginning of your branch of the CWA during the Second World War.

The 34 chairs in the Government House Dining Room have a charming if hidden history. Soon after the Second World War, Lady Elizabeth Binney, wife of Governor Sir Hugh Binney, commissioned members of our CWA to make tapestry covers for each chair. Over 20 kilograms of tapestry wools and canvas were purchased. The name of each CWA craftswoman was written on the underside of the chairs. Their names, and the varied and colourful designs, have however long since been hidden under uniform red damask covers. However, you can still see the originals peeking out just a bit – so next time you visit, please have a sticky beak!

Well, that is more than enough from me. I want to wish you all a wonderful and safe Christmas and New Year, and my warmest congratulations on your 80th anniversary. Thank you for inviting me to be your Patron.