

**DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S GOLD AWARDS**  
**REMARKS BY**  
**HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AC**  
**GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA**  
**GOVERNMENT HOUSE, FRIDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2020**

Good afternoon and welcome to the 2020 Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Ceremony for Tasmania.

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.

This year's Covid-19 pandemic has had an effect on the way we do things here at Government House, as you heard from David: restricting numbers, making our standard receptions with close socialising impossible. The fact that we are able to gather at all is perhaps a reminder that we are more fortunate than many other countries in combating this pernicious disease.

And we are all very thankful that our health professionals and all of the other officials contributing to the Government response to the Coronavirus disease continue to do exceptional work on our behalf.

Likewise, in the face of this global pandemic the Duke of Edinburgh's Award has continued to demonstrate its flexibility and the importance of the resilience it builds in its participants.

This year, the International Award Foundation highlighted the potential for participants to complete their Award remotely or even from home. It was more important than ever to stay healthy and active during this time and continuing with their Award activities helped participants do this even if they were unable to engage in their usual activities.

So for the first time a new way of doing the Adventurous Journey at the Bronze level was created, called the Virtual Bronze Experience. Participants camped overnight in their backyards, prepared their own meals, undertook

physical activity to simulate the journeying required as well as participating in group problem solving activities online.

So – well done to all for taking on what we might call an additional challenge this year!

Some of you will know that Dick and I hosted His Royal Highness, The Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex here at Government House in April 2018. During his visit to Australia he enthusiastically promoted the Awards in his role as the Chair of The Board of Trustees of The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation.

While staying at Government House Prince Edward met with 110 Tasmanian Award Participants from six different Award Units, launched the Duke of Edinburgh Employer Program and attended a banquet in this Ball Room. And here [gesture] is his signed photograph commemorating that visit – so he is in a sense part of this event as well.

Since 1959, over 775,000 young people have completed the Award in Australia and there are around 60,000 volunteers helping young people undertake their Award challenge every year.

The Awards therefore have an enormous impact on the lives of those young people who undertake the program. It is clear that the wider community also benefits greatly from the voluntary service provided during the time that recipients spend earning their Awards. In addition, the commitment to a skill and physical recreation activity benefit the individual and the leadership skills learned through the various activities reverberate through the community for years after the Awards have been presented.

This afternoon we are here to recognise the achievements of seven young people who have earned their Gold Award. I am always in admiration of the diversity of the activities undertaken and I'm very much looking forward to hearing more about these seven young Tasmanians and to learning about their stories.

