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**OPENING THE TASMANIAN ART AWARD AT ESKLEIGH  
BY  
THE HONOURABLE PETER UNDERWOOD AC  
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA  
ESKLEIGH - FRIDAY 20<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2012**

Thank you for asking me to be here this evening and thank you for again asking me to open the Eskleigh Foundation 2012 Tasmanian Art Award. Tonight is a milestone in that this is the 20<sup>th</sup> year of the Award, the first having been held in 1992. And I note that in the following year the Governor of Tasmania was asked to become the Patron of the Foundation and the current Governor has been the Foundation's Patron ever since.

It is entirely appropriate that the Governor of the State, by his or her patronage, endorses the work of the Eskleigh Foundation for this wonderful organisation provides high quality support to people with disabilities and their families here, in group homes, and through its statewide community care network. It all costs money of course, and this annual event is a major fund raising event for Eskleigh. CEO Dale Luttrell tells me that since its inception the Art Award has raised over \$250,000 for Eskleigh.

In addition to being a very important source of funds the Eskleigh Art Award facilitates the public's exposure to the artists' work and rewards artists with cash prizes and commendations of excellence. Because the awards are judged by distinguished academics and artists an award or commendation is highly regarded in the artistic world and consequently, this exhibition attracts works for artists with established reputations as well as new exhibitors. This year there are, again, in excess of 200 entries - 221 to be exact. We are indebted to Dr Jane Deeth, who with her Inveresk Campus students has again been the curator of this event, and to the judging panel, Dr Ken Smith from Monash University, Mr Malcolm Bywaters the Director of the Academy Gallery at Utas and prominent practicing artist, Mr Michael McWilliams.

We are also indebted to the Chair and Board members of the Eskleigh Foundation for the great philanthropic work that each of them do and I would like to thank them for the huge difference they make to the lives of the people who benefit from Eskleigh's services.

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This afternoon the members of the judging panel took and me on a tour the art works which was, as has been the case on previous occasions, instructive and interesting. We all ended up at the USTSI restaurant in Perth with the Eskleigh Chair, Dianne Porteous and others where we enjoyed an enjoyable informal dinner. But being invited to a pre-event dinner always brings to mind the dinner I attended at the invitation of the President of a Law Society after which I was scheduled to speak about the role of the Governor in today's society.

Like tonight, it was a good dinner but instead of being an informal occasion it was a full on, black tie event held in a very posh up-market hotel – one of those places with a lot of different glasses and a bewildering array of cutlery set out at each place. The main course was roast beef, vegetables and an Idaho potato. Now I don't know about you but I am rather partial to Idaho potatoes especially when they are covered in melting butter. So after the very tall, distinguished and aloof waiter put a pat of butter on my Idaho potato I asked - very politely, "Please may I have another pat of butter on my

potato”? The waiter looked into the distance and said “I am sorry sir but I have orders from the kitchen to put only one pat of butter on each Idaho potato.” “Please, Please” I said, “I would really like two pats of butter on my Idaho potato.” Implacably the waiter intoned, “I am sorry sir, but my orders are only one pat of butter on each Idaho potato. Suddenly, my customary good manners and humility deserted me and I shouted at him, “Look my good man, do you know who I am?” “No I do not know who you are” he said without batting an eyelid. So I retorted, “I am the Governor of the State of Tasmania. I am the guest speaker at this dinner and I want another pat of butter on my Idaho potato.” “Are you sir” said the immovable waiter. “And do you know who I am?” “No” I snapped. “Well”, he said, staring at a far distant point over my left shoulder, “I am the man who puts the pat of butter on the Idaho potato.”

Now, I think that tonight is a good opportunity to congratulate the Launceston Art Society and the Eskleigh Foundation on winning the Australia Business Arts Foundation Arts & Health Foundation State and National awards last year. This is an inspirational

collaboration between the Launceston Art Society and Eskleigh. The Society now has a permanent home at Eskleigh where it runs classes and has a gallery for changing exhibitions. In return members of the Society volunteer to ensure Eskleigh Home is open to the public seven days a week, not only promoting the work of northern artists, but also the historic home and Eskleigh's support services. And an important extra plus in this collaboration is that those who live at Eskleigh have the opportunity to be part of art classes run every week by the Art Society. It's a win/win collaboration.

Congratulations also go to all the sponsors [whose names are set out in your programme] because the Eskleigh Art Award would not be possible without their generosity. And as a predecessor of mine, Sir Guy Green said when opening this Exhibition some time ago

“This is a high quality and most attractive exhibition. It is not appropriate for me to actively promote the sales of these paintings but if it were

appropriate I would tell you that in this exhibition there are many paintings which either as attractive additions to your home or office or their intrinsic value or their value as investments – or even all three – represent very good buys indeed.”

And with that admonition I have pleasure in declaring open the 2012 Tasmanian Art Award