

**REMARKS BY
THE HONOURABLE PETER UNDERWOOD AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
AT A RECEPTION HELD TO MARK THE SERVICE GIVEN BY
THE HONORABLE PETER RAE AO AS CHAIRMAN OF THE FEMALE
FACTORY HISTORIC SITE LTD
GOVERNMENT HOUSE THURSDAY 25TH JULY 2012**

It is a great pleasure for me and my wife to welcome you all here to Government House this evening to this reception to mark the service given by Peter Rae AO as Chairman of the Female Factory Historic Site Ltd. Peter Rae has a long and distinguished public career. Currently he is Chairman of the International Renewable Energy Alliance which is the world alliance of the major world renewable energy associations. He is Senior Vice President of the World Wind Energy Association and is on the Boards of several of the other Alliance partners. Among many other offices Peter is also the Vice Chairman of the Renewal Energy Policy Network 21¹ and a member of the International Jury of the Energy Globe Sustainability Awards.

For 18 years he was Senator Rae and for part of that time chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Securities and Exchange Commission, whose report led to the formation of the Australian Securities and Investment Commission.

In 1999 he was made an Officer of the Order of Australia for services to business and industry and in 2005 he was the University of Tasmania's "Alumni of the Year" in recognition of work in renewable energy.

But this evening we are here to acknowledge and thank him for his work as Chair of the Cascades Female Factory Historic Site. For the following account of Peter's achievements I am indebted to Project Manager Shirley McCarron AM and I am sure Peter will agree with me when I say at the outset, that none of the achievements during his Chairmanship, especially the World Heritage listing, would have been possible without Shirley's hard work, her support, her encouragement and her commitment to the Site.

Shirley McCarron tells me that since 1998 when the newly formed not for profit organisation was successful in obtaining a Centenary of Federation Grant from the Commonwealth Government to purchase Yard 3 of the site, an enormous amount has been achieved under the committed and insightful guidance of Peter Rae.

His dedication to the site and the opportunity to tell the little known stories of women transported to Australia, often for what now would be classed as trivial crimes was little known, and they became the basis of a crusade for Peter, his Board, and Site Manager Shirley McCarron. In addition to caring for the site over the years Conservation Management Plans have been commissioned and implemented; extensive archaeological investigation and major conservation works have been undertaken. All this work was properly recognised in 2010 by World Heritage listing being awarded under the Australian Convict Sites Serial Nomination.

Peter & Shirley played a pivotal role in the lengthy discussions and planning with the State Government leading up to the nomination and award. An agreement was reached that the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority would take over the management of the Female Factory Site at the beginning of 2012 following a hand-over period with both organisations working together to ensure a smooth transition took place. I expect that felt a bit like handing over to another the long term care of a child that you brought up and nurtured, but I am confident that your child will be well looked after by its new parent.

Over the years various dignitaries from around the world have visited the site, and in 2009 Australia's first female Governor General, Her Excellency Quentin Bryce, visited the Site on her first formal visit to Tasmania. Much of the interest in this important site for women has been a result of Peter's strongly held views that these convict women and their children were the mothers of our nation, who contributed in no small way to the economic and social growth of Australia.

From Day 1 of the organisation's tenure of Yard 1 a strong programme based on the use of the arts as a means of highlighting the history of the site and raising awareness of the convict women and children who peopled the site, has been presented by the Chairman and Female Factory Historic Site Boards. This programme included a wide range of events and installations such as:

- exhibitions on various themes;

- musical performances and multi arts performances;
- large Community Events including - FFHS Research Group's Convict Muster, a re-enactment of the arrival of the convict ship, Harmony, the Colonial Fair and 180th Anniversary Celebrations;

The programme also included:

- the 2004 Rajah Quilt State Project for the Tasmanian Bicentenary, which attracted more than 25,000 visitors and involved several hundred participants;
- installations on site such as the Metal Quilt Installation, Departures and Arrivals concerning the babies who died on the site;
- the semi-permanent loan of Lady Jane Franklin's, Broadwood piano purchased in England in 1836 and brought to Tasmania with the Franklins;
- the conference - Footsteps in Time; and
- the printing of a highly successful booklet on the site, 'Footsteps and Voices' by Professor Lucy Frost

Under Peter' stewardship the Site has attracted a number of awards and grants in addition to the UNESCO listing. During the same period the Female Factory Historic Site has seen a number of exciting initiatives such as :

- in 2004 the purchase of the Matron's Cottage, the only extant building on the site, with the restoration of 4 of the 6 rooms now complete;
- the establishment of the Research Group at FFHS as a sub-committee of the Board; a group that is now working as an independent organisation;
- the establishment of the Female Convicts Research Centre and its development of an excellent database of convict women, together with the publication of several books on convict women and their lives;
- the establishment of the WD Booth Gallery in the Matron's Cottage for exhibitions and small performances;
- the development of several specially designed tours for the site such as - Heritage tours, Morning Tea with the Matron, Celebrating Convict Women and Interactive Primary School tours; and
- the development and creation of a quarterly newsletter.

Peter that is a wonderful record of community achievement and service. You have made a lasting contribution to the preservation of an important piece of history for the benefit of many generations to come. I congratulate you and on behalf of all those who have worked with you for the FFHS and on behalf of all those who will enjoy the fruits of your work I say “thank you” – and there is no better way of expressing appreciation for the work you have done other than by conferring upon you the first ever Life Membership of the Female Factory Historic Site Ltd.

¹ Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century, is a policy network that provides a forum for international leadership in [renewable energy policy](#), in order to share knowledge and facilitate the [rapid growth of renewable energy](#) technologies in [developing countries](#) and [industrialised economies](#).