

FESTIVAL OF VOICES – NEWCASTLE CHAMBER CHOIR
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, WEDNESDAY 7 JULY 2021

Good evening and welcome to this special performance by the Newcastle Chamber Choir for Tasmania's 2021 Festival of Voices.

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 Craig Farrell MLC, President of the Legislative Council;
- The Honourable Elise Archer MP, Minister for The Arts;
- Councillor Helen Burnett, Deputy Lord Mayor;
- Damon Wise, outgoing Festival of Voices Chair;
- Lara Giddings, Deputy Chair;
- Joan Wright, Choral Curator; and
- Tim Munro, incoming Chair.

Don and I feel privileged to be hosting this performance, given the very real chance that the Choir might not have made it to Tasmania.

And although this is not a public performance, the opportunity to experience the Government House Ball Room with its wonderful acoustic is one we're sure the members of the Choir will appreciate.

Don and I also enjoyed participating in last Saturday's Big Sing Bonfire at the Macquarie Point Goods Shed, and so we feel well and truly part of this year's Festival of Voices. We have attended the finale and other performances in past years, which we have also enjoyed very much.

I congratulate Joan, Damon, Lara and colleagues for pressing on despite the enormous Covid-related challenges of putting this year's event together. The arts sector in particular, along with tourism and hospitality, continues to be significantly affected by the pandemic.

The resilience of the arts sector is truly admirable, and not least because your continuing work during this time of local and global stress is undoubtedly having a positive social effect.

And government and other official support for the sector is also much welcomed.

I thank the Newcastle Chamber Choir – members and support personnel – for sticking with your commitment to travel to Tasmania for this year's Festival of Voices.

Thank you.