

GIRL GUIDES TASMANIA CAMP QUAMBATOOK 2021
OPENING ADDRESS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
BRIDPORT, FRIDAY 1 OCTOBER 2021

Good evening everyone, and thank you for inviting me to be here with you on the first night of your Camp Quambatook.

I wish to begin by paying my respects to the traditional 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:

- State Commissioner Linda Durran, and
- Councillor Greg Howard, Mayor Dorset Council

I am very excited to be here tonight; this is my first Girl Guide event as Governor. I am honoured to be associated with your organisation as your Patron.

The Girl Guide movement began in Tasmania in 1911, at Government House Hobart. The Governor, Sir Harry Barron and his wife convened a meeting to establish the Girl Guide movement within the State. At that meeting it was suggested that, and I quote: ‘the training of girls in first aid, cookery and in doing acts of kindness to everyone [which] would uplift their lives and improve their home relations’. End of quote. Despite some fearing that the movement might make the girls ‘mannish’,¹ the Girl Guide movement became more popular and grew in numbers across the State. Girl Guides were promoted as a way to “develop a better knowledge, in a practical way, of home keeping, mothercraft, and citizenship” in young girls.²

As my Aide-de-Camp, Paula Chatwood, will attest, to gain her Baden Powell Award in 1988 she had to gain badges in housework, ironing, and babysitting. The opportunity to develop in areas of personal interest was not available.

Fast-forward to 2021, and the Girl Guide experience has greatly evolved and is vastly different. We are fortunate that here in Australia, young girls and women have opportunities that the first Guides could have only dreamed of.

¹ The Mercury, 19 June 1911

² The Mercury, 17 January 1921

I am most delighted to learn that the mission of Girl Guides Australia is to 'empower girls and young women to discover their potential as leaders of their world'³, as the empowerment of women is a matter in which I have great interest and for which I am enthusiastic.

I also understand that the Guiding Program focuses on value-based leadership and life skills and encourages you to take responsibility for your own decisions, activities, goals, challenges and ultimately your own achievements.⁴

I applaud this program. It is an excellent way for young women to gain leadership experience, resilience and teamwork skills. I strongly encourage you all to take these opportunities. I hope that such opportunities to develop yourselves will give you confidence as our future leaders, as we strive for greater equality for women.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank all the hard-working adult leaders and volunteers who support you through your Guiding journey and make exciting events such as this Camp Quambatook possible. Having read your Annual Report, I can appreciate that Guiding Tasmania has survived 2020 and COVID through the hard work and dedication of your volunteers. This is a huge achievement.

And what an exciting Camp this looks to be! You will have the opportunity to take part in

- bush biking,
- a dairy visit,
- laser tag,
- ropes and gadgets,
- sewing,
- finding out what creature live in bush ponds,
- rowing, sailing, and paddling, and
- a dance party.

I now take much pleasure in opening Camp Quambatook. Enjoy yourselves Guides, and make the most of this brilliant weekend.

Thank you.

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https://www.guidestas.org.au/GG/Guiding_Community/WhoWeAre/GG/Community/WhoWeAre.aspx?hkey=33a2fb72-30b1-4995-8a53-587a30229820

⁴ <https://www.girlguides.org.au/programs/australian-guide-program/>