

**PRESENTATION OF
THE GOVERNOR'S ENVIRONMENT SCHOLARSHIPS 2021
REMARKS BY HER EXCELLENCY
THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, MONDAY 25 OCTOBER 2021**

Good afternoon. Don and I warmly welcome you to Government House for the presentation of the 2021 Governor's Environment Scholarships.

I pay my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land: the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community. I recognise a history of truth, which acknowledges the impacts of colonisation upon our First People. I stand for a future that respects and acknowledges Aboriginal stories, culture, language and history.

Shortly we shall hear from Professor Simon Ellingsen, Dean of our University of Tasmania's School of Natural Sciences. Simon will mention the long-standing sponsors of the Governor's Environment Scholarships. I add my thanks to them.

I also acknowledge last year's recipients, Olivia Wilson and Kawinwit Kittipahlahwattanapol. As we all know, 2020 saw the devastation of so many public events. In fact, Government House shut down completely from mid-March last year. The Governor's Environment Scholarship Presentation was one of very many which had to be cancelled.

The Covid-19 pandemic has greatly affected our world. Depending how we judge a global catastrophe of this nature, we may conclude either negatively that a species boundary-crossing virus has got the better of us, or positively, that bringing it under reasonable control within 18 months is evidence of a very considerable and sustained medical research and vaccination effort.

The Covid-19 pandemic has also sharpened our focus on our environment. It is under stress and has been demonstrably so for decades. There is considerable concern of a looming global climate catastrophe. This makes the work of the young scholars who are with us today of greatest importance.

The Governor's Environment Scholarship awards were inaugurated in 1999. I am delighted to know that these scholars continue as a first-class example of the close relationship between our University and Tasmanian industry. There have been 54 student recipients to date. They represent 22 years of cutting-edge Tasmanian research into many areas of environmental concern. When we hear

Simon describe the 2021 research projects, we shall realise how significant these research areas are – and not just for our island State, but beyond our shores.

Our research can and does have national and global implication. The work of the University's Menzies Institute for Medical Research is a fine example. Tasmanian academic research expertise within the Menzies Institute has come far since its original work. Established in 1988, as the Menzies Centre for Population Health Research, its early research was world leading in linking babies' sleeping position to sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

Our Menzies Institute maintains very close links with the Royal Hobart Hospital. I am also Patron of the Research Foundation which supports world-class research grant funding.

We can be proud of our University's young academics working in critically important areas of health and the environment.

Two or three Governor's Environment Scholarships are available each year at Honours level for one year of study. These have a significant role in encouraging students into the area of environmental management.

Equally significantly, they encourage and recognise talent in young academics to provide our industry and government with increased numbers of quality environmental managers in Tasmania.

Over the years, financial support for the scholarships has increased in value from \$6,000 to \$7,500 per student.

These awards also demonstrate that the sponsor organisations are committed to excellence in environmental practices. The Governor's Environment Scholarships are fine examples of what can be achieved by working cooperatively towards a common goal to our environment and, in turn, that benefits us all.

I extend my congratulations to today's recipient, David Heaton, and to Michael Shelley in absentia, due to Covid restraints. I also extend my congratulations, belatedly but with very best wishes – to last year's recipients. I have no doubt that your Honours years through these Scholarships will produce valuable environmental research into the future.

Thank you. Official Secretary / David ...

[David invites Professor Simon Ellingsen to read out the citations.]