

HOBART HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY 2021 SPRING FLOWER SHOW
SPEECH BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA,
HOBART TOWN HALL, FRIDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2021

Good afternoon. Thank you very much for inviting me to the opening of the Hobart Horticultural Society Spring Flower Show for 2021. This is my first involvement with the Society as your new Patron.

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 who continue to maintain their identity, culture and Indigenous rights.

The range of classes, divisions and sections in the Show is extraordinary and I am honoured to be opening this year's exhibition. I congratulate Andrea Gerrard, Society President and colleagues and exhibitors for bringing the Show together so well. Thank you also to the City of Hobart for their generous support.

Your theme for this year, "A Carnival of Animals", is very creative and aims to encourage younger people to participate in the Show. Many schools now have community gardens. They are wonderful additions to school curricula. This Show, by encouraging youth entries, is promoting a healthy, productive and socially rewarding alternative to mobile telephones and online games and distractions.

As an island at 42 degrees south, we may feel geographically remote from the rest of the world; but this Flower Show shares a great deal with other Shows globally, such as; the Harrogate Spring Flower Show; the New Zealand Titahi Bay Spring Flower Show; the Sissinghurst Spring Flower Show; the Brisbane Arcade Spring Flower Show. And more.

Sadly, the Brisbane Show has been postponed due to Covid issues. That is a stark reminder that our geographical remoteness has been very fortunate for us. May I recommend to all Tasmanians that it is most important that we all get vaccinated as soon as practicable.

I did note in your Spring Flower Show program in the Community Class 2 – Best Pot Plant – a reference to Covid and the encouraging question: "What amazing

plants have you grown at home during the pandemic?” According to the UK *Guardian* newspaper:

“Latest figures show there has been a huge increase in the number of people buying plants and bulbs during lockdown, and medicinal plants have proven particularly popular. Experts say people want to connect with nature and that customers are buying more bulbs so they can grow their own plants next spring as gardening grows in popularity.”¹

The many spring flower shows around the world are reminders of how welcome this time of the year is, after the cold and dark of winter. Now is our great surge in gardening activity celebrating the return to growth in nature.

This is a weekend to celebrate our fortunate island, the beginning of spring and our devotion to the art of floral cultivation and display.

David Wheeler, founder and editor of the British gardening quarterly *Hortus*, paraphrasing the famous philosophical statement quipped: “I garden, therefore I am.”² I have no doubt that sentiment applies to many of us here today. Congratulations again to all who are exhibiting and participating in this year’s flower show and to the organisers and all their hard work.

My husband, Don and I look forward to viewing the exhibits; but before we do, I have much pleasure in declaring open the Hobart Horticultural Society Spring Flower Show for 2021.

Thank you.

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¹ [Flower power: Covid restrictions fuel boom in plant and bulb sales | Coronavirus | The Guardian](#), accessed 6 September 2021.

² Wheeler, David, in *The roots of my obsession: thirty great gardeners reveal why they garden*, London, Timber Press, 2012 page 158.