

**HOMeward BOUND PROJECT – 2019 PARTICIPANTS**  
**SPEECH BY**  
**HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AC**  
**GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA**  
**IMAS, 20 CASTRAY ESPLANADE THURSDAY 7 November 2019**

Good evening and thank you for inviting me to address you this evening.

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land: the muwinina people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community, who have survived invasion and dispossession, and continue to maintain their identity, culture and Indigenous rights.

In the context of the Homeward Bound project and climate change, it is so appropriate that we acknowledge the way in which the Aboriginal people cared for country and managed the resources of the land and sea. This brings to mind the beautiful kelp baskets for carrying water and ochre made by Aboriginal people and the fact that ocean warming and pollution has led to the loss of 95% of our giant kelp forests off the East Coast. It is leadership addressing this problem that the Homeward Bound project is designed to foster.

As the inaugural Patron of Homeward Bound I'm thrilled to be with you again – having in November 2016 hosted the first cohort at Government House, prior to their voyage to the Antarctic Peninsula from Ushuaia at the southern tip of Argentina.

Back then I had mentioned that generally speaking Vice-Regal patronage attaches to organisations and entities which have proved themselves, by being well-established. But the proposed Homeward Bound Project, as articulated by its founder Fabian Dattner, was clearly in a category all of its own, with its strong scientific underpinning and leadership and strategic initiatives.

And I observed too that with its focus exclusively on women, with a decade-long trajectory to transform the role and numbers of women driving global science, as leaders, such an enterprise demanded support.

I had in fact decided early on in my term as Governor that gender equality and empowering women would be a focus of the community engagement part of the role. And so when Fabian first came to see me, just a month into my role, I seized the opportunity to support Homeward Bound.

I have been conscious too that one of the reasons for gender inequality in employment, for the gender pay gap and the fact that women retire with on average 47% less superannuation than men, is that females are under-represented in areas of science, technology and engineering and over-represented in lower-paid employment. The under-representation of women in STEM means that they can be isolated and uncomfortable in the work-place. Moreover, the fact that they are under-represented in leadership roles in STEM means that we are not utilising the best available talent.

Homeward Bound is doing much to overcome these imbalances and to be doing so for a healthier planet makes this a tremendously significant initiative.

This is made abundantly evident through the individual and collective experience of the 100 women who are soon to embark on the fourth voyage to Antarctica. The subject areas of their expertise are amazing, taking in conservation biology; geo-spatial science; coral reefs; chemistry; agribusiness; environmental engineering; aquaculture; molecular bioscience; AI; climate change and health; soils; and much more.

If I could now refer locally to three individuals. The first is CSIRO scientist Jess Melbourne-Thomas, who with Fabian co-founded the Homeward Bound Project. Jess, as many of you will know, was recently announced as the 2020 Tasmanian Australian of the Year for her tremendous work in marine ecosystem modelling and for her leadership of women in Antarctic science. It is no surprise at all that such an eminent scientist is recognised in this way

given the way she has utilised her experience and innovative leadership to co-found Homeward Bound.

And I am delighted to say a word or two now about our two Tasmanians in the fourth cohort, Clothilde Langlais and Ingrid Albion.

To Clo I thank you in particular for inviting me to talk to you and your colleagues and guests this evening. I note that you are a CSIRO colleague of Jess; that you took your PhD at Toulon, France; and that your research concentrates on ocean dynamics, climate variability and change, with a more recent focus on multidisciplinary coastal projects, closely related to impact, adaptation and management of our coastal resources. These are areas of great importance into the future<sup>1</sup> – not least as we read almost daily the warnings of how poorly prepared the world is to act on the climate change that is of our making and is exclusively our responsibility.

And Ingrid, your work with such a variety of wildlife is just brilliant and is such a Tasmanian story. In your own words:

“I can't believe I've been selected to be part of the Homeward Bound initiative - joining women from around the globe ... Anyone I've ever met knows I love animals – Tasmanian devils, whales, dogs – and would do anything to protect them. So when I realised the threat climate change is having on the animals, people and places I love, I knew I had to do something. I will use this opportunity to educate and inspire people to act on climate change, and grow my skills and networks for change ... For the past 20 years I have been a passionate wildlife conservationist and environmental educator at the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service. This has included breeding Tasmanian devils as part of the insurance-population; training thousands of volunteers in best-practice Whale Rescue techniques; and playing a key role in wildlife conservation and environmental education programs.”<sup>2</sup>

I will conclude now by wishing you both the very best in this exciting and personally fulfilling and globally vital enterprise. And I believe we'll hear from Clo and Ingrid prior to the panel session, which should be very stimulating.

Thank you again for offering me this opportunity as your Patron to be part of this evening.

Thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://homewardboundprojects.com.au/hb1-participants/hb4-participants/>, accessed 6 November 2019.

<sup>2</sup> <https://chuffed.org/project/help-ingrid-get-to-antarctica?fbclid=IwAR2fheieue6QSzhSG3j7qQ5Hwr8TX88maJPHbdWw0BeEGx1BheLAhE03lw0>, accessed 6 November 2019.