

**HUMAN RIGHTS WEEK: PRESENTATION OF AWARDS BY
THE HONOURABLE PETER UNDERWOOD AC, GOVERNOR
OF TASMANIA, GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
MONDAY 10TH DECEMBER 2012.**

It is a great pleasure for me and my wife to welcome you all here to Government House as part of the celebrations for Human Rights Week. Organised each year by a voluntary committee supported by the Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Human Rights Week is quite a big celebration in Tasmania. A quick check of the programme proclaims the energy and innovativeness of the organising committee for not less than 26 events have been set in place for Human Rights Week in this State. "The aim of the week is to promote knowledge and understanding among Tasmanians about human rights, what human rights are and how to defend them. The Committee also promotes knowledge and understanding about the state of human rights elsewhere in the world, how it touches us and how we can help others to claim and protect their rights."ⁱ Shortly I shall be presenting the 2012 Human Rights Awards in 8 different categories. Each award is sponsored by an individual or by an organisation from the government, community or private sectors that recognises the importance of acknowledging human rights achievements as an integral part of their business and operations.

The week's activities include such diverse activities as a forum conducted by Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Tasmanian Branch, part of an international organisation that since 1915, has been actively working for a world without war, a world where racial, social and economic justice are given rights for all,

rather than Lofty Goals, to a Human Rights march and an African music and talent show which will showcase African fashion, music and talent.

In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) for all people and all nations. These rights are stated in clear and simple terms; rights that belong equally to every person. There isn't time to read them out this morning, but even though you might be familiar with them in general terms the Declaration is worth re-reading from time to time because it serves as a reminder that with every right there exists a corresponding obligation, and with respect to the Declaration of Human Rights that obligation is to do whatever each of us can reasonably do to protect and reinforce those rights. In Tasmania we live a peaceful and relatively prosperous life where all of us are equal before the law. By and large Tasmanians enjoy the rights set out in the Declaration and I believe that this privilege carries with it an obligation to protect and promote those rights until they are given - as the Declaration states - universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

I congratulate those who will now be given their awards for they have acknowledged and responded to that obligation.

ⁱ http://www.afairerworld.org/_HRWeek/committee.html, accessed 5 December 2012.