

**HUON ART AWARDS 2019 EXHIBITION**  
**SPEECH BY**  
**HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AC**  
**GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA**  
**CYGNET TOWN HALL, FRIDAY 1 MARCH 2019**

Good evening all. Dick and I are delighted to be with you at the Cygnet Town Hall this evening to open the 2019 Huon Art Awards Exhibition.

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land— the Melukerdee band of the Palawa people and the Mouheneener people, who were the original owners of the land where I live in Hobart. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community, who have survived invasion and dispossession, and continue to maintain their identity, culture and Indigenous rights.

And may I acknowledge among you:

- Jill Miller, Chair of Huon Art Exhibitions Group and fellow Committee members;
- Rosalie Woodruff, Greens MP for Franklin;
- Bec Enders, Huon Valley Council Mayor, and Councillors Paul Gibson and Juanne Bird; and
- Bob Brown, former Greens Leader and Senator.

We had originally been contacted by Paul Thomas in late 2017 with an invitation to open the 2018 exhibition, but we had to be a regret owing to a prior Government House evening commitment hosting a reception for the annual Tasmanian Theatre Awards.

We did however suggest that Paul write in early, if he wished, for 2019, and so here we are and delighted to be participating in this very significant showcasing of contemporary Tasmanian art – although I believe there also a few overseas entries!

They add to a total of 233 entries this year, which is a noticeable increase on last year. The majority works are oil or acrylic; followed by three-dimensional works; mixed media; photography; and watercolour.

And importantly these five art genres each also have distinct student categories, with student-specific awards as part of the total prize monies, about 12,000 dollars.

That's incentive enough for an artist to want to enter. But of course there's also a distinct prestige in being hung at the Huon Art Prize Exhibition, and not just as a line on the CV irrespective of whether the work wins an award or not; this is because these awards have proven themselves by being in existence for some seventeen years now; and because more broadly Tasmanian culture continues to be on the rise and that very much includes the visual arts. We only have to think of the MONA effect to confirm that.

So the Huon Art Exhibitions Group is to be commended in its well-established aim of cultivating the artistic and cultural energies of southern Tasmania's rural areas, while equally fostering and encouraging younger artists.

And it is much to the credit of the Group that your Lovett Gallery continues to flourish, promoting the works of your members and elevating the already considerable status of Cygnet as a Tasmanian gem between the Huon River's Egg Islands and Kangaroo Bay. We have visited Cygnet a number of times by boat as well as also visiting officially as Governor for a concert, for Le Weekend, for an unveiling ceremony for the RSL and for a first nations event last year as well as visiting as part of an official visit to the Huon Municipality. It is always such a pleasure to be here.

Congratulations also to the sponsors of the exhibition awards, a little too many for me to mention individually but whose logos and commitments are prominently displayed and who collectively truly represent this lovely and talented region.

On that note I will declare the Exhibition formally open because I believe there are now some important presentations to make.

Thank you.