

**MANNALARGENNA DAY
SPEECH BY HER EXCELLENCY
PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
TEBRAKUNNA VISITOR'S CENTRE
SATURDAY 1 DECEMBER 2018**

As patron it is a great pleasure to be here walking with you all on tebrakunna country to celebrate Mannalargenna Day. Thank you Aunty Patsy for inviting me.

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

These words are particularly pertinent today when we are celebrating the continuity of the culture of our first people in lutruwita, Tasmania.

I am sometimes asked what have you found to be the most significant or memorable aspect of your role as Governor? And I have to say that my involvement with the Aboriginal community, meeting your elders such as Aunty Patsy, and learning so much more about Aboriginal culture is a real highlight of the role.

Learning about Mannalargenna, revered clan leader and formidable warrior, who belonged here to Tebrakunna country. That he negotiated the exchange of his sister and his four daughters with Straitsmen and it is through these unions that many Aboriginal families trace their heritage and that it is also through these unions that Aboriginal culture has been kept alive. Quite contrary to nineteenth century and twentieth century accounts, it was not swept out of existence but survived.

And this beautiful necklace, which Aunty Patsy Cameron made for me, is evidence of the continuity of culture. Aunty Patsy, like many of you here today, is a descendant of Mannalargenna and she learnt how to make this necklace of maireener shells, black crows, oat shells and toothies from her mother, and her mother learnt from her mother and aunties and so on back in an unbroken string.

European explorers in the eighteenth century observed and noted the beauty of shell necklaces worn by Aboriginal women and after colonisation necklaces were sold for food, clothing and other goods.

Archaeologist Rhys Jones found a cremation site dating back 2000 years containing shells that had been pierced for a necklace.

And I have had the enormous privilege of viewing hand stencils in a remote rock shelter. It was such a feeling of awe and emotion as I imagined the women and children whose ochred hands had pressed their prints millennia ago.

I am so grateful to have learned to appreciate the significance of commemorating Mannalargenna and celebrating the fact that Aboriginal culture lives on through his daughters and their descendants.

As Hilary Burden has said, it is tragic how little Tasmanians know about their immediate past other than through endless re-writes of 'the Black War'. We seem to be capable of only remembering what we did to Aboriginal people, not who they were before the genocide, or how they lived their lives.

This day is a celebration of the continuity of Aboriginal culture and an opportunity to strengthen cultural practices and pride in Aboriginal heritage. In a spirit of reciprocity, it is also an opportunity to share Aboriginal culture and knowledge with the non-Aboriginal people of lutruwita, Tasmania. I would like to wish you all Happy Mannalargenna Day, a day which promises to be one of great spiritual significance into the future and one which signals our changed understanding of history.

Thank you.