

**OATLANDS DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL ASSEMBLY
SPEECH BY HER EXCELLENCY
PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
WEDNESDAY 22 MARCH 2107**

Good morning everyone.

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land – to pay respect to those that have passed before us and to acknowledge today's Aboriginal community who are the custodians of this land.

I have been asked to present Student Representatives with their badges and thought it would be a great opportunity to speak to you all, very briefly about two things: first education and secondly leadership.

First: education. No doubt you are often told how important it is to try your best and work hard at school. I want to explain why this is a good idea. Tasmania is the poorest state in Australia. The average family in Tasmania has less money than families in other States. This is because we have fewer people with a job, those with a job work less hours and we produce less for each hour worked than on average in Australia.

There are many reasons for this. Some of them we can't do much about. But there is one we can. We know that the more education a person has, the more likely they are to be employed and the employed are more likely to in a full-time job if they have a post-secondary qualification – a trade or a university degree. And the more education a person has the more productive they are.

In Tasmania we have smaller proportion of people with a University degree, larger proportion of people with no educational qualification beyond Year 10 and Year 12 retention rates which are 12% below the national average.

We know this is not because Tasmanian students are not as clever as other Australians and so less capable of undertaking Years 11 and 12. If we look at Year 9 NPLAN results, results of Tasmanian students do not differ significantly from similar schools around the country.

So if we could get more students to complete Year 12, and more to go on to further education and training beyond Year 12, this will improve Tasmania's

economic position in general and Tasmanian families will be better off – with more money to spend on healthy food, health costs and their children's education. This is not to say that money is the most important thing in life. But the reality is that we all need enough money to buy healthy food, have a reasonable place to live, pay medical bills and education expenses.

It is interesting to note, that comparatively speaking, one of the industries that performs well above the national average in productivity is Tasmanian agriculture (50% above the national average). And agriculture in Tasmania has a promising future. But it needs better qualified and highly trained people. It needs students to complete Year 12 and to go on to further education in cropping and animal production so they have the skills these industries require.

For example, you are not going to be able to work out what soils need, what sprays to apply, what unless you are appropriately trained.

And of course country areas need skilled tradespeople, doctors, nurses, and teachers.

One of the most common questions I get asked by school children is: 'How did you get to be Governor?' And I respond: 'Well, it all started with a good education.' Completing Year 12 and going to University.

I am not suggesting you all should get a university degree but I am suggesting you all should complete Year 12 and then pursue some form of vocational training or further education.

Leadership was the second thing I wanted to touch on. Leadership is something that you can all do. It is not just about those who have been chosen to be student representatives, although those who have been chosen have special leadership responsibilities.

You can be a leader by sticking up for other kids if they are being bullied or someone is being racist towards someone on the bus or when you are out and about or disrespectful to a girl.

If you know someone is being bullied, it is not enough to not actively join in. You are reinforcing and encouraging it by laughing or by being aware of it and just watching. Stick up for the victim. That takes real courage.

So my messages to you are: study hard and make the most of the opportunities given to you or make them happen; don't be afraid to speak up about anything and everything you feel passionate about; and importantly, don't forget to have fun.

Good luck to you all and especially to your new student leaders – you should be very proud to have such a role and I am proud of you.

Thank you for inviting me to speak to you today.