

**OLD VIRGILIANS ASSOCIATION CENTENARY RECEPTION REMARKS
HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA, GOVERNMENT HOUSE, WEDNESDAY 21 JUNE 2017**

Good evening and welcome to this reception to mark the Centenary of the Old Virgilians Association.

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

This is an auspicious occasion and Dick and I are very pleased that we are able to be part of your Centenary celebrations.

May I acknowledge among you: The Reverend Professor Michael Tate, who will speak shortly; Terry Blizzard, St Virgil's Acting Principal; Daniel Reardon, OVA vice-President; Peter Imlach, OVA Secretary; OVA Organising Committee members; and St Virgil's College Board Members.

I'd also like to make reference to Christine Woods, who is here and who is the author of your recently published *100 Years of the Old Virgilians Association* – some copies of which are available this evening. It's a wonderfully researched and compiled history and I would have thought well worth being added to any Old Virgilian's library.

I read with interest its history including the list of old scholars on the Heritage Roll of Honour which includes three Premiers: Albert Ogilvie, Doug Lowe and Paul Lennon. As a personal aside it also includes Phillip Vincent and Richard Cogswell, two St Virgils boys who in my schooldays in the 1960s shared my bus stop, Huon Road bus stop 14; and the list includes Michael Tate whose bus stop was No 15.

As you all undoubtedly know, former Tasmanian Governor Bill Cox is also on the Heritage Roll of Honour and a member of the Association. And in considering Governors and the school, I looked back to 1917, the year in which the Association was founded. In December of that year, newly-arrived Tasmanian Governor Sir Francis Newdegate – a product of Eton and Sandhurst and a career MP in the British House of Commons – visited St

Virgil's College. I'll quote to you parts of the Mercury's newspaper's brief report on the visit:

His Excellency Sir Francis Newdegate paid a visit to St. Virgil's College yesterday. He was received at the main entrance by the principal of the college, Rev. D. D. Crowley and the Right Rev. Monsignor Gilleran. The college cadets formed a guard of honour, and the college grounds were tastefully decorated with flags and bunting ... As the Governor and party entered the main hall, the college choir sang the National Anthem. A short musical programme followed. An address of welcome from the staff and pupils was read and presented by Master T. Falkland ... His Excellency was then shown over the college and grounds, and expressed himself well pleased with his visit ... and secured for [the pupils] a whole holiday on Friday.¹

Alas, Governors these days can't hand out holidays like they used to!

Christine's book also tells us that Sir James O'Grady, Governor of Tasmania, attended four Old Virgilians' Balls in the 1920s. Intriguingly, two of these were debutante balls and the debutantes were presented to the Governor. Why were Old Virgilians hosting debutante balls? Not that I am suggesting a revival of this practice.

Ladies and gentlemen, on that note, may I say again how pleased we are to be hosting this significant anniversary event.

In conclusion can I acknowledge the musicians playing the background music this evening. The guitarist is Mr Jamie Pregnell and the saxophonist is Mr Nick Nugent. These gentlemen are former students and current music teachers at the school.

Thank you.

¹ Mercury, Friday 14 December 1917, page 8.