

RECONCILIATION TASMANIA'S YOUTH SPEAKOUT
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA, WEDNESDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2019

Good afternoon and welcome to this special event marking the second year of Reconciliation Tasmania's Youth Speakout.

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

May I acknowledge among you:

- Bill Lawson, Reconciliation Tasmania Co-Chair and Reconciliation Australia Board Member;
- Fiona Hughes, Reconciliation Tasmania Co-Chair;
- Clair Andersen, RT Board Member, and staff members present;
- Mark Redmond, Chief Executive.

Firstly, may I as Governor again offer my sincere congratulations to Reconciliation Tasmania for this excellent initiative. Dick and I were both honoured to have been part of the launch of Reconciliation Tasmania in August 2017 at Macquarie Point in Hobart – there was a keen sense that day of the time being right to bring together Tasmanians with the same goal, namely, reconciliation and mutual respect between all groups and cultures.

You will have seen when you drove in to Government House this afternoon that the Australian Aboriginal Flag now flies permanently in the grounds. The installation ceremony took place just two months ago [Friday 12 July], was very well attended and filled us all with a considerable sense of pride and optimism. It began with a smoking ceremony and dance; Jim Everett recited a poem; elders sprinkled ochre and soil; Dewayne Everett Smith sang for us and we ate wallaby shank

pies with pigface relish, yula and drank Tarkine Tea and Roasted wattle seed coffee prepared by our chef and palawa kipli caterers.

And likewise “Youth Speakout”, this creative student engagement in our cultural identity is a very positive Reconciliation Tasmania program – positive because it engages young people in thinking about ways in which we can and should work together to overcome the dark chapters in our collective history. It is very necessary to acknowledge that our Aboriginal people have looked after this country for tens of thousands of years and that we have a vibrant Aboriginal community with a continuity of cultural practices and strong island identity. And this necklace, that I am wearing is evidence of the continuity of Aboriginal culture. It was made for me by Aunty Patsy Cameron and consists of mairneener shells, black crows, oatshells and toothies.

Youth Speakout is also positive in being a truly educational commitment beyond your regular school curricula. That you have undertaken this initiative voluntarily, as busy school students, is very much to your credit.

Today, the Parliament has become involved in Youth Speakout. And now you are at Government House. It is fitting that as young Tasmanians you have been welcomed in this way into the heart of our adult democracy, in order to be able to express yourselves as to your belief in and feelings about reconciliation.

Congratulations again to each of you, and to all of you.

Thank you.