

ROYAL HOBART HOSPITAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, WEDNESDAY 2 OCTOBER 2019

Good morning and welcome to this morning tea to thank supporters and volunteers of the Royal Hobart Hospital Research Foundation.

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.

I'd also like to acknowledge Foundation Chair Trent Sayers and CEO Heather Francis.

Noting that it has been a little over a year since last welcoming the Foundation to Government House in May 2019, as the Foundation's Patron, it is an honour for me to reflect on the achievements over this time.

Much has happened since then, most particularly the successful carriage of another annual grant round in 2018, and the commencement of a vibrant program of new investigations which began rolling out in January 2019.

It's of great merit that all five of the Foundation's \$10,000 Incubator Grants funded in 2018 were directly supported by individuals and families, some of whom are here with us this morning. This was an outstanding and ground-breaking outcome, enabling the Foundation to push further funding into the next grant category: the \$25,000 Project Grants, where a record six studies were funded for 2018.

Also, from the beginning of last year the Foundation was able to invest \$450,000 into a further Major Project Grant, an intensive three-year investigation by a team led by Dr Kimberly Pitman – who will speak this morning. My sister-in-law Julie has MS so I am particularly pleased to know that this piece of research is being funded.

Once more, the Foundation has been privileged to gain generous donations, large and small, from so many members of the Tasmanian community who are determined to support the medical research required to improve the health and wellbeing of our State.

This is vitally important, given the relatively poor health status of our population, the contributors to this are wide and varied, but organisations such as the RHH Research Foundation and its many partners are committed to better health through research. They could not do this without the help of those that are in this room today and I know that they thank you for this.

As a result of your support, in 2019 there are a total of fourteen new studies underway, each one focusing on conditions and issues of relevance to the Tasmanian community. Cardiovascular health continues to be a major focus, so too are various forms of cancer and, with an ageing community, there are valuable investigations well underway exploring a diverse array of areas including better post-surgical rehab following joint replacement, the impact of poor nutrition amongst older inpatients and a better approach to integrated care for older general surgery patients.

Since hosting this Morning Tea in May last year, the Foundation has held its most successful Research Excellence Dinner twice, delivering this in August 2018 and then once more only a few weeks ago on 16 August. I understand that one of the nation's leading commentators on the topic of philanthropy, Mr John McLeod, gave the address on that most recent occasion, exploring the ways in which the generosity of individual, businesses and community groups can fuel a better future for our charitable sector.

I understand that Mr McLeod explained that the impact of philanthropy really is profound - the role of donors who are prepared to fund the often complex (sometimes even frustratingly tedious!) process that is scientific investigation, cannot be too widely acclaimed.

And as a researcher myself in a different discipline, I know how valuable it is to have alternative and local sources of funding outside the large

competitive grants system such as the National Health and Medical Research Council, to kickstart research projects and fund the ideas and investigations of our postgraduate researchers.

As well, the Foundation has delivered another full calendar of events over the past year, from the state's largest celebration of International Women's Day, to the state's 'highest' fundraiser: abseiling off Tasmania's tallest building, Wrest Point.

The Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens Easter Egg Hunt and Family Picnic Day was held successfully in April, and I'm advised that the forthcoming Melbourne Cup Luncheon at MONA has sold out once again, weeks before the event.

So, in welcoming you here today, can I assure you how much your support of local medical research means: to the Board and to the team of the RHH Research Foundation; to the clinicians in our hospitals and across our communities; to the researchers whose work you so generously fund.

To all of you, thank you very much indeed.