

**REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE PETER UNDERWOOD AC,
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA AT A RECEPTION TO MARK THE 2013
HOBART CUP, THE 10TH AUSTRALIAN WOODEN BOAT FESTIVAL AND
THE 175TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST ROYAL HOBART REGATTA,
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, THURSDAY 7TH FEBRUARY 2013.**

Once again it is a great pleasure for me and my wife to welcome you all to a reception at Government House to mark the running of the 2013 AAMI Hobart Cup and the holding of the Royal Hobart Regatta. In addition, this year we also celebrate the 10th My State Australian Wooden Boat Festival. These three events make for a truly wonderful and exciting weekend in Hobart and attract thousands of visitors from interstate and overseas, all of whom are warmly welcomed to our beautiful island State.

I hope those of you whose interests are more equine than aquatic will forgive me if I say a few words about the Regatta for this year is its 175th anniversary, whereas this year is only the 139th anniversary of the first Hobart Cup. Although I promise you that I will speak about the Cup when on *its* 175th anniversary in 36 years' time! As for the Wooden Boat Festival as it is only its 10th year the chance of me addressing you for its 175th anniversary somewhat remote!

Now, the Official Secretary found a Regatta speech given by Governor Sir Stanley Burbury 37 years ago and I thought I should share a short edited version of it with you. His Excellency began by saying that the observance of traditional occasions binds members of a community together and reminds them of their shared heritage. He said that the Royal Hobart Regatta is eminently such a traditional festive occasion, and of course any Governor must be keenly aware that he is very much a part of that tradition, since the Regatta was the brain child of that

remarkable early Tasmanian, Lieutenant-Governor Sir John Franklin, who founded the Regatta in 1838. Successive Lieutenant-Governors up to 1856, and thereafter Governors, have given Vice-Regal patronage to Regattas.

It would be nice to be able to say that Vice-Regal patronage has been unbroken, but that would be historically inaccurate because by 1842 the Regatta had, according to Lady Franklin, become a "festivity of licentiousness and immense disorder". Sir John Franklin told the Committee he would only continue his patronage if the Committee accepted stringent terms to preserve decency and propriety. The Committee was not prepared to accept the terms and the Regatta was held without Vice-Regal patronage in that year. It was perhaps a little unfair of Franklin to stipulate such stringent terms since he introduced the demon alcohol to the Regatta by turning on free beer and cheese for all the settlers attending the first Regatta in 1838.

Now, before you say anything I am sorry to have to tell you that as a result of government budget constraints I am unable make the same offer to those attending this year's Regatta!

In its earliest days the Regatta was held at Pavilion Point where this House now stands. It was during the course of the construction of this house in 1853 when the Regatta was once again held without Vice-Regal Patronage. This was because the then Governor Sir Henry Fox-Young told the Committee that the Regatta could no longer be held at Pavilion Point since he was planting trees and shrubs, and he was not prepared to tolerate the annual mass of broken bottles around Government House. The Committee took umbrage at this and the Governor was not *invited* to be patron. They said the Regatta would now be held under the patronage of the people and a new venue for the Regatta was

established at Macquarie Point, but by 1854 everything had settled down happily again, and Vice-Regal patronage of the Regatta resumed and has continued to this day.

Sir John Franklin devised the Regatta as an aquatic festival to mark the anniversary of Abel Tasman's discovery of Tasmania. His motivation for the establishment of the Regatta was to create a public function at which all classes of the Community could mix. He said let us have a day of festivity to which ALL the settlers will be invited, and the green-grocers and clerks can mix with members of the Executive Council.

The first Regatta was a great success and it soon became an annual festivity to which the people asserted an inalienable right, and a symbol and expression of their democratic freedom.

Basically the Regatta has changed little since 1838. It then had its calendar of aquatic events and sideshows and it then had and still has, its People's Day. Sir Stanley Burbury concluded his address with the observation "I have no doubt that for many years to come the Hobart Regatta will remain part of our Tasmanian tradition as a day of national celebration, and a day in which all accept that Jack is as good as his master." I don't know about the Jack and his Master bit, but on this, its 175th anniversary I agree that "for many years to come the Hobart Regatta will remain part of our Tasmanian tradition as a day of national celebration."

Please join me in a toast to the Royal Hobart Regatta.