

**ROYAL SOCIETY OF TASMANIA 175TH ANNIVERSARY PLAQUE UNVEILING
SPEECH BY
HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
TASMANIAN MUSEUM & ART GALLERY, MONDAY 14 OCTOBER 2019**

Thank you, Janet.

As we have heard from Ross, the Royal Society's anniversary year has well and truly celebrated and commemorated of the Royal Society of Tasmania. And this is as it should be, given the Society's great age in the Australasian context; and its status as one of the oldest such societies outside the UK.

Furthermore the Society, as the progenitor of both the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens and the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, lays just claim to being a pre-eminent Australian scientific, cultural and intellectual body. This is underscored through the Society's close association with the University of Tasmania, through its Library being housed at the University; while the Northern Branch is based at Launceston's Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery. Further proof of your status as a repository of science and culture lies in the *Papers and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania*, an amazing historical collection of scientific papers from the mid nineteenth century to today.

And the Society's relationship with the Office of the Governor is particularly strong and enduring – albeit with a mildly controversial initiating element.

Prior to your founding as the Botanical and Horticultural Society of Van Diemen's Land in 1843, by Lieutenant-Governor Sir John Eardley-Wilmot, his predecessor Sir John Franklin had established The Tasmanian Society in 1841, which published *The Tasmanian Journal of Natural Science, Agriculture [and] Statistics*. Immediately following the departure of Franklin, a split occurred in that body, leading to the creation, at the behest of Eardley-Wilmot, of a new society on Saturday 14 October 1843.

And the following year Eardley-Wilmot secured Queen Victoria's patronage and you became "The Royal Society of Van Diemen's Land for Horticulture, Botany and the Advancement of Science".

Meetings of the Royal Society were held in the Harrington Street Museum from 1852; and in 1861 Governor Sir Henry Fox Young, as President, laid the foundation stone of the Royal Society of Tasmania's museum and library.

Volume 2 of the Papers and Proceedings of Royal Society contains two from WT Denison, who was the last Lieutenant Governor of Van Diemens' Land before it was granted self government and became Tasmania. The first paper was titled, 'On various modes of planting the potato', and the second dealt with 'manures most suitable for turnips'. A later Governor, Federick Weld, was co-author of a number of papers dealing with the introduction of salmon, related no doubt to the establishment of the Salmon Ponds, which the Royal Society was responsible for.

I will quote now the words of the plaque that is about to be unveiled:

"This building is on the traditional lands of the Muwinina people. The Royal Society of Tasmania and the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery acknowledge the Tasmanian Aboriginal community as the continuing custodians of the island, lutruwita (Tasmania). This building was completed in 1863 to house The Royal Society of Tasmania's museum and library. In 1885, the building and the objects contained in the museum were donated by the Society to the people of Tasmania and became the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery."

While it took some years for the Society to find its true home, patronage has been central to the Society's identity virtually since its founding, with Queens and Kings as Patrons and Governors as Presidents – until in 2003 the Governor of Tasmania became Patron.

I am honoured to continue in that role, and it is a great privilege for me to be able to demonstrate that by now unveiling this plaque, as a permanent marker of the great achievements past and to come of the Royal Society of Tasmania.