

SAVING THE TASMANIAN DEVIL BOOK LAUNCH
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, WEDNESDAY 4 SEPTEMBER 2019

Good evening and welcome to Government House to this reception to launch *Saving the Tasmanian Devil: Recovery Through Science-based Management*.

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 continue to maintain their identity, culture and Indigenous rights.

May I acknowledge among you:

- the Honourable Peter Gutwein MP, Treasurer and Minister for the Environment, Parks and Heritage;
- Nicola Hodgman;
- Patsy Cameron;
- John Whittington, Secretary Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment;
- Briana Melideo, CSIRO Publishing Director.

Looking at the guest list for this evening, it is most impressive to see just how many individuals have been closely involved with the Tasmanian devil, in some cases over decades, and in a great variety of ways. And as the book shows, this endemic island marsupial has become – albeit through crisis – an international symbol of collective will to protect our increasingly fragile natural world.

I was honoured to be invited to write the Foreword to the book. Here are a few take-outs from the Foreword which, to this exceptional addition to the literature, which has no fewer than 75 contributors and is edited by Carolyn Hogg, Samantha Fox, David Pemberton and Katherine Belov; and is a high-quality CSIRO publication.

So here goes with some take-outs:

It starts with reciting the proclamation that I made exercising the Royal Prerogative with the advice of the Executive Council to declare the animal *Sarcophilus harrisii* as the animal emblem of Tasmania. And I added:

As Governor, I felt particularly honoured to be associated with that proclamation, which transcends mere symbolism because the Tasmanian Devil has endured and managed to survive a remarkably tough evolutionary story: mainland Australian extinction; early Twentieth Century population crash through unknown disease; indiscriminate slaughter as a supposed threat to livestock; and from approximately 1996 the onslaught of DFTD.

Saving the Tasmanian Devil: Recovery Through Science-based Management is a critically important new publication in respect of the Tasmanian Devil, wildlife conservation more broadly and understanding of the fragility and complexity of our precious global environment. The Tasmanian Devil Program was established to conserve the species in the wild and understand more about the aetiology of the disease and this book provides the definitive history of the Program, the disease, the captive breeding program and wild monitoring.

I then went on to describe two field trips with the Save the Tasmanian Devil Program that Dick and I observed:

The first to Wukalina/Mount William, a release site for Tasmanian devils bred on Maria Island. As well as watching the examination and checking of a recaptured devil, we had a briefing about the promising virtual fence program which is an aspect of the roadkill mitigation

strategy; and we were shown a Tasmanian devil latrine and a maternal den, with an explanation of the rather intriguing mating habits of the devil! The second trip was in May 2018 to country between Glenora and Fentonbury in the Derwent Valley...

... Accompanying David Pemberton and his colleagues Dr Samantha Fox and Dr Billie Lazenby (all who have contributed to this publication) while Billie checked Devil traps that had been set the night before. We were fortunate to see three young healthy devils being examined and released. To witness the response of the wild-bred Devils to expert and gentle handling, to see them passively accepting being stroked, microchipped and sampled and then personally holding the devil and releasing it, was an experience I will never forget.

It was a great privilege to watch experts at work with this species – experts working across Australia and internationally in the one cause. In many ways this book is their story, as much as it is the story of the unique Tasmanian devil.

So: congratulations to everyone involved in this important new publication.

Thank you.