

2108 TASMANIAN ARCHITECTURE AWARDS
SPEECH BY
HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
WESTLAND NURSERIES, SATURDAY 7 JULY 2018

Good evening and thank you for the invitation to Dick and me to attend the 2018 Tasmanian Architecture Awards.

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land—the Mouheneener 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 Elise Archer MP, Attorney General, Minister for Justice, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Arts, Minister for Environment;
- The Honourable Rob Valentine MLC, Independent Member for Hobart;
- Yvette Breytenbach [*Bray – tin – buck*], Tasmanian Chapter President of the Australian Institute of Architects;
- Jennifer Nichols, Chapter Executive Director.

And may I congratulate in advance all of the judges – for categories and prizes – for your diligent and time-consuming work in assessing such a diverse and high-quality range of projects.

Dick and I have enjoyed being part of your annual awards evening since we first attended in 2015, that unique occasion being at Willie Smith’s Apple Shed in Grove.

To now be part of a great big Tasmanian architecture crowd in a working glasshouse is also pretty special!

When I spoke at the awards last year I mentioned Valleyfield, our historic New Norfolk property, and our related interest in re-use of redundant buildings.

Now, in 2018, I'm doing a fair bit of research on the history of Government House, which was first occupied in 1858 and so is 160 years old this year. You will I am sure be interested to know for example that construction was begun on the Domain site as far back as 1827, to a John Lee Archer design in Georgian renaissance styleⁱ, but was discontinued for want of funds.

Those foundations were built over in 1840 to a James Blackburn Palladian/Baroque designⁱⁱ. But in 1843 work was halted – again because of expense – and part of the ground floor walls were in fact taken down.

Then in 1853 architect William Porden Kay adapted Blackburn's foundations to a Victorian neo-Gothic design, which is the building we have today. Kay also incorporated the materials left on the site into his building.

Which leads me to wonder how Government House might have been judged in your category "Residential Houses – Alterations and additions"!

I would like to offer my congratulations to all 23 Tasmanian projects shortlisted this evening, across the various categories – twelve, I believe – and all the best as well to those in the running for the four individual Prizes to be awarded during the course of the evening.

And Dick and I will be watching with keen interest when the Tasmanian Chapter winners are pooled for national recognition as part of the National Architecture Awards presentation evening in November this year.

I'll end by quoting some wise words provided to me by the Tasmanian organisers of this event. Quote:

"It can be a tough process to enter one's project for judging. There must be a certain level of confidence, energy and willingness to go through the program, to put one's work out there to be scrutinised by peers and the community. Therefore, it is heartening to see that the awards program is growing. Projects are diverse. Projects are inspiring, and several have talked to the importance of affordability and sustainability. This is an exciting time to be looking at the discipline of architecture and how it impacts the state we live in."

I heartily endorse that realistic, positive, most encouraging message.

Thank you.

ⁱ <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/archer-john-lee-1713>: “Archer's buildings possess the virtues of simplicity and good proportion, combined with a satisfying sense of stability. His public buildings in the Georgian Renaissance manner contribute to the interesting architectural character of the city of Hobart.”

ⁱⁱ “Tasmanian Colonial Architecture” – online publication in David’s Collection. It includes this description of the architectural drawing: “Design for Government House, Hobart, by Blackburn, ?c1840, in Palladian/Baroque Classical mode.”