

TASMANIAN THEATRE AWARDS
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
BALL ROOM, GOVERNMENT HOUSE, FRIDAY 22 FEBRUARY 2019

[Vice-Regal Salute is played]

Good evening and welcome to this reception to mark the 2019 Tasmanian Theatre Awards of the Theatre Council of Tasmania.

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.

I would like to acknowledge among you:

- Peter Sexton, Board President, and fellow Board members;
- TCT Judges;
- Councillor Anna Reynolds, Lord Mayor of Hobart;
- TCT patrons Robyn Nevin and Nicholas Hammond;
- sponsors and donors;
- and each and every highly talented nominee.

This is the fifth annual Tasmanian Theatre Awards and I believe the third reception to be held at Government House, preceding your night of nights which of course is tomorrow at Wrest Point.

So I think we can say that this gathering is becoming a feature of your annual awards presentations – and I reckon that that is a very good development, for a number of reasons.

First because the awards are a truly Statewide event; and it is the business – and pleasure – of the Governor to represent the State when an occasion calls for that.

Second, to be able to socialise in the lead-up to the awards evening – without I'm sure the nerves that attend the announcements – is no bad thing and also serves perhaps to boost further the eager anticipation of those announcements.

Third, because this Ball Room has been host to 160 years' worth of performances of every imaginable type, and so your being here adds to that splendid record.

And fourth, and possibly most important of all, it's another opportunity to recognise each nominee, and each individual working behind the scenes of a performance or in other ways to bring that performance to the stage.

The extraordinary amount of hours you put into your collective work is nothing short of amazing – and of course generally with modest pecuniary reward. But as we all know and appreciate, the true reward is in the joy of performing, the concentration and dedication associated with bringing theatre to life, performance after performance.

This year The Tasmanian Theatre Awards are specifically celebrating the tireless contribution from accompanists to the community sector. They are usually pianists who spend their time in the background supporting rehearsals and performances with little kudos for their vital role.

And you are also celebrating the 25th Anniversary of *The Ship That Never Was*, the major attraction in the purpose-built amphitheatre at Strahan. The late Richard Davies was the creator and inspiration for this iconic Tasmanian play. It is the longest running play in Australia and is enjoyed by over 15,000 visitors every year.

And here are some more impressive theatrical statistics:

Around 90% of the shows staged by Tasmanian theatre companies during 2018 were assessed as part of the Tasmanian Theatre Awards.

Forty-six separate productions were registered for assessment, ranging from one-man shows to musical extravaganzas featuring casts of nearly 50 performers on stage.

Registered productions accounted for over 400 live theatre performances around all regions of Tasmania during 2018.

Thirty-four different theatre organisations were involved in presenting productions registered for the Awards. (Remembering that Theatre Council of Tasmania's members include virtually every producer of professional and community theatre in Tasmania.)

Twenty-one judges were engaged to assess live performances and new, original scripts.

And 26 companies and nearly 90 individual theatre practitioners have been recognised for their excellence through the 2019 Tasmanian Theatre Awards nominations.

Dick and I have been fortunate to attend a number of the productions in 2018 which have been nominated – it so exciting to see such a vibrant theatre culture, demonstrating I think that creativity, the arts and a thriving economy are not in conflict but feed off each other.

What an evening it will be tomorrow. All that remains for me to say therefore is to wish you all a most successful and enjoyable event – and for now do enjoy the hospitality of Government House.

Thank you.