

**ST DAVID'S CATHEDRAL FLORAL FESTIVAL – "BLOOMING CHURCH"**  
**SPEECH BY HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE**  
**KATE WARNER AC, GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA**  
**ST DAVID'S CATHEDRAL FRIDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2107**

Good afternoon everyone. I am delighted to have been asked to be here today to open this 2017 Floral Festival. My husband Dick and I are really looking forward to having a good look at all the beautiful displays here.

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land –to pay respect to those that have passed before us and to acknowledge today's Tasmanian Aboriginal community who are the custodians of this land.

I wish to acknowledge the Honorable Chief Justice Alan Blow; the Honourable Elise Archer MP, Speaker of the House of Assembly; the Honourable Dr Vanessa Goodwin MLC, Attorney General; Cassy O'Connor, MP, Leader of the Tasmanian Greens; Madeline Ogilvie, MP; Alderman Eva Ruzicka, representing the Lord Mayor of Hobart; The Right Reverend Dr Chris Jones, Vicar General; The Very Reverend Richard Humphrey, Dean of Hobart; Mrs Judith Tudball, Principal of St Michael's Collegiate school; Mr Robert McEwan Headmaster of the Hutchins School; and distinguished guests.

I am informed that this, the St David's Cathedral Floral Festival has until this year been organised by Norma Gordon OAM with the assistance of her husband Mervyn.

I am also informed that Norma decided to step down from her role of convener after last year's festival and that this evening is an opportunity to recognise the amazing work of Norma and Mervyn Gordon for their 46 years of service to this festival. It is telling that it has needed a committee of four to take over the organisation and management of this event.

As most of you would know, Norma Gordon is a well renowned and well respected floral arranger / floral artist.

Norma was awarded the Medal (OAM) of the Order of Australia for her service to the community, particularly through floral art organisations.

Norma has been President of the Australian Floral Art Association, and has represented Australia at national and international events. She has designed and co-arranged large Australian floral exhibits at the World Association of Flower Arrangers' Seminar in England and at the Flower Show in Glasgow. She has been Australian delegate to the World Association of Flower Arrangers and member of the Inaugural Coordination Panel, World Association of Flower Arrangers.

She has held many positions in Garden Clubs and the Floral Arts Society, has been a judge for floral art, gardens and other sections at flower shows. And much more.

Norma has been the Convenor of the St David's Annual Ecumenical and Community Floral Festival, from 1997 to 2016 (20 years). This event has raised over \$80,000 for the community work of the Cathedral and outreach programs during that time.

Norma and Mervyn have together organised the Floral Festival at the Cathedral for these past 20 years – they worked tirelessly to ensure that all of the exhibits were carefully presented and the contribution of each person was always appreciated. In Norma's own words – flowers are beautiful in themselves and what she and others do to create floral arrangements simply adds to that beauty.

Norma and Mervyn, I am sure that with your organisational and floral skills, you will be very welcome in heaven where there must surely be an abundance of flowers.

And in taking up for this year where you have left off, may I congratulate this year's four Co-Convenors, Di Worth, Robyn Kronenberg, Georgina Humphrey and Raelene Weissel – for stepping fearlessly in where others might have feared to tread!

My second task today, after recognising Norma and Mervyn for their amazing work with the Floral Festival for almost 50 years, is to open the 2017 Festival, *Blooming Church*.

Really, I thought Blooming Church? That did, Richard, bring a smile to my face. But of course there is a serious side to this. As Richard said in the flyer for the event, 'the Church, has in recent times, been viewed negatively ... condemning, interfering and unwelcoming. No wonder people have been thinking 'Blooming Church' for the church has been on the nose'.

This could be referring to marriage equality but also to revelations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse over the last four years. Just yesterday the ABC published a photo of a sign left outside the Royal Commission hearings which read, 'Jesus must be weeping'. And just yesterday Gail Furness SC, in her opening address, said 60 per cent of all child abuse survivors attending private Royal Commission hearings reported sexual abuse at faith based institutions.

Nearly 2000 Catholic Church figures have been identified as alleged perpetrators in the Royal Commission. At the hearings this month it is the Catholic Church that is giving evidence before the Commission about how it has responded to allegations of child sexual abuse and to the Commission's cast study reports. Next month it will be the Anglican Church authorities in Australia.

At least, in Australia, something is being done to tackle the issue of institutional child sexual abuse. I know that the Dean hopes that this Festival is part of the process of change, a new era. So that it is no longer bloomin' Church but blooming Church, bursting with beauty, creativity and wonder.

And so in conclusion it gives me great pleasure in declaring open the 2017 St David's Cathedral Floral Festival. May it be a blooming great success!

Thank you.

