

**FRIENDS OF THE BURNIE REGIONAL MUSEUM INC  
70<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE PET FALLS MUSEUM  
REMARKS BY  
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC  
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA  
BURNIE REGIONAL MUSEUM, THURSDAY 2 MAY 2024**

Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to this celebration of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Pet Falls Museum.

I pay my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land: the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community and recognise and respect their enduring culture and continued connection to land, sea, and waters.

May I thank Julie and the Friends of the Burnie Regional Museum for their kind invitation to join you for this anniversary. As your Patron, this is my second formal visit to this Museum. I am looking forward to viewing the exhibits and sharing in the celebration today.

The United Nations Educational and Scientific Organisation (UNESCO) has acknowledged the significant contribution of regional museums to the collection, maintenance, and presentation of world heritage. Museums are important for providing local communities with opportunities to develop and showcase locally based histories and educational content.<sup>1</sup>

As I mentioned on my last visit, children form a significant audience for the stories and objects contained in museum collections across our nation. Whether they be a cultural venue as part of a casual family outing, or a more structured school excursion, children enjoy learning from the objects and stories in Australia's collections.

I am interested in ways to advance educational attainment in our State, so I am pleased that the Burnie Regional Museum remains a focal point of educational outings.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/world-heritage-and-museums/> accessed 26 Apr 24

We are here to celebrate 70 years since the foundation of the Pet Falls Museum by Peter Mercer, which later became this current Burnie Regional Museum. Pet Falls Museum takes its name from the falls that were near the Mercer family property on the Pet River at Ridgley. Peter Mercer arranged for the contents of the Aldie Museum in Launceston to be packed and moved to the new location. The items arrived late on 8 February 1954.

The first group to visit the museum came on 14 August 1954. Around 40 adults and children arrived by bus to look at the museum and to walk to the Falls.<sup>2</sup>

After some ups and downs, the museum and its contents were moved to the Pioneer Village in 1971. As we know, it was officially opened as the Burnie Regional Museum in 2011.<sup>3</sup>

The work in the curation and display of the histories and culture of the north-west remains an important contribution by Peter Mercer. We rightly celebrate his work today.

We celebrate the 70 years since the founding of the Pet Falls Museum, and I look forward to speaking with you as we enjoy afternoon tea.

Thank you.

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<sup>2</sup> Mercer, Peter 2016. The Power of Purpose: The story of the Burnie Regional Museum. Forty South Publishing, pp 18-23

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.burniearts.net/Exhibitions/Permanent-Exhibitions/Federation-Street-Exhibit> accessed 6 Oct 22