

**TASMANIAN ASSOCIATION FOR
SUPERVISED PASTORAL EDUCATION (TASPE) CONFERENCE
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
BALL ROOM, GOVERNMENT HOUSE, MONDAY 13 MAY 2024**

Good evening, everyone. I warmly welcome you all to Government House.

May I begin by acknowledging the Muwinina people upon whose Country we gather. I acknowledge today's Tasmanian Aboriginal Community as ongoing custodians of Country. I recognise their enduring culture and continued connection to land, sea, and waters.

I am delighted to have you all here to acknowledge the important work that Spiritual Care workers undertake for our Tasmanian communities. This evening also marks the occasion of delegates from around Tasmania coming together for this spiritual care conference.

May I thank the Tasmanian Association for Supervised Pastoral Care Education (TASPE) for organising and hosting this important conference. May I extend a very warm welcome to Michael Paterson, esteemed priest, psychotherapist, and supervisor from Fife in Scotland. His expertise will undoubtedly enrich your discussions and understanding of spiritual and pastoral care. Michael, I should disclose that we have a special soft spot for Scots here at Government House!

Tasmania is a beautiful State, with stunning landscapes, pristine waterfronts and beaches, rare and beautiful flora and fauna, clean air and water, and with many close-knit and resilient communities.

However, like the rest of Australia and the world, we face challenges. Greater health care challenges than other States, cost of living and housing increase hardship and crisis for many in our community.¹² Further, our rural and

¹ MyState Bank: New research finds young homeowners feeling interest rate pinch, cost of living pressures. The Mercury, 5 December 2023

² <https://www.themercury.com.au/lifestyle/a-report-showing-tasmania-is-the-unhealthiest-state-has-cast-doubts-over-it-being-the-healthiest-state-by-2025/news-story/3b6fd6916d5b88642bdb6d02ac7cf918>

agricultural communities are experiencing unfavourable conditions, causing concerns for the mental health of our farmers and their families.³

Unfortunately, many of these communities are not within easy reach of support services. So, pastoral and spiritual care has even greater significance.

In schools, pastoral care provides students with a supportive environment. Promoting resilience, pastoral care programs can contribute to positive educational outcomes and student wellbeing.⁴

In prisons, pastoral care can help inmates navigate the challenges of incarceration and prepare for reintegration into our community.⁵

In hospitals, pastoral work complements medical care by addressing spiritual and emotional stressors associated with illness and suffering. Research indicates that patients who receive pastoral care have greater levels of comfort, hope, and peace, leading to improved health outcomes.^{6,7} So too, pastoral care in aged care facilities can help alleviate feelings of loneliness and isolation, and promote wellbeing.⁸

Volunteers and care givers also benefit and may enjoy a sense of purpose and fulfillment.⁹

May I conclude in saying that we are very grateful for what you do as pastoral care workers. Your work and your contributions to our community are important. I wish you all the very best for a successful and productive conference. Please enjoy the reception. Thank you.

³ Unfavourable seasonal conditions taking toll on Tasmanian farmers, prompting mental health concerns. The Mercury, 28 April 2024.

⁴ Ee, J., Lim, S. L., & Lim, E. (2017). The role of school counsellors in fostering resilience in schools. *Journal of Psychologists and Counsellors in Schools*, 27(1), 1–16.

⁵ Dixon, L. (2015). *Pastoral care in prisons: Towards a practical theology of care for the incarcerated*. Wipf and Stock Publishers.

⁶ Balboni, M. J., Sullivan, A., Amobi, A., Phelps, A. C., Gorman, D. P., Zollfrank, A., ... VanderWeele, T. J. (2014). Why is spiritual care infrequent at the end of life? Spiritual care perceptions among patients, nurses, and physicians and the role of training. *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, 32(4), 408–414.

⁷ McSherry, W., & Jamieson, S. (2011). An online survey of nurses' perceptions of spirituality and spiritual care. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 20(11-12), 1757–1767.

⁸ Hyden, L. C., & Ohlander, J. (2013). Ageing and the spirituality of care. *Ageing & Society*, 33(3), 495–516.

⁹ Ai, A. L., Tice, T. N., & Whitsett, D. D. (2016). Volunteerism and Health: A Review. *Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community*, 44(4), 277–282. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10852352.2016.1184879>