

**48<sup>th</sup> AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL BUDGERIGAR COUNCIL  
NATIONAL SHOW  
OPENING ADDRESS BY  
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC,  
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA  
COUNTRY CLUB LAUNCESTON, SATURDAY 25 MAY 2024**

Good afternoon, everyone. It is my great pleasure to be here to officially open this 48<sup>th</sup> Australian National Budgerigar Council National Show on behalf of our Budgerigar Council of Tasmania.

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land: the palawa people. I acknowledge today's Tasmanian Aboriginal community and recognise their enduring culture and continued connection to land, sea and waters.

May I extend a very special welcome to entrants from interstate and around Australia to Tasmania! I hope you take the opportunity to see more of our beautiful island State.

Last year, I attended and closed the 90<sup>th</sup> Budgerigar Society of Tasmania's Annual Winter Show. I spoke then about the Regal relationship between budgerigars and the Crown. This relationship started with budgies gifted to Queen Victoria in 1845 by John and Elizabeth Gould upon their return from Australia. Queen Victoria's son, King George V, was patron of the Budgerigar Society until his death in 1936. The late Queen Elizabeth's pair of budgies, gifted to her as a child, grew to a flock of over 100 birds, kept in an open aviary at Windsor Castle.

Last year, at your show, I enjoyed looking at all the different species. I can appreciate your dedication to owning and breeding them.

Australia's fascination with the budgie goes back thousands of years. In fact, the budgerigar originated in aboriginal dialect, meaning 'good bird' or 'good food'.<sup>1</sup> Budgies feature in aboriginal dreaming, art and culture. The dreamtime story of

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.budgerigar.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2019\\_anbc\\_estandard\\_2019\\_master.pdf](https://www.budgerigar.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2019_anbc_estandard_2019_master.pdf)

the Warlpiri people of the Northern Territory explains how budgies helped them find waterholes and places of recent rainfall.<sup>2</sup>

Budgies are special to our Australian culture. They are Australian icons! They are commonplace in our everyday experience. We see them in art, in ads and movies, and they have also entered our vernacular. If I say ‘budgie smugglers’, you all know what I mean! Our own Kylie Minogue is known as the ‘Singing Budgie’; budgies are our global ambassadors!

The high-profile love of the budgerigar was beautifully illustrated in the relationship between Sir Winston Churchill and his cherished pet budgie, Toby. Lord Alistair Lexden wrote that this “much loved creature slept in a special cage in Churchill’s bedroom during his peace-time premiership in the 1950s. The cage was opened when ministers gathered for matutinal confabulations before the great man got up. In his diary, Churchill’s Private Secretary, Anthony Montague Browne, also gave an affectionate account of Toby “flying round the room pecking at Cabinet papers, taking nips from the whisky-and-soda at the Prime Minister’s bedside and settling upon the domed head of the Chancellor of the Exchequer with the inevitable consequences”.<sup>3</sup>

Minister, Rab Butler came to these meetings with a special silk handkerchief, which he used to mop up after Toby, murmuring “The things I do for England”. From his master, Toby received only kisses, never rebukes.<sup>4</sup>

May I also raise another Royal and interesting anecdote from the nanny of Princes William and Harry, Victoria Legge-Bourke, otherwise known as Tiggy. Ms Legge-Bourke was most surprised, when at a garden party in Kensington, a budgie snatched the straw from her daiquiri glass, had a long sip...and fell asleep. Ms Legge-Bourke then adopted the budgie, appropriately named Daiquiri.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://ausemade.com.au/flora-fauna/fauna/birds/parrot-psittaciformes/budgerigar-melopsittacus-undulatus/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.alistairlexden.org.uk/news/alistair-lexden-recalls-antics-winston-churchill-s-budgie#:~:text=After%20his%20return%20to%20Downing,thoroughly%20spoilt%20by%20his%20master>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.alistairlexden.org.uk/news/alistair-lexden-recalls-antics-winston-churchill-s-budgie#:~:text=After%20his%20return%20to%20Downing,thoroughly%20spoilt%20by%20his%20master>

<sup>5</sup> Harris, S., & Baker, D. (2020) Budgerigar: How a brave chatty and colourful little Aussie bird stole the world’s heart. Allen & Unwin

This annual budgerigar show is an event that demonstrates the dedication and expertise of many people who have devoted much of their lives to the art, science, and perfection of budgerigar breeding. This show also brings people together from all corners of our nation, united in their love of the budgerigar.

I understand that of the seven zones around Australia, a staggering 147,480 budgies were eligible to be shown across the 28 classes being judged at this show. From that enormous pool, a total of 584 birds from all zones were selected to compete at this show. Each budgerigar represents hours of meticulous care and attention to breeding and training. May I acknowledge the hard work, dedication and commitment of everyone involved.<sup>6</sup>

Apart from the competition, this national show is a wonderful opportunity for the budgerigar community to connect and collaborate; for seasoned breeders and novices to make new friendships, and exchange ideas; and for all to inspire each other. I understand that this morning you shared these beautiful budgerigars with the rest of Australia in a live interview with *Weekend Sunrise*.<sup>7</sup>

May I close and wish you all the very best for a successful and enjoyable 48<sup>th</sup> National Show. I applaud all competitors and congratulate the winners of each class and the overall winning zone. May I also thank the volunteers and members of the Budgerigar Council of Tasmania for their hard work to make this annual show a success. I hope you all enjoy your closing dinner tomorrow night.

And now, all that remains for me is to declare this 48<sup>th</sup> Australian National Budgerigar Council National Show open.

Thank you.

---

<sup>6</sup> Email Tom Calderwood/Catherine Charlesworth 20 May 2024

<sup>7</sup> Phone call Catherine Charlesworth/Paula Chatwood 20 May 2024