

2024 ONAM FESTIVAL
HOSTED BY THE MALAYALEE ASSOCIATION OF TASMANIA INC
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
HELLENIC HOUSE, SATURDAY 31 AUGUST 2024

Good morning to everyone gathered for this festival to celebrate Onam with your Malayalee Association of Tasmania.

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 deep connection to land, sea, and waters.

I am delighted to join you today to celebrate this vibrant festival of Onam and I welcome all your community. Your association is dedicated to showcasing and celebrating in Tasmania the vibrant culture of Kerala.

Onam is a significant harvest festival that transcends religious and cultural boundaries and brings together people from all walks of life. Onam teaches us the values of humility and generosity, and the importance of community. It reminds us that no matter where we are, the values of love, respect, and compassion should always guide our actions.

The beautiful floral arrangements, or *Pookalam*, the traditional dances, the songs, and the great feast of *Onasadya*—are each aspects of Onam. The colours of *Pookalam* represent the diversity of people in our Tasmanian community, and *Onasadya* represents abundance of nature and the need to share it with those around us.

Today, we shall enjoy performances and activities throughout the day with Bollywood and classical dances, and traditional costumes. We can also smell the magnificent Sahya being prepared.

As we celebrate Onam today, let us also remember those less fortunate. May we extend our hands in kindness to them and share the joy of this festival. The true spirit of Onam is the joy of giving, togetherness, and the hope for a brighter tomorrow.

May I extend my best wishes to you all for a joyful and prosperous Onam. May the festival bring happiness, health, and harmony.

Thank you, and have a wonderful Onam!