

GOVERNMENT HOUSE OPEN DAY 2024
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, SUNDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2024

Good morning, everyone, and a very warm welcome to Government House for this 2024 Open Day. Today, Open Day is an opportunity for you to explore the State Rooms of Government House and the gardens, regarded as some of the finest Victorian-era gardens in Australia.¹

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 deep connection to land, sea, sky, and waters.

Construction of Government House began in 1855, and all the sandstone came from the quarry to the left as you entered². There are 73 rooms in Government House.³

In the Main Hallway areas, you will see contemporary Tasmanian artworks contrasting with the original works on the walls. The contemporary paintings recognise the work of some of our many talented local artists.

You can visit the Ballroom, with its Huon Pine floor, the largest Huon Pine floor in the world, and its three magnificent chandeliers, and the charming French Room, with its hand-painted wallpaper and delicate furniture. Do not miss the views from the Conservatory, which was added in 1991 following architect, William Porden Kay's, original drawings.

In the Dining Room, see the arms of England, Scotland, and Ireland painted on the ceiling panels by ex-convict and forger John Wiltson. At one end of the

¹ The Governor of Tasmania website, Living History, <https://www.govhouse.tas.gov.au/government-house/living-history>, accessed 30 September 2024.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Dining Room, you will see two statues representing spring and winter. The two empty alcoves at the opposite end of the room had two statues for summer and autumn and were loaned to our Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens. Sadly, they did not survive the weather outdoors.

Please enjoy looking at colonial furniture and the original furniture, which was shipped out from England.⁴

Around Government House please enjoy the established gardens and ponds, paddocks, cottages, stables and other buildings.⁵ The garden is much the same as it was when it was developed in the 1850s and 1860s and includes fowl yards, an orchard, and kitchen and picking gardens. All the produce from the gardens is used in the Government House kitchen.⁶

The grounds include an 1889 tennis pavilion with two grass courts and an *en-tout-cas* court; at the front gate, a small Japanese-style ornamental pond; a croquet and bowls lawn, and a fruit orchard; a late 1980s Tasmanian Bush Garden; an early 1990s Heritage Rose Garden and a vineyard was planted in 2015 with riesling and cabernet merlot grapes.

Last year, a Community Garden of vegetables and herbs was planted for produce for school lunches in the School Food Matters program and aims to inform students about fresh produce and food distribution.

Also, as you walk around the grounds look out for brass plaques at the base of some trees that record those planted by visiting royalty, heads of state, and distinguished visitors over the years.⁷

Apart from the buildings and gardens please enjoy the displays, performances and many activities on offer.

⁴ The Governor of Tasmania website, Interior Rooms, <https://www.govhouse.tas.gov.au/government-house/interior-rooms>, accessed 30 September 2024.

⁵ The Governor of Tasmania website, The Grounds, <https://www.govhouse.tas.gov.au/government-house/the-grounds>, accessed 30 September 2024.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ The Governor of Tasmania website, The Grounds, <https://www.govhouse.tas.gov.au/government-house/the-grounds>, accessed 30 September 2024.

May I thank to all our sporting organisations here today and all our musical performers, including our Army and Navy Bands, who regularly perform for us.

May I acknowledge and thank our many community organisations here today.

Thank you also to St John Ambulance and Surf Living Tasmania for helping us to stay safe today.

May I conclude and thank you all for spending your Sunday with us. I welcome you all to Government House.

Please enjoy a wonderful day.

Thank you.