

**AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM  
WOODEN BOAT SYMPOSIUM 2025  
ADDRESS BY  
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC  
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA  
DECHANEUX THEATRE, HOBART, SATURDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2025**

Thank you [for HE's introduction], and good morning. I welcome you all to this Australian Maritime Museum Wooden Boat Symposium. I extend an especially warm Tasmanian welcome to speakers and visitors from interstate and from overseas.

I acknowledge the Muwinina people upon whose land 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.

The inaugural Australian Wooden Boat Festival dates back to 1994, organised by Cathy Hawkins, Ian Johnson and Andy Gamlin.

This symposium has always been one of its highlights. For 2025, a special focus for this Festival is our Pacific region. The Symposium reflects that focus and features presenters from New Zealand, the Marshall Islands, Tahiti, New Caledonia, Japan, the Pacific coast of the United States of America, and Australia.

The program includes topics such as Pacific maritime history, traditional and modern boatbuilding, navigation, voyages, and adventuring on the Pacific Ocean. All the presentations share a common theme: the construction and use of boats made of wood.

With titles such as "Pecha Kucha: Pacific Stories"; "Objects collecting people"; "*Tally Ho*: a dollar, a parrot and a fool"; and "Is there any news of La Perouse?", I am sure that you will all find something that entertains and educates.<sup>1</sup>

Between sessions, you may visit the Library of the Sea, which features a collection showcasing history, craftsmanship, and books about seafaring, shipbuilding, and nautical history.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://awbf2025.org.au/symposium/> accessed 29 Jan 25

The Symposium will begin shortly with Tom Robinson's keynote address. I won't steal too many of Tom's words, but I would like to share some of the points that stood out to me.

Tom spent nine years preparing for his wooden boat voyage, planning to row the boat he built across the Pacific Ocean, a 7,000-nautical-mile journey. He undertook it alone for 265 days. Tom set out from Peru in July 2022 and completed his crossing near Vanuatu. In 2024, the Guinness Book of World Records officially recognised him as the youngest person to row across the Pacific.<sup>2</sup>

Many of the presenters following Tom will talk about traditional canoes and voyaging vessels.

Congratulations to the Australian Wooden Boat Festival team for facilitating and organising this important event. I thank all the presenters for being here to share their knowledge. May I also thank all the sponsors and supporters.

It is now my great pleasure to declare this 2025 Australian Maritime Museum Wooden Boat Symposium officially open.

Thank you.

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<sup>2</sup> Email Scarlett English / David Hughes 27 Jan 25