

**WOMEN WHO SAIL AUSTRALIA (WWSA)
AFTERNOON TEA FOR MEMBERS VISITING HOBART FOR THE
2025 AUSTRALIAN WOODEN BOAT FESTIVAL
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, TUESDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2025**

Good afternoon, everyone. I warmly welcome you all to this afternoon tea for members of Women Who Sail visiting Hobart for the 2025 Australian Wooden Boat Festival.

May 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.

Hobart is always alive with all things nautical at this time of year, the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race, the annual celebration of our Royal Hobart Regatta and our biennial Australian Wooden Boat Festival.

I am sure you all have enjoyed the camaraderie and energy of having hundreds of boats in and around Hobart for the Wooden Boat Festival. Our Tasmanians certainly did.

Women Who Sail Australia is a great initiative, encouraging women to connect, share and support each other on the water.¹

I understand this is the second time you have gathered in Hobart for the Festival,² having presented a sold-out event on your first visit with four members speaking about their sailing experiences, rope skills, and berthing tips. We look forward to your return in two years' time.

May I acknowledge that we have with us today one of the co-founders of the Wooden Boat Festival and renowned yachswoman, Cathy Hawkins. We also

¹ <https://www.womenwhosailaustralia.com/> accessed 30 Jan 25

² *Women Who Sail Australia* Issue 3 of 2023 https://issuu.com/sistershipmagazine/docs/wwsa_issue_3_2023 accessed 30 Jan 25

welcome Jean Socrates, the oldest person to sail solo, non-stop and unassisted around the world via the Southern Ocean's Five Great Capes, and the first woman to sail solo, non-stop and unassisted around the world from North America.

Significant increases in women's participation in sailing have occurred in recent years. The 2024 Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race had approximately 12% women across 62 yachts, including three double-handed crews. This is still a significant minority, so your group providing a space for women to exchange ideas, ask questions, and connect with like-minded women has great merit.

In December, I was fortunate to meet with some of the 22 entrants in the Melbourne to Osaka double-handed race starting in March. It is terrific that a mother-and-daughter crew, a crew of two young mothers, and two other women, one of whom is co-skippering with her father, are participating in the 3–8-week race.

As I understand many of you are from interstate, you may wish to hear a little about this Government House. The House was built between 1852 and 1857 and designed by colonial architect William Porden Kay, a Victorian neo-Gothic style building. The building's sandstone was quarried on-site. As you came in, you may have noticed the pond on the left-hand side of the driveway.

Our extensive gardens include tennis courts, a bowling green, vegetable and flower gardens, a community garden, a French garden, a vineyard and a host of trees planted to acknowledge our premiers and visiting dignitaries with plaques marking the planting date. Please feel free to look around our State Rooms, including the Drawing and Dining Rooms and around the Gardens after your afternoon tea.

Thank you.