



THRIVE GROUP TASMANIA, 50TH ANNIVERSARY
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE CAROLINE WELLS
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, MONDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2026

Good afternoon, everyone. I am delighted to welcome you all here to Government House as we celebrate the Thrive Group's 50 years of education and care in Tasmania.

Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge the Palawa people as the First Peoples of Lutruwita/Tasmania and the Traditional Custodians of this land. For countless generations, they have cared for and nurtured this remarkable island, its landscapes, waterways and communities.

I pay my respects to Elders past and present and recognise the enduring contribution of Aboriginal Tasmanians to the cultural, social and spiritual life of our State.

When I became Governor earlier this year, I made a commitment to lead with compassion, kindness and purpose. And I think that those qualities are central to the story of how your organisation came into being.

Back in 1974, there was a shortage of childcare around Tasmania and especially in Launceston. What did exist was built around ordinary business hours, and that was no use to the women taking up work in the woollen mills, the Launceston General Hospital and the city's shops.

So, a group of concerned citizens came together at a crowded public meeting at the Trades Hall to find a solution. They settled upon the concept of a family day care scheme.

Family day care meant women caring for children in their own homes, coordinated by women, for mothers whose working hours no creche could cover. This was a solution built by women, for women.

It was also an exciting and innovative new model of care. It had been tried in Australia for the first time in Melbourne just four years earlier, and in Tasmania a scheme had been established in Glenorchy only the previous year.

When the Launceston Family Day Care Scheme began on 4 November 1975, in an office in that same Trades Hall, it was amongst the earliest schemes anywhere in the country.

The scheme was an immediate success, caring for up to 150 children within four years, and since then what is now known as the Thrive Group...well, thrived.

The organisation merged with a second northern scheme, changed its name more than once, and by the end of the 1990s was the largest family day care service in the State.

From 2001, it operated childcare centres across rural and regional Tasmania, from Queenstown on the West Coast to Whitemark up north on Flinders Island, and from Triabunna on the East Coast to many communities in between.

Today, Thrive runs 25 services across Tasmania, as well as a family day care scheme consisting of more than 60 educators in the north and in the south.

Your 155 staff care for more than 1,600 children a day in communities right around our State.

Thrive is a very apt name for your organisation. By creating safe, supportive educational environments and meaningful learning experiences, your educators have helped lay the foundations for Tasmanian children to thrive.

May I acknowledge the educators who have been the driving force behind Thrive over the past 50 years. In particular, the family day care educators who open their own homes, often in small communities around our State, to provide such an essential service. Thank you for all you do to support Tasmanian children and families.

I also recognise Thrive's Board of Governance, Executive and all staff for your work to ensure the organisation's continued success. I particularly acknowledge your efforts in helping families in some of Tasmania's most rural and remote communities to access important education and care.

Finally, may I mention the generations of children who have been your focus over the past five decades. Among them are Tasmanians now in their fifties who were in the care of the original Launceston scheme, as well as four-year-olds who have begun their journey at a Thrive service this year.

While much has changed since that first public meeting in 1974, your commitment to providing quality education and care has remained constant. Congratulations to everyone at Thrive Group Tasmania on 50 years of supporting children, families and communities across our State.

Thank you, and please enjoy afternoon tea.