

**REMARKS AT A PERFORMANCE OF THE CHOIR OF HIGH HOPES
BY MRS FRANCES UNDERWOOD
PARLIAMENT HOUSE, HOBART, TUESDAY 16 APRIL 2013**

As the Patron of the Choir of High Hopes, it is a great pleasure to hear you sing in Parliament House. Through the invitation of your Music Director Helen Todd I became your Patron in 2010 and since then I've enjoyed listening to you in venues as diverse as the Theatre Royal, the new RACT building and Government House.

Patronage means support. You have my support and I urge all Tasmanians – and especially politicians! – to get behind this amazing adventure that began a mere five years ago and you can do that by simply booking the Choir for your events, and publicising it far and wide.

Why support the Choir in this way? Because the Choir of High Hopes is committed to helping Tasmanians who are coping with disadvantage; homelessness, unemployment, drug and alcohol issues, mental and physical disabilities, injustice, social isolation and poverty – issues that shape the lives of so many amongst us.

Choir members, your persistence is admirable.

As a lifelong music educator I am reminded that music brings a significant quality to our everyday lives; such that many scholars, from Thomas Aquinas, the Thirteenth Century Italian genius, to contemporary US musician David Byrne, have observed that if you want to understand architecture then you first need to understand music. An observation that you might think very

appropriate as we are in what is Tasmania's most important constitutional building – although my husband might have other ideas about that!

In the Choir's own words: "Singing together as one powerful voice, united by song, uplifts our singers, inspires our audiences and enriches our community."ⁱ But this music not only enriches the community, it also enriches the lives of each member of the Choir. It brings them together every week for rehearsal, and then to share a healthy meal, make friends and find support — a truly life-affirming experience is what the Choir of High Hopes is able to offer to its members.

This is fabulous self-help, but as we all know self-help isn't enough in this day and age. The Choir of High Hopes must continue to have formal, ongoing support to ensure its continuing development and expansion. It is a successful operation and worthy of support. I see that the Choir is performing almost every month this year. Something I could not have said when I first became your Patron. So their continual efforts, and public recognition of those efforts, are now reaping rewards. Long may that continue.

I look forward to continuing my support the Choir of High Hopes on its wonderful journey and I hope that I will be joined by many others to help the Choir continue its journey.

Thank you.

ⁱ <http://choirofhighhopes.com.au/blog/page/2>, accessed 14 April 2013.