

**HOBART WOMEN'S SHELTER
WOMEN'S HOUSING WORKING MEETING
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, TUESDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2022**

Please be seated.

Welcome to Government House. We are delighted to have you here to host the Hobart Women's Shelter Women's Housing Working Meeting.

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land: the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Aboriginal community. I recognise a history of truth, which acknowledges the impacts of colonisation upon our First People. I stand for a future that respects and acknowledges Aboriginal stories, culture, language and history.

May I acknowledge among us:

- Mr Simon Behrakis, representing Minister Michael Ferguson
- Ms Amy Bree, representing Minister Jane Howlett
- Ms Danielle McKee, representing Minister Jacquie Petrusma
- Members and representatives of Local Government
- Ms Ella Haddad
- Federal Member, Mr Andrew Wilkie
- Ms Janet Saunders, CEO Hobart Women's Shelter
- Community leaders and supporters from local industry

Government House is very proud of our association with the Hobart Women's Shelter (HWS); a relationship we intend to foster and continue. Our Executive Chef, Ainstie Wagner, has given cooking classes at the Shelter for women and their children, which have been very successful. We also hosted a lunch for the Shelter and clients late last year.

When visiting the HWS in September last year, I was very impressed by your accommodation and facilities. I was impressed with CEO Janet Saunders and her wonderful staff and volunteers. They support the residents and are committed

to providing a safe place for women and children to temporarily reside. They also provide services to assist, educate and empower women whilst at the shelter.

Raising awareness of family violence and taking actions to prevent it is a major public welfare issue and is an issue that I feel strongly about. We must also challenge the condoning of violence against women and challenge gender stereotypes and roles. We need to promote, as well as normalise gender equality in public and private life. Promoting women's independence and decision-making is critical.¹ Housing for women and their children can provide them with some independence.

I was concerned to be told by Janet that almost 900 women and children were turned away from HWS in 2020-2021. This has never been experienced by the Shelter since it opened in 1974.

This is more than double the number of women and children turned away in other states across the nation.² I understand that this is due to women staying at the Shelter for long periods, rather than short stays, so tying up accommodation for others in need.

It is commendable that the HWS is embarking on a project aimed at increasing the number of permanent housing places for women and children experiencing family violence and/or homelessness in Tasmania.

Homelessness is also an issue of importance to me, in particular for older women. They may have been made redundant and unable to find new employment. They may not have achieved home ownership or may have lost it in a relationship breakdown. And they may have fled family violence.

Today's meeting is an important step in addressing housing needs of women. You will be hearing about and discussing: "Three perspectives on innovative funding, design and planning for women's housing needs."

I hope you enjoy your meeting, and that you find the topics presented and subsequent discussion helpful in your efforts to address the current demand for both crisis and permanent accommodation for women and children in Tasmania.

¹ [Putting the prevention of violence against women into practice - summary \(ourwatch.org.au\)](https://ourwatch.org.au), accessed 8 Feb 2022

² Letter dated 17 November 2021 from Janet Saunders CEO Hobart Women's Shelter.