

**THREAD TOGETHER HOBART CLOTHING HUB
OF THE
HOBART CITY CHURCH OF CHRIST
SPEECH BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
4 GOULBURN STREET, HOBART MONDAY 29 AUGUST 2022**

Thank you [Carol Kingshott, MC introducing HE].

I pay my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land: the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian 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.

Don and I are very pleased to be part of this opening. This is, in some ways, a follow-up to the reception we hosted last April celebrating your 150th anniversary: a truly significant milestone.

That reception had been requested by your Senior Minister, the Reverend Simon Clemow, with whom I will soon be unveiling the official plaque. May I also acknowledge Thread Together CEO Anthony Chesler, who is here from Sydney. It is most appropriate that he is here with us today.

Last Thursday evening, Don and I spent time in Glenorchy as part of the Salvos Sleep Out. Our walk was a stark reminder of the difficult circumstances faced by so many Tasmanians. It was equally a reminder of the valuable work undertaken by organisations like the Hobart City Church of Christ.

The launch today of the expanded Thread Together Clothing Hub is further evidence of the need for your service. That Thread Together is deliberately multi-purpose – helping vulnerable people and our vulnerable planet – is commendable and remarkable.

While I am aware of the tonnes of fresh food that are thrown away daily, I did not know that as much as a third of new unsold clothing ends up in landfill. It's yet another disturbing consequence of our throw away consumer societies. We are wasteful and careless with our most basic of human needs – food and clothing. Homelessness is also a key target of your work.

I know from historical research done at Government House, that during the 1920s and 1930s many homeless Tasmanians lived in tents on the Domain. That there are still tents, when we are far removed from any kind of Great Depression, is tragic.

This, again, underscores the value of the work and commitment of this Thread Together Clothing Hub.

There is, as many will know, a movement to address this issue at the Federal level. In May last year, the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water held an inaugural National Clothing Textile Waste Roundtable. Participants were represented from many industries including retail, fashion, charity, production, environment, research and waste management. Discussion centred around how to reduce the approximately and staggering 800,000 tonnes of textiles waste Australia generates and sends to landfill each year¹.

The UK is just as wasteful. Based on official 2016 data of municipal non-industrial waste, the equivalent of 895,000 pairs of shoes, or almost 1.8 million pairs of jeans went to landfill.² A BBC documentary called “The Secret Life of Landfills” organised digging up a 1980s landfill site and found almost fully intact cotton clothing, and legible newspaper. The documentary concluded that landfill inhibits biodegradability.³ Equally, there are also issues with toxic chemicals and greenhouse gases escaping from landfill.

The current fashion system uses high volumes of non-renewable resources, including petroleum, extracted to produce clothes that are often used only for a short period of time. The materials are then mostly lost to landfill or are burnt.⁴ This made me think about my own clothes purchases and, doing some research, I was pleased to discover that there are quite a few Australian companies opting for ethical production and sustainable fabrics.

In a small step, at Government House, we purchased last year a number of pouffes from St Vincent’s Industries. The coverings are made of recycled jeans and filled with rags. They are very comfortable.

¹ [Clothing textiles waste - DCCEEW](#) accessed 26 August 2022.

² [Thinking about waste - clothing and landfill - Time to Sew](#) accessed 26 August 2022.

³ Ibid.

⁴ <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20200710-why-clothes-are-so-hard-to-recycle>, accessed 26/08/2022.

Again, I commend you at Thread Together for helping to reduce clothing waste and the consequent environmental dangers. I also commend and thank you for everything that you do in our community. The work of Thread Together helps our vulnerable citizens and is simply invaluable. I am delighted to be part of this official opening. I shall make a point of telling people about your collective creativity and commitment to a better world.

Thank you.