

KENNERLEY CHILDREN'S HOMES – OPENING OF NEW PREMISES
SPEECH BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
24 HOPKINS STREET, MOONAH, THURSDAY 20 APRIL 2023

Good afternoon, and thank you Robyn [Jacques, introduced HE] and colleagues for inviting Don and I to attend today and to formally open your new premises.

I pay my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land: the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community and recognise their enduring culture and connection to land, sea and waters.

The Tasmanian Times newspaper in June 1868, under the heading “A Home for the Homeless” wrote of the need for a “Home and School for destitute and neglected children ... A house, conveniently situated [on Landsdowne Crescent], and surrounded by three acres of orchard-ground, was for sale. Mr Kennerley became its purchaser. Before it could be fitted for its destined purpose, repairs and considerable additions were necessary. These he also undertook. The Home was to accommodate 24 boys and the necessary masters and assistants.

Mr Alfred Kennerley was Mayor, Magistrate, and Member of Parliament – and described at the time as having “always taken a warm interest in the welfare and progress of our religious and charitable institutions. He was a considerable contributor to the building fund of All Saints Church in Macquarie Street.”¹

The Governor at the time was Sir Charles Du Cane, who took an active interest, visiting the Home. He also chaired early annual meetings assessing its progress.

Subsequent Governors continued the close relationship. For example, in 1917 Governor Sir Francis Newdegate expressed his admiration in this way: “The boys who had left the home had earned the respect of the community, and had justified the good name of the institution ... The founder would always be remembered by the home which bore his name and his idea that those who had not the same advantages should be helped by those who had ... He advised them

¹ *The Tasmanian Times* (Hobart), Wednesday 3 June 1868, page 3.

when young to aim at some goal and bend all their efforts in reading and otherwise to attain it.”²

Kennerley continued to operate as an institution caring for boys under Care and Protection Orders (Wards of the State) as well as private placements to assist marginalised families.

There was a significant change in 1969, 100 years after the founding, when the centralised, supervised dormitory style accommodation in West Hobart was replaced by four purpose-built cottages in the northern suburbs. Carers were engaged as employees to raise their children in care as their “parents”. These “cottage parents” had specialist training supervision and the support of qualified Child Development Officers. These four cottages grew to nine plus a holiday home, until government funding ceased in June 2015.

In the 1990s, an Emergency/Respite Care program commenced under a service agreement with the Department of Health & Human Services. This program assisted parents needing short-term care for their children and provided Respite Care for Kennerley and Government carers.

Your Moving-On Program (leaving care) was established in 2003 in partnership with, and initial sponsorship from, BoysTown. Later, you received Government support under a service agreement.

In 2007/08, you established a service agreement to provide long-term foster care with qualified staff and infrastructure.

In late October 2022, you moved from your premises at 9 Timsbury Rd to the Cloister in St Theresa’s parish.

You continue to be inclusive of all cultures, race, religions, gender, sexual orientation and family compositions.

² *The Mercury*, Friday 5 December 1919, page 10.

In over 150 years since your founding, your good name continues strongly. Your fundamental ethos is unchanged, and you have adapted to the complexities of caring for our young people today.

May I conclude by congratulating the Board, management, staff, carers, children in care, volunteers and all Kennerley supporters. And, in a moment, I will have great pleasure in formally declaring open your new premises here at 24 Hopkins Street, Moonah.

Thank you.