

**OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE LAUNCESTON CITY MISSION
ARK YOUTH AND COMMUNITY CENTRE
ADDRESS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
LAUNCESTON, WEDNESDAY 26 JULY 2023**

Good morning everyone, and thank you for inviting me to officially open this Launceston City Mission Ark Youth and Community Centre. I am honoured to be part of this significant event.

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 continued connection to land, sea and waters.

May I acknowledge Launceston City Mission's commitment and service to our community. You have served us for 169 years and continue to face the complex challenges of homelessness, poverty, crisis, and social injustice.

The opening of this Ark Youth and Community Centre represents a new chapter in your commitment to the care, understanding and support for some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

The name, "Ark," evokes the biblical ark that provided refuge and safety for those sheltering from the storm. This "Ark" centre will provide sanctuary for those in crisis or in need of assistance.

This "Ark" centre is designed to provide for the many needs of children and families in crisis. Importantly, this will provide them with a safe environment. May I extend my thanks to all the individuals and organisations whose support and generosity created this centre. Your contributions have laid the foundations for a better future for our community.

May I also recognise and congratulate all the staff and volunteers of the Ark Centre. I thank you all for your dedication and tireless efforts to help others.

May I conclude and acknowledge this Launceston City Mission Ark Centre is a testament to your commitment to support every child, regardless of background or circumstance.

I now have the greatest pleasure to declare this Launceston City Mission Ark Youth and Community Centre *officially open!*

[HE cuts ribbon]