

**Morning tea to celebrate the 145th anniversary of the
Kennerley Children's Homes**

Friday 4th April 2014

It is a great pleasure for me and my wife to welcome you all to Government House to celebrate the 145th anniversary of the founding of the Kennerley Children's Homes. There are not many organisations in Tasmania, or indeed, the whole of Australia that can claim to have a history that goes back 145 years to 1869. Such a long record bespeaks of sustained good management that recognises a readiness to embrace change in order to respond to contemporary needs. As you know the Home came into existence as a result of the philanthropy of Sir Alfred Kennerley and a pressing need to make proper provision for the care and training of the many children who were without proper food or shelter. The first admission to what was then called the Kennerley Boys Home was on 7th April 1869; 145 years ago almost to the day!

Born in London, Kennerley was 47 years old in June 1857 when he arrived in Tasmania although he had previously migrated to Sydney some 27 years earlier. Here, Kennerley quickly plunged into public life and a year after his arrival was appointed a magistrate. Three years later he was elected an alderman of Hobart Town and the following year commenced the first of two terms as Mayor. In 1865 - just eight years after his arrival in the colony - Kennerley was elected to the Legislative Council & five years later he became Premier. The measure of the man was apparent from the legislative programme that he embarked upon - quite amazing for the

times. He advocated social reforms way ahead of the times, such bills as marriage to a deceased wife's sister, maintenance of deserted wives, children and indigent persons, public charity, infants' custody, and life assurance companies. He also advocated support for destitute children and juvenile offenders. Consistent with his public face Sir Alfred bought land and founded the Boys' Home and Industrial School, which first admitted 30 boys and within six years had trained over 70 juveniles.

He died at what was then the incredible age of 88 a much respected citizen. Were he able to be with us today I am sure that he would be delighted to see that his philanthropic work was still thriving 145 years after it commenced. Mind you the manner in which foster care is now provided is a far cry from how it was provided 145 years ago, but that is as I say a tribute to management that has responded to changing times. But the basic philosophy has remained the same over the organisation's long and proud history: "caring for children under guardianship; and providing a safe and stable environment that enables each child to reach full potential."

Of course providing a safe and stable environment that enables each child to reach full potential requires a lot of loving care and commitment from carers many of whom are here this morning. To each of you I thank you for your service and commitment which has made such of difference to so many children over a long period of time. You should all be very proud of your contribution.

I also pay tribute to the splendid work of the Chair, Robin Jacques and his Board, the General Manager, Operations Manager and all the hard working staff, volunteers and supporters. It is wonderful work that you do. Finally, it would be remiss of me on this special occasion not to single out the late Alan Hilder and pay tribute to his unswerving commitment and service to Kennerley for 35 years prior to his untimely passing last year.

Thank you all.