

**26TEN FIFTH BIRTHDAY
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA, TUESDAY 24 OCTOBER 2017**

Good evening and welcome to this reception to celebrate the Fifth birthday of 26TEN, the network of organisations and individuals working together to improve adult literacy and numeracy in Tasmania.

I begin by paying my respects to the Mouheneener people, the traditional and original owners of this land – those who have passed before us; and in acknowledgement of today's Tasmanian Aboriginal community, being the custodians of this land.

May I acknowledge among you:

- Scott Bacon MP;
- 26TEN Coalition Convenor Siobhan Gaskell and her colleagues;
- Jenny Gale, Department of Education Secretary;
- Liz Jack, Director LINC Tasmania;
- Mary Bent, Chair Tasmanian Library Advisory Board;
- Anita Planchon, Manager Strategy and Engagement;
- and Sue Howard, 26TEN Manager.

26TEN was launched as an ambitious and unique strategy to lift adult literacy and numeracy rates in Tasmania. In just five years, that ambition is paying off. Plain facts tell some of the story:

- This week, 26TEN Week, members and supporters of 26TEN are taking part in over 80 events across the State to highlight the vital role parents and carers play in developing the reading, writing and numeracy skills of their children;

- 26TEN has nearly 700 member organisations and supporters;
- well over 1,300 people have volunteered and completed training as adult literacy tutors;
- and support is widespread across the community, through the State Government; City Councils; Child and Family Centres; schools; and LINC's.

So 26TEN has developed an excellent formal support base and has a growing network and these are well represented here this evening.

Last year, on visits to Houstons Farm and Glenorchy LINC, Dick and I were very moved to hear from adult learners what a difference 26TEN had made to their lives.

In addition I would like to give a special welcome to the adult learners who are parents and grandparents and who, through 26TEN and their own hard work, can now read to their children, read the notes sent home by teachers, and who have the confidence to walk their children into school.

Congratulations to you on your persistence and effort. I know in some cases it's taken great courage because it isn't easy to be an adult asking for help with reading, writing and maths.

And remember, parents and carers are a child's most important educators in the early years, when something like 90 per cent of a child's brain development occurs. This is a message worth spreading and is why 26TEN will continue to highlight the vital role of adults in family literacy.

Indeed it fits perfectly with this year's theme for 26TEN Week, which is: "Reading, writing, counting – families together."

It is another step towards the ideal where most Tasmanians will have appropriate literacy and numeracy skills for life.

And it can be done. Dick and I have recently hosted the Ambassador of Finland, His Excellency Mr Lars Backström and Mrs Brigitta Backström, and they were able to explain how it has come about that Finland has consistently and exceptionally high literacy rates.

With nearly 50 per cent of Tasmanians not having adequate literacy and numeracy skills, we clearly have a long way to go. But in considering what 26TEN has achieved in just five years, we can now have a degree of optimism about the future that we did not have five years ago, when 26TEN didn't exist.

Through the guidance of the 26TEN Coalition, a new action plan for 2018-2020 will make it easier to support adult learning, and it will become easier for people who need help to get it.

The action plan sets out a framework for the next three years, where the 26TEN Network will further encourage people and organisations to collaborate and inspire each other to take action to lift literacy and numeracy.

Congratulations therefore to everyone involved with this inspiring Tasmanian initiative and please now do enjoy your fifth birthday party!

Thank you.