

**REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE PETER UNDERWOOD AC,
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA AT A RECEPTION TO CELEBRATE
THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE BEACON FOUNDATION
DURING THE CURRENT YEAR, GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
WEDNESDAY 5TH DECEMBER 2012**

It is a great pleasure for me and my wife to welcome you all to Government House today to celebrate the successes that the Beacon Foundation has enjoyed this year.

This wonderful organisation of which I am proud to be patron began in this State in 1988. Its mission was to change the outcomes for young people. In 1995 the Foundation ran its first “No dole” programme. The chosen school was Brooks High School. It was an immediate success. In the first year of the program, the number of students going onto welfare after year 10 was halved, in the second year, halved again and in the third, fourth and fifth years, all Brooks students successfully went onto further education or employment – not welfare.

This formed the blueprint for what is now a national program run in 137 schools in all states and territories, and Tasmania now has 15 of those schools in that national program, helping to address the State’s low retention rates to year 12, and the high youth unemployment rate.

This year Beacon has worked with 14,000 students nationally and the 2012 National Outcomes report discloses these results:

- 98.8% of Beacon students were engaged in post-year 10 education, training or work.
- Beacon students are four times less likely to be disengaged from full time education, training or employment than the national average;
- the unemployment rate for Beacon students post year 10 is five times lower than the national average; and
- Beacon schools report above average post year 10 retention.

Pretty good results I think you will agree. Here in Tasmania I mention Cressy District High which is now a Beacon platinum alumni school. In 2004, as few as 25% of the year 10 students at Cressy District High School went onto further education or training. In 2008, after the school had been running the Beacon program for four years, 94% of year 10 students went on to further education and training. Principal, Annette Hollingsworth credits the Beacon program with a large part of the school's success, and with the school's connection to the community. I have had the pleasure of meeting Ms Hollingsworth and I am sure that she too has personally contributed to that success in no small measure.

Another success this year is New Norfolk High School. It partnered with Beacon this year along with 36 other new schools across Australia. It won the "School of the Year Award" at the National Conference. Another Tasmanian school, Geilston Bay High, celebrates success this year by winning the "Most Outstanding

Business Engagement” in conjunction with the Tasmanian Hospitality Association.

So it has been a really good year for the Beacon Foundation, but it is quick to acknowledge that critical to Beacon’s success is the support of business and industry – helping schools bring relevance to the curriculum, and providing knowledge and opportunity. This year Beacon has over 50 business partners and 3,300 local business supporters. To all those partners and supporters I say thank you for each of you have helped to make a big difference to the lives of our young people.

There is much to celebrate. The Beacon successes in 2012 are very impressive and I congratulate Bill Lawson and the members of his Board. I congratulate CEO Scott Harris and his team at Beacon and again thank all those many people who have supported and encouraged the work that Beacon Foundation. It is rightly said that a nation’s greatest asset is its youth, and the Beacon Foundation is responsible for nourishing that asset by improving its self-esteem and by making it more productive and valued.