

**LADY GOWRIE TASMANIA
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
DRAWING ROOM, GOVERNMENT HOUSE, TUESDAY 25 JUNE 2019**

Good evening. Dick and I warmly welcome you to this reception to mark the 80th Anniversary of Lady Gowrie Tasmania and the associated launch of your publication celebrating those 80 years.

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land, the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community, who have survived invasion and dispossession, and continue to maintain their identity, culture and Indigenous rights.

I would like to acknowledge among you:

- Senator Carol Brown;
- Senator Catryna Bilyk;
- Linda Jacobs representing Elise Archer MP;
- Cassy O'Connor Leader of the Tasmanian Greens;
- Josh Willie MLC;
- Anna Reynolds, Lord Mayor of Hobart;
- Lady Gowrie Tasmania CEO Ros Cornish;
- William McShane, Board Chair and fellow Board Directors.

And there are many staff and friends and others who have and who continue to make this organisation what it is, namely, a truly multi-faceted community service operating at the highest levels of professional excellence.

Indeed while your position statement – which is “Children First” – may appear self-evident and even elementary, the reality of the business of Lady Gowrie Tasmania is quite complex, and I quote from the publication:

“Lady Gowrie Tasmania continues to advocate for children and families through family support, inclusion support, research projects – such as supporting children’s physical health and wellbeing – and building strong and sustainable relationships with government that enable lobbying to be undertaken in a professional and respectful manner.”ⁱ

Lady Gowrie is such a familiar name with so many of us having connections with it. Our nieces, Harriet and Charlotte attended Lady Gowrie in Battery Point the 1970s and our granddaughter, Nell, attended Lady Gowrie, Campbell Street. And Lady Gowrie has long had a reputation for being an innovator and leader in early childhood education.

Proof positive of the success and value of your work is that, whereas eighty years ago one small Lady Gowrie Child Centre was built in Battery Point for children from disadvantaged circumstances, today there are over 30 of your Education and Care services across Tasmania catering to a great variety of very young Tasmanians.

As Governor I’m particularly pleased to be launching the anniversary publication, given the Vice-Regal origins of the service, Lady Zara Gowrie having been the wife of then Australian Governor-General Sir Alexander Hore-Ruthven, 1st Earl of Gowrie.

I should say in passing that the original 1st Earl of Gowrie, William Ruthven, wasn’t quite so benevolently child-minded because in 1582 he forcibly abducted a 15-year-old boy ... who, mind you, just happened to be King James VI of Scotland ... That abduction being a political coup, designed to limit French Catholic influences upon the young Monarch.

But here we are in 2019 and the name Lady Gowrie is synonymous with all that is good about nurturing and educating our youngest Tasmanians.

We all know the crucial importance of appropriate and professionally-delivered Early Learning: it quite literally sets up young individuals to start positively the very long journey through formal education into adulthood. The importance of early childhood education, of those years 0-4, of playful learning with babies and

children is something I have become much more aware of as Chair of the Advisory Committee of the Underwood Centre for Educational Attainment.

And that's precisely why the original six Lady Gowrie Child Care Centres were established across Australia in 1939 ... "to provide a holistic approach to childcare ... with a focus on nutrition, health and well-being as well as education."ⁱⁱ

Ladies and gentlemen in conclusion I would like to congratulate everyone here who has any input into these highly regarded Tasmanian education and care centres. And indeed congratulations to all who have gone before.

I had mentioned at the beginning of these remarks your position statement – which is "Children First". It seems appropriate therefore to further conclude by also letting your children have the last word. So I'll quote this delightful little conversation from the anniversary publication –

Educator to Bella, aged 3: "What do you enjoy doing at Lady Gowrie, Bella?"

Bella: "What's Lady Gowrie?"

Educator: "Lady Gowrie is this place here, where you come every day."

Bella: "Well I like coming to Lady Gowrie and I'm going to draw Archie and me 'cause I get to see Archie at Lady Gowrie. And I also like playing with my friends."ⁱⁱⁱ

This reminded me of a visit to Government House of a prep class. I did my best to explain the role of Governor in simple terms to the class sitting on the carpet in the drawing room and then responded to questions, one of which was from a little boy who asked, 'Where is the Governor?'

I now happily declare your 80th Anniversary publication launched.

Thank you.

ⁱ Page 19 left column last para.

ⁱⁱ Page 10 left column para 3.

ⁱⁱⁱ Page 5.