

**OPENING OF A DISPLAY BY THE HONOURABLE PETER
UNDERWOOD AC, GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA TO COMMEMORATE
THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF HOBART LEGACY AT THE
TASMANIAN MUSEUM & ART GALLERY
MONDAY 2ND SEPTEMBER 2013**

As is well known, Legacy is a charity that provides services to Australian families suffering financially and socially after the incapacitation or death of a spouse or parent, during or after their defence force service. Currently, Legacy cares for 100,000 widows and 1,900 children and disabled dependants throughout Australia¹. This wonderful support for families of service personnel all began right here in Hobart and it is my privilege this evening, - in the city where Legacy was born 90 years ago - to recognise the origins and the history of Legacy by officially opening a display mounted by Hobart Legacy and TMAG.

Legacy was born in Tasmania way back in 1923 when General Sir John Gellibrand, who was born and bred in Tasmania, founded the Remembrance Club in Hobart. His objective in doing so was to correct what he perceived to have been a failure by armed forces personnel who had returned to their businesses after the end of World War I, to adequately assist others who had also returned from the battlefields, but were having trouble getting back on their feet. The Australian Dictionary of Biography contains this extract about General Sir John Gellibrand,² “From the time he left the A.I.F. in 1919 Gellibrand had taken a deep interest in public affairs, and particularly in Australia's defence. But perhaps his finest monument was his untiring work for the Legacy movement, the formation of which he inspired when he founded the Remembrance Club in Hobart in 1922. (I note in passing that the Dictionary of Biography uses the date

¹ <http://www.legacy.com.au/> accessed 28th August 2013

² <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/gellibrand-sir-john-6295> accessed 28th August 2013.

1922, not 1923, but I refer those who are about to accuse Hobart Legacy of being a year late in mounting this exhibition to Mark Lyons, who uses 1923 as the starting date in his book “Legacy: The First Fifty Years.” However, from his account it is clear that the Club and its aims actually developed over a period of some months.³

From its original aims, mainly to guard the interests of ex-soldiers, the Legacy clubs extended their activities to caring for widows and children of deceased ex-servicemen. In his foreword to the *History of the Legacy Club of Sydney* (Sydney, 1944), the great Australian historian Charles Bean says with respect to Gellibrand: 'And, coming back to the great and good man from whose original work it all sprang—there was a time when some of us thought that the best monument to John Gellibrand might be the story of a Second [Battle of] Bullecourt. Now I feel there will be an even better one — the record of Legacy'.”

Sir John’s concept of assistance to returned servicemen was picked up by Sir Stanley Savige, a former officer in Sir John’s battalion who visited Hobart in 1923 and admired the good work that the Remembrance Club was doing there. Savige took the concept to Melbourne, established a similar Club there and dedicated his life’s work to its success.

Since those days, Legacy, as it became known, has spread to all parts of Australia. Now there are some 49 Clubs right across the country, and as I have said, one hundred thousand widows and some 1,900 children and adults with disabilities are cared for by some 1,600 volunteers – the legatees. The spirit of Legacy is service, but what really makes Legacy stand apart from all other care

³ Published Lothian Publishing Company, Melbourne 1978. ISBN 0 85091 069 2.

organisations is not just service, but the manner in which the service is delivered; ongoing personal contact and support from the legatee to the widow or child. Legacy is a personal, one-on-one business. Legacy does not provide charity. Legacy fulfills an earned obligation. A former premier of New South Wales said of the work of Legacy that “it is a legacy for those who fought and died for this country.” He said that “Those who participated in the struggle to defend Australia were defending our nation’s belief, a belief in a fair go, a belief in supporting other Australians in time of need, and our belief in the intrinsic value of every person.” As well-known American author James Michener once said of Legacy, “No nation in the world cares for the families of its dead with as much generosity and love as Australia does through this extraordinary ex-serviceman’s organisation.”

I am privileged to be the Patron of Legacy in Tasmania and as I say, I am privileged to be here today and to officially open this important display recording the history and work of that unique organisation.