

**REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE PETEER UNDERWOOD AC,
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA AT THE LAUNCH OF TWO NEW
LOUI'S VANS, BRIGHTON CIVIC CENTRE,
WEDNESDAY 5TH DECEMBER 2012**

I am honoured that you have asked me to attend this ceremony and to launch two new vans. I very well recall the evening of Wednesday July 30th 2008 - 4 years ago - when my wife and I were greeted by Janelle Kava and we went out with Loui's van to Glenorchy. At that time I had only been Governor for 4 months and I wanted to see first-hand the work of Loui's van. We drove to the car park at the back of the picture theatre and opened the back of the van but there was no one in sight. I thought, well there aren't any people here tonight who need Loui's van, and then swiftly and silently the people came. They emerged from the shadows of the surrounding buildings. They were obviously not newcomers. They were quietly served with soup and pies; sandwiches and fruit and hot drinks. No questions were asked by the volunteers on the van. The clients said a quiet thank you. Everyone was treated with respect and dignity; men and women of all ages. And then, as suddenly as it had begun, loaded with food, the figures melted back into the shadows as silently as they had come. What a wonderful thing to do I thought - to help the needy like that.

At that time Janelle told me that it all began in Hobart in 1992 with a two-night operation feeding about 42 people a night. She said that it quickly expanded to a 160-volunteer operation that served more than 15,000 meals each year to Hobartians in need. But that was 4 years ago. Today Louie's van is a 280-volunteer, six-nights a week

operation with two vans operating in Glenorchy, Bridgewater, Gagebrook, Clarendon Vale and Rokeby. The volunteers are involved in all aspects of the programme from making the soups and sandwiches to serving from the van. In the last financial year Louie's vans assisted no less than 16,000 times. It is a wonderful record and great tribute to all those fantastic volunteers who make the operation work.

This year Loui's van was able to secure funding from the Tasmanian Community Fund and also some funding from Vinnie's Sleepout which enabled the purchase of these two new vehicles. The canopies for the vans were manufactured by Hill Sheet Metal in Brighton and the electrical work carried out by Brighton Tyre and Auto and I express my sincere appreciation to those two companies for assisting what truly is a great community support project.

These vans that I am about to launch will make a big difference to the support that is already offered to people in need because they will take over the existing service freeing one of the existing vans to explore an expansion into areas not presently covered by Loui's vans and freeing the other for use at Vinnies' Community Growth Centre.

It is a great shame that here in Hobart there are people in need of the support given by Loui's vans, but the fact is that there are many such people and I congratulate all those who give so willingly give their time, services and money to fulfill that need. Further, it is a

tremendous credit to those volunteers that the service they provide is given freely, without any asking any questions to all those who come to Loui's van seeking assistance. Indeed, I understand that one evening some foreign tourists wandered over unaware of what Loui's van actually does, but nonetheless in the spirit of Loui's Van motto of not refusing anyone who approaches they were generously provided with soup. After consuming their meal they tried very hard to pay for it but the language barrier made it very difficult to get them to understand that it was free food given to all who ask for it. Can't you just imagine them talking to their friends when they returned home telling them what a fantastic place Tasmania is, where food is handed out free in the streets to all who just rock up and ask for it!!

So it is with pleasure that today I formally launch two new Loui's vans that will keep up the good work here in the suburbs of Hobart.