

**NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSES TASMANIA STATEWIDE CONFERENCE
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, WEDNESDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2018**

Good evening and welcome to delegates attending the 2018 Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania Statewide Conference.

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

May I acknowledge among you:

- Kate Beer, President, and other board members of Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania;
- John Hooper - Executive Officer, and Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania staff;
- Volunteer Board members from other Houses;
- and thanks to Aurora Energy, principal sponsor of the Conference.

For many years now I have been aware of the wonderful work of Neighbourhood houses as places linked to local communities at the grassroots level building the capacity of individuals, families and communities.

My husband Dick was a great supporter of the Derwent Valley Community House when we lived in New Norfolk and since my appointment as Governor, we have visited a number of Community Houses when on municipal visits: the Burnie Community House with its wonderful Hill Top Farm and had lunch at the Produce store which sells fresh vegetables and delicious nutritious food; the St

Helen's Neighbourhood House and the Ravenswood Community Garden, which is run by the Ravenswood Neighbourhood House.

Just last Saturday at the Blooming Tasmania Flower and Garden Show I learnt about the Okines Community House and Community Garden at Dodges Ferry, which we now plan to visit during our Sorell Municipal Visit.

With 35 neighbourhood houses in Tasmania a peak body is a huge asset to assist the houses to achieve outcomes within their community.

In looking at your website I was impressed to read the May 2018 Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania "Making a difference for our communities" Report.

As a comprehensive evidence-based document this surely will assist you in many ways. As it says, and I quote:

"The data that we now have is a rich source of information about why people come to Houses, how they experience it when they do, and how communities are strengthened in ways that can change lives.

"The state-wide story is critical for lobbying for Network-wide resources whether for grant funding applications, maintaining or increasing funding from governments, or to engage partner organisations who are able to see the incredible value in the work Houses do."

The reference to "grant funding applications" resonated pretty strongly with me because as a former career academic I know all too well the critical importance of measuring outcomes and impact.

So the data you have and continue to obtain is of great value, I'm sure. The raw statistics are certainly impressive:

"Community members made 32,483 contacts with 33 Houses during the two census weeks in 2016-17. Based on this data up to 779,592 contacts occurred across the Network over the full year (a 57% increase on the ... contacts in 2015-16.).

The qualitative data really brings these statistics to life – and I read stories such as the story of Nathan from the Derwent Valley Community House who was

assisted with literacy, obtaining a driving licence, horticultural training and getting a job.

I can well imagine the obstacles there are to data gathering and evaluation. As the Report states:

“Time and resource scarcity within Houses can create a tension between gathering and analysing data, or actively assisting and supporting people. Another issue we have is that what we are trying to measure is slippery—how do you define and measure a strong and resilient community?”ⁱ

No doubt one way of answering that is through your annual statewide conference. I therefore wish you all the very best with it, which I am sure had a terrific opening today with speeches from the Premier and from keynote speaker Tim Costello. And you’ll be hard at it through to Friday.

Please therefore enjoy this social reception and feel free to take a look at our lovely State Rooms if you wish to do that.

Thank you.

ⁱ Report page 4.