

TEN LIVES CAT CENTRE – MONA FOSTER PLAQUE UNVEILING
SPEECH BY
HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
NEW TOWN, WEDNESDAY 28 AUGUST 2019

Good morning and thank you for inviting me to the Ten Lives Cat Centre as your new Patron, which role I accepted in April this year.

Some of you will know that Tasmanian Governors are patrons of many organisations; at present that number is about 150. But this does not mean that patronage is taken up willy-nilly. On the contrary, there are quite strict criteria to adhere to in making such decisions.

Happily, in the case of Ten Lives Cat Centre, your track record speaks for itself – having a strong record of caring for unwanted cats and kittens for more than seventy years, as the largest dedicated cat shelter in Tasmania, originally being the Tasmanian Animal Protection Society, and then the Hobart Cat Centre.

Moreover, as a child I was quite well acquainted with your founder Joan Allport. Not only did she teach me, but I lived in South Hobart and with my friends visited her at the old Allport home, Alridge Lodge in Elboden Street, which was home to many cats and silkworms as well as Miss Allport and Miss Robson. This was before the Tasmanian Animal Protection Society moved to Strickland Avenue.

I do commend you for initiating the name change in 2017 for the specific purpose of better reflecting who you are and what you do, with a greater statewide focus and, importantly, with particular emphasis on the environment.

Now, I would like to share something of an irony with you. This afternoon I am hosting a tea at Government House for Tasmanian Wildlife Rehabilitators. They too are totally dedicated to looking after orphaned and injured animals. The irony is that cats happen to like wildlife, such as birds

and bandicoots! But of course your work is just as important, because it is not the fault of cats and kittens that they co-exist with us. Indeed, humans have much to answer for in neglecting and abandoning kittens and cats, and by not doing the right thing in minimising the ability of their pet cats to take birds in particular.

So it goes without saying that the care of cats is important to the environment of Tasmania.

I understand that Ten Lives looks after more than 3000 cats and kittens annually; and that you are now taking your special education program, "Edu.Cat" into schools across Tasmania. The program aims to foster responsible cat ownership with the aim of creating social change in how people care for cats and thereby help to protect our precious wildlife with three main messages: desexing, microchipping and containment. I congratulate you all on this initiative.

Today, happily, I also have two specific roles as Patron. The first is to present a certificate to Pat Langford to mark her twenty years as a volunteer with Ten Lives. During this time, she has volunteered at the Op Shop, which raises vital funds for the organisation. I have it on good authority, Pat, that you have a special title, which is "Fix it Pat"! That is to say, if anything at all needs fixing, Pat you get it to happen. So, please come forward Pat and accept your certificate.

And my second Patron's role this morning is to pay tribute to Mona Foster. Mona is a legend in the world of cat protection and adoption in Tasmania.

She was a key figure in the former Tasmanian Animal Protection Society, which became the Hobart Cat Centre and now Ten Lives.

Mona was elected President of the Tasmanian Animal Protection Society in 1987 but had been a member of TAPS for more than 20 years before moving onto the Committee.

She was central to the opening of the Centre in South Hobart in 1974. Prior to that time, the Hobart City Council would accept unwanted cats on one day a week.

In those days, the Centre would raise funds through button days in Greater Hobart, as well as its Op Shops in Liverpool Street, Blackmans Bay and the Margate Cat Centre.

The members of TAPS and then the Hobart Cat Centre would search for strays throughout Hobart, trapping feral cats and strays on tips and dumps. Without Mona, Ten Lives tells me this wonderful centre we are in would not exist.

It therefore gives me great pleasure to unveil the plaque in your honour, Mona.