

**HOBART CITY MISSION
RECEPTION TO MARK THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE SMALL STEPS PROGRAM
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
TUESDAY 4 JUNE 2024, GOVERNMENT HOUSE**

Good evening, everyone, and a very warm welcome to Government House to acknowledge the 10th anniversary of our Hobart City Mission's Small Steps Program.

May I begin by acknowledging the Muwinina people upon whose Country we gather. I acknowledge today's Tasmanian Aboriginal Community as ongoing custodians of Country. I recognise their enduring culture and continued connection to land, sea and waters.

As the Patron of Hobart City Mission, I am very pleased to host you all for this reception. Hobart City Mission has been an important part of the life of Hobart for more than 170 years. I am always impressed by the volume of work done by volunteers and professionals in your programs. As times have changed, Hobart City Mission has remained true to the original aims of assisting the less fortunate. Your programs have evolved to address areas of need beyond the poor and the homeless.

In June of 2014, Hobart City Mission identified a desperate need for supported accommodation for young mothers who were at risk of homelessness, or at risk of having their infants removed to State care because of a lack of accommodation and support. The founding of your Small Steps program developed a holistic approach for these young mothers by providing accommodation, support and hope for them.

Small Steps provides live-in support that teaches parenting and life skills for 12 young mothers and their babies. There is 24/7 onsite care available, and mothers can stay at Small Steps for up to two years. This around the clock support, and safe and secure accommodation enables them to learn skills for

independent living and gain improved levels of self-confidence and employability.

This proactive program has had a positive impact on nearly 140 young women and their babies.

Program Leader, Elisa Ryan, reported that, since October 2022, 42 volunteers have contributed to the program. There are now 25 volunteers providing onsite support overnight and on weekends, including weekly babysitting and mentoring, and monthly lunches for residents. On average, volunteers contribute 242 hours of support each year.

Small Steps volunteers also provide learner driver training with two participants having completed the required hours. More are about to begin the program.

The programs of maintaining a household, parenting, childhood development, guidance in cooking healthy meals, budgeting, and arranging appointments with external providers, all add to the skill sets of participants and help them transition into the wider community with confidence.

May I conclude with a quote from a mother who has undertaken the Small Steps program:

“I think Small Steps support us in the best way. Since living there, I have always had the support... with the funding and the activities and all the arts and crafts cooking etc, are appreciated, we wouldn't get that living by ourselves, I appreciate everything Small Steps have done for myself, the kids and the people living in Small Steps.”¹

Congratulations to Hobart City Mission workers and volunteers for your commitment. Congratulations, too, to the young mothers who have taken advantage of the Small Steps program to set themselves up for a better life with their children.

¹ Email Verity Davis / David Hughes 27 May 24

Please enjoy this reception to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Small Steps program. I wish you all the best for another decade of support to young mothers and their children.

Thank you.

Please enjoy the reception.