



PRESS RELEASE - Embargoed until Saturday 16th May 11am

Neighbourhood House Week Celebration on Parliament House Lawns Boosted by \$2 Million Investment in Literacy Assistance

At this time of global economic crisis, some of the most disadvantaged communities in Southern Tasmania ignored the doom and gloom (and the predicted showers and rain) to celebrate the work they do together to make their communities a better place.

Over 1000 Neighbourhood & Community Houses across Australia have been celebrating their role in strengthening their local community this week as part of National Neighbourhood House Week (11-17 May).

There are 34 funded Neighbourhood Houses across Tasmania, located in some of our most disadvantaged communities. What makes Neighbourhood Houses different is that they are run by local people and bring local people together to create solutions to what's needed in their community - and get on and do it.

The unexpected high point of the day was the major announcement that the Tasmanian Association of Community Houses, the peak body for all 34 Neighbourhood Houses in Tasmania, was granted \$2 million from the Tasmanian Community Fund to improve adult and family literacy in local communities.

Ann Harrison, Risdon Vale Coordinator and TACH President, said "We are so excited about this opportunity. The Tasmanian Community Fund have chosen to fund a network of locally run Neighbourhood Houses to target literacy support where it is most needed. This will make a real difference to the lives of disadvantaged people and their families."

"Neighbourhood Houses are places where people feel safe to come for support when they have struggled with school and formal training systems, and many have poor literacy skills. This program will provide them new opportunities and have an immediate impact in our local communities.

"Our Neighbourhood Houses will now be able to provide a creative way that builds on the relationships and activities that the people who most need support with their literacy are already accessing within their communities," Mrs Harrison said.

"The funding to achieve this would not have been available from any other source and we are extremely grateful that the Tasmanian Community Fund has seen the merit of our proposal which allows local communities, through Neighbourhood Houses, to decide the best way to create literacy programs in their communities.

Neighborhood Houses and Centres are run by management committees made up of people who live or work in that community. As Mrs Harrison said “Houses are run by the community, for the community”

Neighborhood Houses were last year guaranteed their core funding through the Dept of Health and Human Services, as Minister Thorp said today, “The Tasmanian Government reaffirmed its support for Neighbourhood Houses when it committed full time funding for the network from last year.”

“This has been successful in allowing the houses to work in the best ways and at the best times to suit their local communities.”

This funding enables each volunteer management committee to employ paid staff to coordinate bringing local people together to work out their own way, together, to meet a community need.

On the lawns of Parliament House people saw examples of just how this works.

There was an older volunteer from Risdon Vale working with, and teaching, local young people to fix up their own bicycles.

A young woman from the Gagebrook community centre spoke about how she has studied for and recently graduated from a Certificate 3 in Community Services, a course run in Gagebrook community Centre.

Warrane Mornington talked of their Harmony Cooking Group that has begun in their community, drawing together women from the many cultures, including recent African Humanitarian Entrants, that now live in Warrane, to all share their culinary skills with each other.

Or the TOOL program featured on Stateline on Friday night, which is a great partnership between five Neighbourhood Houses on Hobart’s Eastern Shore, local business owners and large companies, which provides trade training in a local vineyard for young people who are struggling at school.

There are Neighbourhood Houses in the communities of: Beaconsfield, Burnie, Bridgewater, Chigwell, Clarendon Vale, Deloraine, Derwent Valley, Devonport, Dorset, Dowsing Point, Dunalley, Eastern Shore, Fingal Valley, Geeveston, George Town, Goodwood, Gagebrook, Women’s Karadi Aboriginal Corporation, Maranoa Heights, Northern Suburbs (Rocherlea & Mowbray), Okines (Dodges Ferry), Pittwater, Ravenswood, Risdon vale, Rokeby, Rosebery, St Helens, Tresca (Exeter), Ulverstone, Warrane Mornington, West Moonah, West Winds (Woodbridge), Zeehan.

Neighbourhood House Week Celebration

Saturday 16th May

10:30am – 12:30pm (Media Event 11.15-11.45)

Parliament House Lawns, Hobart

If weather is terrible we will move media event to Customs House Hotel View Bar

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