

Media Release
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COMMUNITY FUND PROVIDES \$2 MILLION FOR COMMUNITY HOUSES MAJOR LEARNING INITIATIVE

The Tasmanian Community Fund (TCF) will provide \$2 million to the Tasmanian Association of Community Houses to improve adult and family literacy under its major funding initiative to boost Tasmanian learning.

This is the first year of a five-year strategy with up to \$9.5 million to be made available to the Tasmanian community over that period to address learning and literacy issues.

The major grant announcement coincided with the Tasmanian Association of Community Houses (TACH) Neighbourhood House Week celebrations in Hobart today.

The Association will use the grant to establish a 10-year capital fund to create an Everyday Literacy Fund for Local Communities in line with the TCF's Learning in Perpetuity funding stream.

TACH will resource practical adult literacy projects developed by the organisation's network of Neighbourhood Houses. There are 34 Neighbourhood Houses across Tasmania, located in communities facing significant socio-economic disadvantage or social isolation.

The program will see functional literacy activities developed covering everyday practical situations, as well as the development of local literacy groups to meet particular community needs.

With the establishment of the program and a fund built from the interest on the initial grant over 10 years, more than \$770,000 will be distributed to adult literacy projects and more than \$440,000 will be available to fund the program in perpetuity. The remaining balance of \$1.7 million will be returned to the TCF in 2019, to be used for similar or other community programs.

Grants totalling a further \$1.37 million spread among eight recipients will be announced shortly for shorter-term projects directed towards the TCF's Learning Community stream.

TACH President Ann Harrison said the funding announcement and the literacy program would 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 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.

TCF Chairman Gerald Loughran said the program provided an ideal vehicle for the TCF to target its literacy initiative where it was most needed.

“We recognise that literacy is a key aspect for individual learning and building community capacity and this major grant maximises the outcome and the benefit the disadvantaged communities will receive,” Mr Loughran said.

“We are aware that Tasmania falls behind in a range of educational measures, such as school retention rates, adult literacy and levels of skilled employment.

“This grant and the funding to be announced in a few weeks for shorter-term projects will go some way towards improving adult and family literacy in six key areas – prose literacy, document literacy, numeracy, problem solving, technology and information literacy, and health literacy.

“In addition to this major funding initiative, other projects supporting learning may be submitted to the TCF in other funding rounds.”

This latest grant takes to more than \$40 million, the amount the TCF has provided over the past eight years to in excess of 1000 Tasmanian community organisations or projects.

The Tasmanian Community Fund was established in 2000 from the proceeds of the sale of the Trust Bank, to make grants for worthwhile community purposes throughout the State. The TCF holds two general grant rounds every year, each of which attracts approximately 250 applications and distributes funds across a broad range of project areas, offering benefits to many different community sectors and regions.

Further details and funding guidelines are available on the TCF website www.tascomfund.org, or by email at admin@tascomfund.org, or by phoning 6233 2920.

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