



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

SAVE THE CHILDREN 100TH ANNIVERSARY RECEPTION

Thursday 27th June 2019

Mr Peter Hodgson, Chair, Save the Children

Mr Paul Ronalds, CEO, Save the Children

Save the Children Ambassadors

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

First, I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land upon which we are gathering and pay my respects to their Elders past and present and to any Elders here with us this evening.

Tony and I are delighted to welcome you all to Government House to celebrate Save the Children's 100th anniversary.

What an achievement it is for any organisation to not only survive a century, but to thrive, as this organisation has done.

What an achievement to grow so widely from a birth in one country to a presence in some 120 countries.

But, above all, what an achievement to know that you have helped, protected from harm, and given the opportunity for a healthy and safe start in life to 1 billion children.

As a former Children's Court magistrate and Family Court judge I know, and Tony, as a criminal court judge knows too of the need for children to be protected and to be given the nurture and the care that will enable them to flourish – individually, and as a generation.

Perhaps it is that background that brings home to us so profoundly that this organisation – the brain-child of one pioneering woman – has been able to protect so very many children, and often in the face of adversities, some of which – thankfully – we have not encountered directly in this country.

Eglantyne Jebb, the Founder of Save the Children, was a true pioneer. In a war-torn Europe, she boldly launched a campaign to save suffering children, declaring that 'every war is a war on children' and that they needed to be protected from conflict.

She led with her big but clear vision that children had individual rights, and that the world must be accountable in ensuring that those rights are realised.

Forty years later, in 1959, Eglantyne Jebb's fight for children's rights bore fruit with the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child.

Across a century of changing landscapes, the broader mission and vision of Save the Children has never wavered.

Whether the call has been for hot meals and school supplies in the Great Depression, lifesaving help in Nazi Germany, or safety for those caught in war or natural disasters, Save the Children has been there.

In Australia today, the focus is on providing children with a healthy start in life, the opportunity to learn, and protection from harm.

Save the Children Australia supports hundreds of practical programs in Australia – and in the region - including in emergency response, in child safety and family violence support, ensuring that refugee and asylum seeker children are safe and healthy, in school engagement for children at risk and striving to provide the best foundation for the future health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

I welcome this opportunity to thank the Chair, Peter Hodgson and all Board members for their vision and leadership, and the CEO and all the staff for their dedicated work.

Thank you to all those who contribute with donations, fundraising, legacies, bequests, government grants and commercial support.

And of course thank you to the many volunteers who provide their valuable time, support, expertise and, above all, their generosity of spirit to the organisation.

To you all, on behalf of all the children across Victoria, Australia and the world, we thank you for the care, goodwill and support afforded by Save the Children across the past 100 years, and into the future.

Happy anniversary to you.