

29 January 2024

Douglass Doherty, Chief Executive Officer, Family Based Care Tasmania

Thanks to everyone for their attendance. We meet today on Aboriginal land and I acknowledge their Elders past and present and any first nations peoples here today.

My name is Douglass Doherty and I am the CEO of Family Based Care Tasmania. I am speaking on behalf of our president, Tia Poole.

Since 1986, Family Based Care has been supporting the frail aged, those living with a disability and their carers. Headquartered here in Burnie, we are an organisation that has a turnover of nearly \$20M, over 2000 clients, and 300 staff State wide. That makes us one of the largest employers of Tasmanians on the NW Coast, and one of the largest providers of multidisciplinary community care in Tasmania that is non faith based.

Family Based Care is a not for profit charity and we take our role as a corporate citizen very seriously. That is why we have invested so heavily in developing Allied Health Services into our business, with Psychology, Speech Pathology, Occupational Therapy, Social Work, and Behavioural Supports now forming part of an integrated business.

Every year we arrange and hold the Burnie Community Sleepout to highlight the ever-present situation of homelessness in our communities of the NW Coast, and to raise much needed funds for those other charities that assist the homeless.

We understand that older Australians cannot access aged care if they have no fixed address. We also know that one of the fastest growing cohorts of people living homeless, or at risk of homelessness, are older women. About three years ago I became aware of a woman in her 70's who had lost her partner. The children of the partner evicted her from their home and she began living in her car and couch surfing. About 6 months after becoming homeless she found herself needing open heart surgery, and she was discharged from hospital to recover in her car! I know she is not alone in her situation, because nearly every week when I travel to Hobart I see another older woman who lives in her campervan at the Montrose Foreshore Park.

We have also become aware that the Commonwealth Government has no funded "cottage respite" facilities in the aged care system in NW Tasmania. Cottage respite is overnight or short stay respite for older people that is not in the home and not in a residential aged care facility.

This partnership with the Supported Affordable Accommodation Trust is another step on the path of our Mission as a charity to assist the elderly, those living with a disability and their carers.

Our intent is to let the 4 single rooms as permanent homes for older Tasmanians and, subject to approval of some funding changes requested of the Commonwealth Department of Health, the rear double unit will be used as the only CHSP Cottage Respite facility on the NW Coast.

To quote Marcus Aurelius, a slightly famous Roman General:

"Waste no more time arguing about what a good man should be. Be one."

Thank you

