



## **District 23 Service & Advocacy Project Award**

### **Zonta Club of Hobart Inc. Submission – The Hobart City Mission “*Small Steps Program*”**

As a small club, the Zonta Club of Hobart sought to find a local project that aligned with the objects of Zonta Inc., to empower women and girls and secure their access to legal, political, economic, educational, health and professional services. In 2013 a member read an article in the local press about the proposed Hobart City Mission’s Small Step Program. It ticked all of the boxes and our partnership began with our members attending a working-bee in the gardens, even before the program officially opened its doors in June 2014.

This wonderful non-government funded program provides a supported and secure accommodation for young mothers and their children, who would otherwise lose custody of their child. The program is aimed towards young women up to the age of 25 with infants and/or children under the age of 5, who are at risk of being homeless and/or having their child removed into the State care due to a lack of safe accommodation and/or support. The accommodation complex is a secure residential facility, which is very important as some of these young mothers have come from violent relationships. There is a volunteer on-site caretaker who provides after hours support. The program has the capacity for 12 young mothers at a time and they generally reside in the program for up to 2 years. There are a number of allied health professionals co-located on the site, providing a multi-disciplinary approach to teaching parenting and life-skills to the young mothers.

Since June 2014, 39 young mothers have taken part in the program including the current 12 residents. Of the 27 that have left the program, the majority are no longer deemed “at risk” by Child Safety Services and 19 have maintained stable accommodation. Several mothers have re-entered education or employment.

One young mother, who entered the program with her baby in foster care, now has permanent care of her child, and is living independently and studying social work at university. Another young mum, said, *“At Small Steps, I learned how to be a Mum, knowing the developmental milestones for children and managing my own reactions to situations. We also learned how to budget, how to change a blown fuse, and what to do if our home was on fire.”*

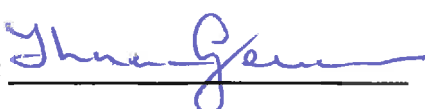
The Zonta Club of Hobart holds a quiz night annually, with Small Steps as the major beneficiary. It provides an advocacy opportunity for Zonta and the Small Steps Program and is supported by the CEO of Hobart City Mission, John Stubley. We use the opportunity to present our cheque to the program, to promote Zonta and its relevance to the program.

We have also knitted blankets for the young mothers and one of our volunteers makes quilts for the children and tote bags for the mothers.



Pene Thornton and Theresa Geiran from the Zonta Club of Hobart Inc. receiving a certificate of appreciation from a young mother who is part of the Small Steps Program.

We have formed a close working relationship with the Program's Partnership Manager, Michelle Folder. In June 2017 some of our members celebrated the Third Anniversary of this program with staff from Hobart City Mission, the program coordinators, government representatives and other stakeholders. It was another opportunity to promote our on-going commitment to this program that changes young lives and empowers young women, who would not otherwise be supported.

Signed by: 

Theresa Geiran, Vice President, Zonta Club of Hobart  
On behalf of Jill Taylor, President, Zonta Club of Hobart.