Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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Children’s University Tasmania kids the honoured guests at Government House reception

It is not every day that you are invited to Government House as a guest of the Governor of Tasmania, Professor the Honourable Kate Warner, AC.

But 28 students from Bagdad, Herdsmans Cove, Rosetta, Rokeby, Austins Ferry and Collinsvale Primary Schools were far from overawed by the occasion yesterday.

The visit to Government House - which included a tour of some of the finest rooms of the Vice-Regal residence, the opportunity to chat with Her Excellency and Mr Warner and gain a greater understanding of the role of Governor, and a lunch fit for royalty - was offered as part of the Children’s University Tasmania School Holiday Program.

It was a big hit with the kids, who had some searching questions for Her Excellency.

There were the questions you would expect:
“How long have you been Governor for?”
“What is it like to live here in Government House?”

And then one young girl asked:
“Does your throat get sore talking for so long?”

Her Excellency, who clearly has a rapport with children, was not the slightest bit rattled.

“What a really good question, sometimes when I have a cold it does,” she said.

Jethro Smith, 9, from Rosetta Primary, aspires to be an engineer one day, so his main interest was in the Gothic Revival architecture.

“Government House was really interesting,” he said. “The statues and even the big doors and mirrors are really cool.
“The best thing was just the experience of being here.”
The participants also toured Parliament House yesterday and role-played in the House of Assembly debating a bill about whether toys should be banned in schools.

Children’s University Tasmania – which is operated by the Peter Underwood Centre under the auspices of Children’s University Australia - creates opportunities that build confidence, encourage and celebrate learning outside the classroom.

“Children’s University Tasmania is a wonderful program which fosters a love of learning and encourages self-belief in children and young people to think about what is possible,” Her Excellency said.

Underwood Centre director, Professor Natalie Brown said Her Excellency had raised the idea of hosting Children’s University kids at Government House.

“It demonstrates her commitment in providing educational opportunities to the young people of Tasmania,” Professor Brown said.

“Her Excellency is of course a passionate educator herself and has strong ties to the Underwood Centre as chair of our Advisory Committee and a steadfast and enthusiastic supporter of all our events.”

Children’s University participants are issued with a Passport to Learning from their school and their hours of validated activity are recorded by Learning Destinations. The activities are chosen by the children and the emphasis is on experience as a powerful learning tool.

Graduates of Children’s University lead the Town and Gown processions in Burnie, Launceston and Hobart during December.

Since being launched in July 2015, Children’s University Tasmania has grown to include 14 schools, and is set to be extended to 10 schools on the North-West Coast following a $350,000 grant from the Tasmanian Community Fund.

Launched in February 2015, the Peter Underwood Centre is a partnership between the University of Tasmania and the Tasmanian Government in association with the Office of the Governor of Tasmania.

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