



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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Message from Her Excellency, Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO

THE BENEVOLENT SOCIETY
Connecting communities for 200 years

My sincere congratulations to The Benevolent Society, who in 2013, will commemorate their Bicentenary Year – an occasion that is indeed worthy of celebration.

The Benevolent Society has played a major part in the building of our nation. As the first organisation to formally provide social support to Australians in need, the Society's establishment in the year 1813 marks the dawn of charity in this country. For two centuries, The Benevolent Society has provided a safe haven for the poor and dispossessed, enriching the lives of thousands of Australians of all ages and backgrounds.

The Benevolent Society continues to help marginalised, vulnerable families and communities today, delivering vital care and support services to those in need and advocating for a more caring and inclusive Australia.

The ability to survive and adapt through two centuries of cultural, political and economic change is a remarkable feat, and although the shape and function of The Benevolent Society has evolved, the organisation remains true to its original purpose. As pioneers of social change, they are responsible for many 'firsts' in Australia including the establishment of the first maternity hospital, campaigning for the old-age pension, rethinking approaches to housing and care for older people and changing the face of social leadership education. They continue to respond to emerging social issues with innovative ideas, compassion and respect.

To operate successfully for 200 years is a landmark for any organisation but for a charity, it is perhaps even more significant. We should all be very proud of The Benevolent Society and 2013 will be a fine opportunity to recognise their role in building strong families and healthy communities - in essence working to create a better Australia to which we may all belong.

It is a privilege to continue the enduring legacy of patronage that began with my distinguished predecessor, Governor Lachlan Macquarie, the Fifth Governor of New South Wales and I congratulate The Benevolent Society on this significant milestone.

Professor Marie R Bashir AC CVO
Governor of New South Wales