



**Official launch of 13 Adolph Street, Richmond
6 December 2007**

Deborra-Lee Furness, Lighthouse Patron

Thank you. I am thrilled to be here tonight and congratulations - the building is fantastic and has a great atmosphere already.

I am probably going to reiterate a lot of what Kane said, however I wrote this the other night from the heart so let me share this with you.

I am passionate about the rights of children living in a safe, loving, family environment and I believe it is every child's birthright to be nurtured, loved and be safe from harm. Call me optimistic.

I have recently been speaking out about Australia stepping up to the plate on a global scale as there are so many abandoned children in the world wandering the streets and there are a lot of families here in Australia that want to give them a home, and our bureaucratic powers that be have been making this process almost impossible which is a great injustice to all concerned.

Another great injustice is that there is a need for a place like Lighthouse here in our own backyard. We are not dealing with famine, disease, war or corrupt fascist leaders like it is in the third world, and yet there is an ever increasing number of kids that are not being cared for. They are lost or are not ready or equipped for the responsibility of life on their own and I truly do believe it is our responsibility as a community to ensure that these children are nurtured and given guidance and love so that they can fulfil their birthright of a full and a happy life. We as a society can't say that these children aren't our problem - they are all our children, our future. This delineation of separatism - them and us - keeps us trapped in ignorance, I feel, and as soon as we perceive ourselves as one, we get the opportunity to move forward together.

Susan has created a home for the abandoned kids here, and as a parent I understand how much dedication, energy, creativity, any other adjective you want to throw in, to ensure that a child is on the right path and is happy and able to make their mark in the world.

Everyone at Lighthouse has taken this challenge on with passion, enthusiasm and love. We can't change the reasons why our kids have had to find their way here, but we sure as hell can change their experience of the world once they arrive. Lighthouse is a shiny example that we can all make a difference in the life of a child, and just by you guys being here tonight has put energy and a life force into their future.

I've been involved with Lighthouse for so many years (we were trying to work it out before – it's a long time) and Susan and the entire team work tirelessly to continue doing the incredible work they do and I acknowledge everyone that's a part of the organisation and everyone that wants to contribute on any level here that has played a part in it. And to Vicki Vidor and the gang for this amazing building – you rock.

Have a great night.

Thank you.