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LAUNCH OF TOY EXPRESS PROJECT MARKS AURORA'S TEN YEARS SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

Aurora Energy today celebrated its 10th anniversary with a significant gift for the Tasmanian community: three specially-equipped mobile toy libraries to be operated by Playgroup Tasmania with support from the Tasmanian Early Years Foundation.

The first of the mobile toy libraries, dubbed the Toy Express, was unveiled in Launceston today by Aurora's CEO, Dr Peter Davis, the CEO of Playgroup Tasmania Inc., Mrs Rebecca Reedman and CEO of the Tasmanian Early Years Foundation, Ms Rebecca Smith.

The vehicles will be located in the south, north and north-west and will travel thousands of kilometres a year bringing a range of toys and educational and parenting equipment to families in small communities around the State.

Dr Davis said Aurora's 10th birthday was a milestone which the company wanted to mark by supporting a significant community project.

"Aurora operates its business with the purpose of helping the Tasmanian community to prosper from our efforts," he said. "We have employees and customer in every corner of the State and everything we do links us to the community.

"The profits we make for our owners, the State Government, help to support services such as hospitals and schools, the wages we pay our people help to support Tasmanian businesses and the contracts we sign with service providers increase employment opportunities for Tasmanians.

"We wanted to cement this connection to the Tasmanian community by doing something to assist families and to support the next generation of Tasmanians."

Mrs Reedman said Playgroup Tasmania warmly welcomed the support of Aurora in getting the mobile toy library project off the drawing board and out on the road, and assistance from the Tasmanian Early Years Foundation in equipping the vans.

"The Playgroup Tasmania is a grassroots organisation and the resources we have available never seem to reach far enough," she said. "We've been concerned that many isolated communities haven't been able to benefit from the services available in larger population centres.

"With three toy express vehicles we'll be able to take our services to families right around the State."

Mrs Reedman said the toy libraries would provide a range of services including parenting DVDs and books, service provider information and referral brochures, educational toys, musical instruments, popular toys and home help ideas.

Northern communities to be visited include George Town, Beaconsfield, Scottsdale St Helens, Bicheno, Orford, Sorell, Swansea, Triabunna, Cygnet, Queenstown, Marrawah, Stanley, Edith Creek.

CEO of the Tasmanian Early Years Foundation, Ms Rebecca Smith, described the project as one of the most rewarding she had been involved in since the formation of the Foundation.

“We’re particularly heartened by the fact that a commercial organisation, such as Aurora, stepped forward with an offer to help which will bring valuable support to families and joy to the youngest members of our community, wherever they live,” she said. “A key objective of the Foundation is to bring the business sector and community organisations like Playgroup Tasmania together to ensure Tasmanian children are given the best possible start in life. This project is a perfect example of this, with us all working together.”

Ms Reedman said work on fitting out the remaining two vehicles was nearing completion and they would both be on the road in the next few weeks. Contact will be made with local councils around the State to raise awareness of the availability of the new service.

For further information contact Rebecca Reedman (Playgroup Tasmania) on 0488 434 568, Christine Ward (Aurora) on 6237 3341 or Rebecca Smith (Early Years Foundation) on (6233 7329).