

Afternoon Tea for YWCA Encore  
SPEECH by Her Honour  
the Honourable Sally Thomas AM,  
Administrator of the Northern Territory  
Government House - 8 December 2011

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Ms Christa Hilton, Executive Director, YWCA Encore of Darwin, ladies, welcome to Government House, it is wonderful to be your host this afternoon as Patron of YWCA, and to recognise your journey with the YWCA Encore program.

Before we proceed, I acknowledge the Larrakia people, traditional owners of the land on which this historic house stands.

Here in Australia, one in nine women are diagnosed with breast cancer before the age of 85<sup>i</sup> and because of this we all share in the burden that breast cancer brings to our community. Whether it affects us directly or through a friend or family member, we all know of someone whose life has been touched by cancer in some way and followed their story. However today we recognise that you have all

been through those difficult stages of treatment and thankfully you have emerged triumphant. Now you have reached that part of your journey that involves the YWCA Encore program. It has been a journey which has allowed you to create new friends and to find opportunities to share your story with those who have travelled a similar path.

The program which was developed in 1970 by American cancer survivor Helen Kohut, a ballet teacher. The program which arrived in Australia in 1983 was established to help women with similar experiences to rebuild their physical and emotional strength.<sup>ii</sup> I congratulate you all for participating in this outstanding initiative. I well know that it has been a difficult journey; however your recovery is a testament to your patience, resilience and courage.

I now invite Ms Julie O'Brien to speak further about the YWCA Encore program.

Thank you.

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<sup>i</sup> Common Media Questions – YWCA Encore

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