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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (IDPWD Feature Publication)

For the past 55 years, St Michaels Association's support for people with a disability has evolved to meet the changing needs of their participants.

"From the organisation's inception as a school through to the current accommodation and day programs at our Newstead, East Devonport and our Independent Services campuses, our belief has enabled our participants to develop their independence to make choices about their lives. This has always been at the heart of what we do", CEO Mike Thomas said.

St Michaels' day programs are focused on increasing participants' skills to live independently.

One of these participants is Paul, who has been with St Michaels for 43 years and has benefited greatly from the programs.

Paul lives in one of St Michaels Supported Independent Living units at Newstead and attends the Independent Services' Day Program four days a week. He often has difficulty communicating with others and being understood.

"Paul's participation in St Michaels' cooking program has given him the confidence and skills to now make staff and other participants' hot beverages. Learning these new skills is so beneficial to Paul and keeps his mind stimulated. I have nothing but praise for the staff at St Michaels Independent Services," his mother, Jill, said.

St Michaels' place in Northern Tasmania is well documented, but the organisation has recently branched out with a campus on the North-West Coast at East Devonport.

Mr Thomas said the former school site was ideal for repurposing as a day program facility, with programs beginning in 2019 and participant demand for quality, outcome-driven day programs increasing rapidly.

"The growth in participant numbers and ongoing demand in the region has meant that we will soon commence building a respite centre at the campus," he said.

A \$2 million affordable housing grant for 16 individual living units was recently awarded to St Michaels by Housing Tasmania for quality, affordable housing for people with a disability in the North-West.

“Affordable housing for people with a disability is in short supply in Tasmania, particularly on the North-West Coast. We are delighted to be able to assist in meeting this need by building assistive technology smart housing on the site.”

The homes will replicate the success of St Michaels’ Assistive Technology Smart Home complex in Newstead, which opened in November last year.

“The homes are a leading example of how “smart home” technology can help to improve the lives of people living with a disability. Tablet and voice automated TVs, heating, curtains and doors allow residents increased independence and convenience, while fully disability compliant hoists and lifts built into the ceilings enable residents to age in place.”

For additional information regarding St Michaels please call (03) 6331 7651 or email info@stmichaels.asn.au. Follow us on Facebook @stmichaelsassociation

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