**139 YEARS STRONG**

**Non-profit organisation celebrates 139 years of
changing lives in Melbourne**

**Melbourne, midday, 10 February 2022.** Sparkways, Melbourne based non-profit organisation delivering Early Learning services and Programs for youth in need, today announced that this week marks their 139th anniversary.

Started in 1883 by William Mark Forster, who was concerned for the plight of underprivileged children.   His simple idea, “*that with opportunity and guidance all young people could accomplish, all they had to do was try*,” was bold for its time and would pioneer youth welfare work in Australia.

Forster’s legacy has lived on at Sparkways as they continue to build on his work through their mentoring program, social enterprise, and the work they do in childcare centres and kindergartens.

*“We continue Forster’s legacy, helping Melbourne youth in need.”* Said Angela Forbes, CEO. “*and with our work in Early Learning, we are viewed as a catalyst for change at important times in a young person’s life.”*

W. M. Forster left a significant legacy with his approach as he did not preach to the boys. Instead through friendship and educational activities he worked to assure them that they each had the potential to accomplish. That ‘partnership’ was progressive for the time and echoes the strength-based approach we take today.

*“ Angela Forbes, CEO says. “It’s our ability to meet challenges, evolve and our passion for making an impact that sees us celebrating this milestone.”*

There is a spirit of optimism in the air at Sparkways. With strong community partnerships they are expanding their Early Learning services and exploring how to deliver more for young people in need.

“*This is an exciting time for us, we look forward to celebrating many more anniversaries*.” said Mrs Forbes.

ABOUT SPARKWAYS

We are a Melbourne non-profit organisation working alongside our communities to ensure our children and young people are given every opportunity to reach their full potential.

We run:
- Youth Services programs; Mentoring and the Social Enterprise, and

- Early Learning services; Childcare centres and Kindergarten Management.

For more information go to www.sparkways.org.au