



Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc.

Budget Priorities Submission 2016/17



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TasCOSS Member Ravenswood Neighbourhood House community leader Peter Richards and community mobiliser Melinie Ridge in the community garden. Picture: PHILLIP BIGGS Courtesy of The Examiner

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Introduction

The Tasmanian Council of Social Service (TasCOSS) is pleased to submit this Budget Priorities Statement to the 2016-2017 Budget process.

TasCOSS is the peak body to the Tasmanian non-government community services sector and represents the interests of its members, the broader community services sector and of the low-income, disadvantaged and vulnerable Tasmanians that the sector serves and supports.

This submission represents the priority issues and areas of need that have been identified through consultation with our members and the sector in Tasmania's three regions and through TasCOSS policy research and analysis processes.

A social vision for Tasmania

The current narratives describing Tasmania in local, national and international media paint two very different pictures of our island and its people. On one hand, Tasmania has been lauded across Australia and the world for the success of MONA, for the world class wilderness experiences the State offers and for its burgeoning food, and cultural tourism sectors.

On the other hand, much darker narratives have been equally prevalent. Though cultural tourism in our cities has been praised in the national media, so too has the experience of substance abuse and social exclusion in regional areas. Though we have a strong global brand for the world class produce, less than half of our population eat an adequate fruit or vegetables.¹ And though we are home to Booker Prize winning authors, literacy levels in Tasmania remain far below the national average². In short, Tasmania's economic and social trajectories are not linked, and at times are travelling in different directions.

A broad social vision for Tasmania is needed to address this and to connect all Tasmanians to the goals of the Government to lift the health and educational outcomes for the State. This vision must acknowledge the critical foundations of good health, including educational attainment, access to affordable housing, adequate and stable employment, appropriate transport, prevention and early intervention programs in health, and affordable essentials such as household energy.

This vision must acknowledge and address the reality that not all Tasmanians have equal capacity to participate in employment, education, and social and recreational activities and that many face barriers that lead to social exclusion. A social vision for Tasmania must include strategies to enable all Tasmanians to participate – economically, and socially – and to engage with the developments taking place in Tasmania.

TasCOSS believes that there is the opportunity – and the imperative – in the 2016/2017 Budget to address these divergent narratives and to start to bring all Tasmanians along, together, as Tasmania moves towards better health outcomes and greater prosperity.

¹ Department of Health and Human Services (2014), *Report on the Tasmanian Population Health Survey*, April 2014: 34.

² ABS (2013), Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies, Australia, 2011-2012. Cat. No. 4228.0.

Participation

In this submission we have highlighted *participation* as fundamental to improving the lives of Tasmanians. Participation, then, is a key outcome across all areas covered in our submission.

Participation in all aspects of life—economic, social, political—is an essential part of individual and community health. Fostering greater participation involves a whole-of-Tasmania approach and cannot be achieved solely by government policy. The community sector, employers, schools, communities and families all play parts in fostering participation across areas such as health, education and employment.

Nevertheless, the State Government has the opportunity to enable greater participation through its policy settings and budget allocations.

Increased levels of participation have a compounding effect on the lives of people and on communities. Greater participation in education, for instance, leads to improved employment outcomes that, in turn, encourages children to finish school and to enter the workforce.³ Participation in social and recreational activities reduces social isolation and increases community cohesion. Increasing participation across all areas is an effective and efficient way for the State Government to improve overall health and wellbeing for individual Tasmanians and communities.

Ultimately, TasCOSS hopes to see all Tasmanians able to participate in the cultural and economic developments currently taking place in Tasmania and not be left behind.

Participation in Tasmania

A number of measurements paint the picture of participation in Tasmania. For instance, the official workforce participation rate in Tasmania in September 2015 was 61.0%⁴, the lowest of all states. While there has been growth in the overall participation rate since 2013, there has been little change in the rate in the last twelve months.

However, this growth has not be shared equally across the State. It has been driven by a rise in male employment, whereas total female employment decreased over the same period.⁵ This tells us that there are inequities in Tasmania's recent economic growth and that governments must be aware of the diversity of experiences across the State.

Indeed, official figures on participation tell us only part of the story. TasCOSS and our member organisations are frequently confronted with stories about people facing barriers to fully participating in life. Be that through lack of access to affordable housing or healthy food, to essential services or to affordable and reliable transport, there are a number of reasons that Tasmanians are unable to effectively participate.

"I didn't own a car and we were reliant on public transport. This didn't come cheaply as the bus company was privately owned and fares were three times those of Metro. Needless to say, we became socially isolated and my children lost touch with their friends. One child became severely depressed."

³ OECD (2011), "How does education affect employment rates?", in Education at a Glance 2011: Highlights, OECD Publishing. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag_highlights-2011-16-en

⁴ ABS (2015), Labour Force, Australia, September 2015. Cat No. 6202.0

⁵ Tasmanian Government Economic Analysis Unit, Labour Force Data Release, September 2015.

Such stories are common across the State and are evidence of the lived experience of those who face barriers to participation. The 2016/2017 Budget is an opportunity for the Tasmanian Government to work towards removing these barriers.

Achieving Participation

Social policy⁶ from previous governments has been largely reactive rather than pro-active and well-planned, and represents a piecemeal, and only partially successful, approach to addressing disadvantage. That Tasmania still has the highest levels of disadvantage in Australia across multiple indicators testifies to the inefficacy of such an approach. It is clear that changes must be implemented to increase participation and improve the lives of all Tasmanians.

TasCOSS believes that the State Government must act to break away from the ‘business as usual’ approach that has been unable to make significant changes to the level of disadvantage experienced across the State. To continue on the trajectory that Tasmania has in the past decade will not see the barriers to participation diminish for disadvantaged Tasmanians.

TasCOSS Consultation

TasCOSS has a process of continuous consultation with the community sector via forums and discussions with key groups and individuals across the State. In the period since the submission of our last Budget Priorities Statement in November 2014, we have consulted with 117 individuals from 73 organisations across Tasmania.

Members consulted represented the following service delivery areas:

- Aboriginal services
- Migrant and refugee services
- Aged care services
- Disability services
- Community development services
- Emergency relief services
- Financial support services
- Family, children and youth services
- Domestic violence and sexual assault services
- Alcohol, tobacco, and other drug services
- Community health services
- Housing and homelessness services, and
- Peak bodies.



⁶ This map shows locations of TasCOSS member consultation activities that have contributed to the 2016 TasCOSS Budget Priorities Submission.



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First 1001 Critical Days

Outcome

All Tasmanian children grow up in a safe, supportive and loving environment

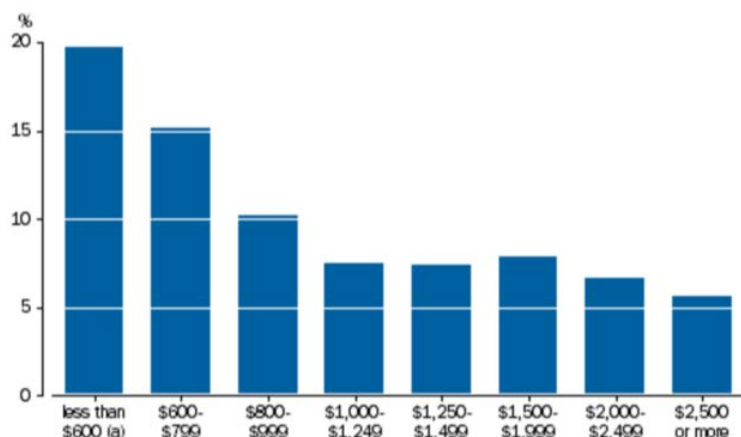
Why is this a priority?

Most parents have the capacity to raise their children to be healthy, active adults. However, some parents need additional help and support from the wider community and from government support services to make this happen. An unsafe, traumatic home environment has detrimental impacts on a child's ability to control emotions, focus on tasks and form healthy relationships: "stressful experiences ... alter children's neurobiology in ways that undermine health, social competence, and ability to succeed in school and life."⁷ The type of life a child experiences in the very early years has life-long consequences, and influences health conditions previously thought to be determined by adult choices:

*Adult conditions such as coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer that were regarded solely as products of adult behaviour and lifestyles are now seen as being linked to processes and experiences occurring decades before, in some cases as early as intrauterine life, across a wider range of impairments.*⁸

Recent Tasmanian statistics show that children from low-income households are at greater risk of impaired early childhood development. The following table demonstrates the relationship between household income and childhood vulnerability.⁹

Proportion of children developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains, by weekly household income¹⁰



⁷ Tim Moore (2015) "Conception to Three Years: The Nature and Significance of Early Development and the Implications for Practice" Presentation to Brotherhood of St Laurence; Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Children's Research Institute

⁸ Tim Moore (2015) "Conception to Three Years: The Nature and Significance of Early Development and the Implications for Practice" Presentation to Brotherhood of St Laurence; Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Children's Research Institute

⁹ ABS (2015) "Factors Influencing Early Childhood Development in Tasmania" ABS Cat. No. 4261.6

¹⁰ (a) Includes negative or nil income.

Recommendation

That the Government adapt and implement the UK *1001 Critical Days* model in Tasmania, including:

- A cross-party commitment
- A working group to oversee community consultation
- Strengthening of tier one and two early intervention community-based services.

Cost

Improving outcomes for Tasmanian children

Uncosted

Rationale

We can improve the health, wellbeing and participation rates in school, work and social activity by improving supports for parents and babies from prenatal and throughout the first two years of life. We can also reduce the need for and incidence of out-of-home care in Tasmania by strengthening our preventative strategy. We can lessen the instances of Child Protection contacts by addressing some of the causes of violence and trauma in the home, through improvements in preventative measures and the provision of supports and services that build and sustain safe and loving home environments.

The United Kingdom model, *The 1001 Critical Days*, was established in 2013 and is already yielding positive results. Supported by a cross-party manifesto, the model sets out a holistic approach to early intervention, and targets at-risk families by mobilising a range of community-based services to assist with parenting and infant mental health. Maternity services, community health workers and mental health services all work closely together to identify families at risk, provide support and share data.

If adopted in Tasmania, *1001 Critical Days* can help provide the means to achieving the outcomes set down in the *Protecting Children is Everyone's Business: National Framework for Protecting Children 2009-2020*:

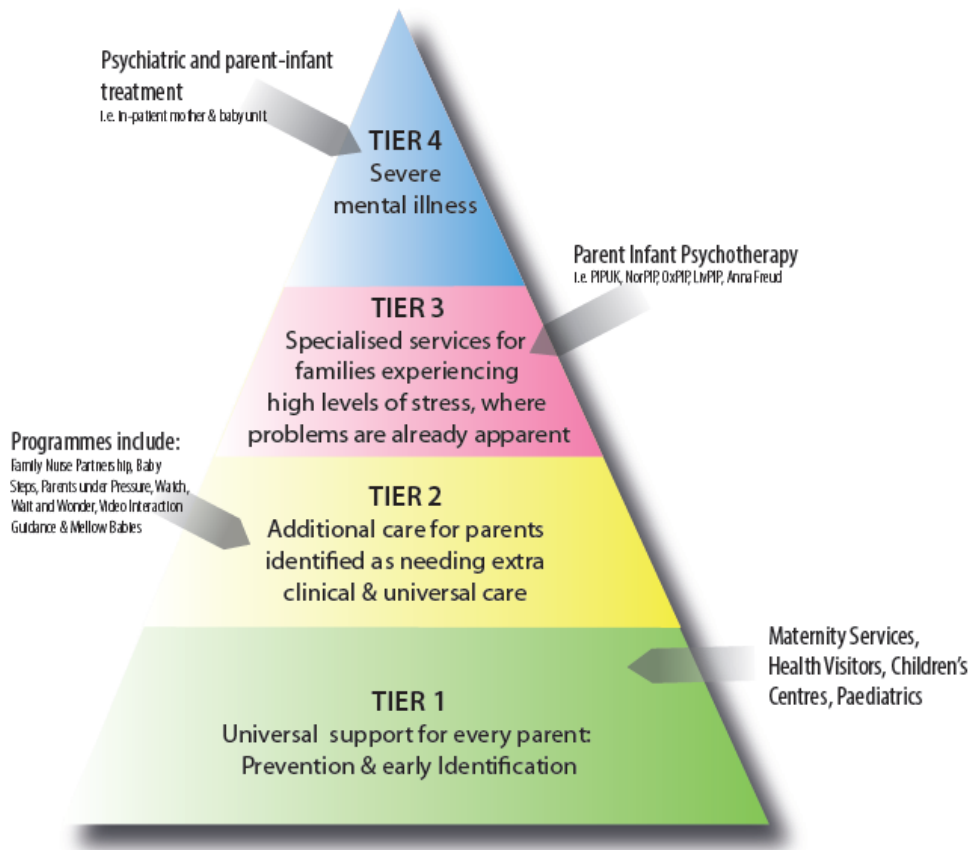
*We recognise that the best way to protect children is to prevent child abuse and neglect from occurring in the first place. To do this we need to build capacity and strength in our families and communities, across the nation ... The protection of children is not simply a matter for the statutory child protection systems.*¹¹

The tiered approach, outlined in the *1001 Days Cross-Party Manifesto* emphasises the importance of community-level early intervention supports that are at the heart of this model:¹²

¹¹ COAG (2009) *Protecting Children is Everyone's Business: National Framework for Protecting Children 2009-2020*. Canberra, p6

¹² *1001 Days Cross-Party Manifesto*, p7 <http://www.1001criticaldays.co.uk/>

Tiered approach to parent-infant services



If adapted for Tasmania, investment in the Tier 1 and 2 services and programs that deliver professional child and family supports throughout the community could complement, support and strengthen the reforms planned for out-of-home care.

The first report produced two years after *1001 Critical Days* was established in the UK warns that without intervention the intergenerational cycles of infant maltreatment continue: “These self-perpetuating cycles create untold and recurring costs for society. The economic value of breaking these cycles will be enormous.”¹³ In Tasmania, intensive support from peri-natal to age 2 years can interrupt the cycle, and could help to create a Tasmania where parents and communities are assisted to ensure that every new born child is raised in a loving, safe and supportive care environment. Department of Education initiatives such as *Launching into Learning* and Child and Family Centres are excellent initiatives; however, they alone cannot deliver the support that is needed to ensure all Tasmanian children are raised in safe and loving homes. There is a prevention gap, and it can be filled by investment and innovation from the Department of Health and Human Services.

¹³ “The 1001 Critical Days: Building Great Britons” (February 2015) p15



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Health

Outcome

Tasmania has the healthiest population by 2025

Why is this a priority?

Tasmania has some of the poorest health outcomes of all the Australian states. We also have glaring health inequities based largely on socioeconomic factors.

The *2013 State of Public Health* report states: “Health inequities are evident across many specific health outcomes in Tasmania with clear evidence of social gradients and disparities in health status”.¹⁴ Health outcomes are determined by the broader inequalities within in our own society.¹⁵ It is well established that socioeconomic disadvantage has correspondingly greater health risks: higher rates of chronic disease, higher rates of preventable hospitalisations and higher avoidable mortality rates. Frighteningly, “the most poor are twice as likely to suffer chronic illness and will die on average three years earlier than the most affluent.”¹⁶

The reason for this is that while some causes of ill health are behavioural and genetic, structural factors such as poor housing, low education levels, unemployment, unhealthy living and working environments are also key contributors. These are factors the World Health Organisation (WHO) describes as “unfair, unjust, unnecessary, and avoidable”.¹⁷ Although these conditions are often beyond the capacity of an individual to address, they are nonetheless well within the capacity of the Tasmanian Government.

The following two graphs provide evidence of our health inequities and corresponding health outcomes.

The ABS defines a ‘potentially avoidable death’ as “one that, theoretically, could have been avoided given an understanding of causation, the adoption of available disease prevention initiatives and the use of available health care.”¹⁸ As seen in the graph below, “Avoidable mortality by socioeconomic status”, people who live on low incomes have higher rates of potentially avoidable deaths. This chart shows that the gap between least and most disadvantaged has widened from 59.9 per 100 000 population in 1998-2000 to 76.9 per 100 000 population in 2005-07.

¹⁴ Department of Health and Human Services (2013) *State of Public Health* Hobart, Tasmanian Government, p4

¹⁵ Pickett, Kate and Wilkinson, Richard (2010), *The Spirit Level: Why more equal societies almost always do better*, UK, Penguin, p25.

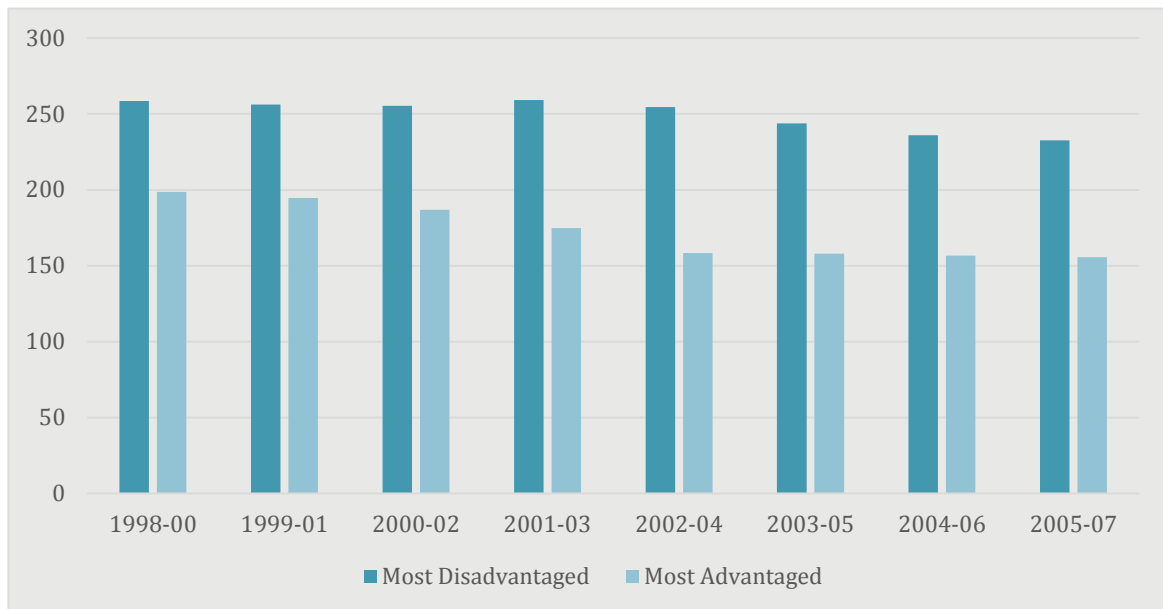
¹⁶ Brown, L., Thurecht, L., & Nepal, B. (2012). *The Cost of Inaction on the Social Determinants of Health Report No. 2*, Catholic Health Australia, Canberra, pvii

¹⁷ WHO, *Social Determinants of Health*: http://www.who.int/topics/social_determinants/en/

¹⁸ ABS (2010) *Measures of Australia's Progress 2010: Health*, Cat. No. 1370.0

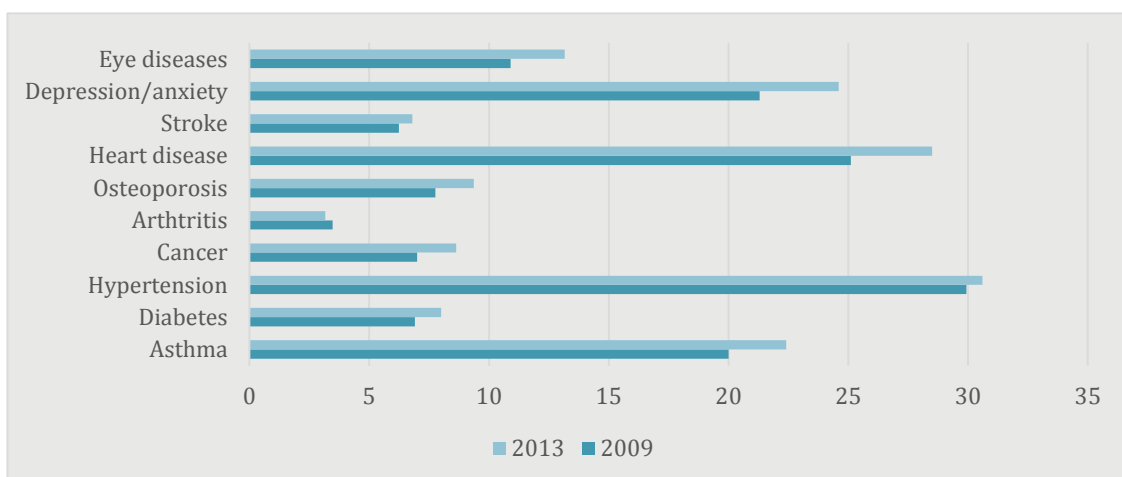
[http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1370.0~2010~Chapter~Health%20\(4.1\)](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1370.0~2010~Chapter~Health%20(4.1))

Avoidable mortality by socioeconomic status (SEIFA) rates per 100,000 population, Tasmania 1998/00 to 2005/07¹⁹



The rates of chronic diseases in Tasmania have increased since 2009. The *Tasmanian Population Health Survey* report states: “Except for stroke in the South and North-West, the rates of most chronic conditions have risen in every region.”²⁰ The chart below shows rising rates of hypertension and heart disease in particular.²¹

Chronic Diseases 2009-2013, Tasmania



¹⁹ Developed from data obtained by the DHHS Epidemiology Unit, and published in: DHHS Population Health (2013) *Health Indicators Tasmania 2013*, p36

²⁰ DHHS Population Health (2014) *Report on the Tasmanian Population Health Survey – April 2014*, Hobart, p.46
http://dhhs.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/159288/TPHS2013_Report3.pdf

²¹ Developed from data obtained from the DHHS Population Health Services (2014) *Report on the Tasmanian Population Health Survey – April 2014*, Hobart, p.46

Underinvestment in preventative health measures

Simultaneously, as we are experiencing growing health inequities, both the Australian and Tasmanian Governments are underinvesting in preventative health. Over the 2011-12 financial year just 1.7% of the Australian total health budget was spent on population and public health services, compared to 7% in New Zealand and 5.9% in Canada.²² The abolition of the National Partnership for Preventative Health translated into a loss of approximately \$2-3 million dollars annually to Tasmania and saw the cessation of a range of community-based programs in the State.²³ Australian Government funding for Primary Health Care research institutes has also been cut, and that which remains is under threat.²⁴

Moreover, the reduction in Australian Government funding for health flexible funds is thought to have impacted on the capacity of community-based health organisations (particularly in the areas of consumer representation and preventative health services).²⁵ A national review by the Primary Health Care Advisory Group is underway at the time of writing, the outcomes from which will have funding implications for Tasmania. The State Government funding of primary health care services per person decreased substantially over the period from 2007-08 to 2012-13²⁶ and last year's State Budget projected a decrease in allocation to Public Health Services. There is an urgent need to strengthen preventative health measures in Tasmania, because our health inequities are increasing.

Recommendations

1. That DHHS increase the preventative health budget from the current 2.6% of the total health budget to 5% over the next five years.
2. That the Department of Premier and Cabinet implement a *Health in All Policies (HiAP)* Framework (as outlined by the Tasmanian HiAP Collaboration in their submission to the Joint Parliamentary Commission in February 2015²⁷), the key features of which are establishment of:
 - An Intersectoral Action Act
 - A Health Impacts Assessment process
 - Long-term data collection to measure health improvements – including population health and health determinants indicators
 - Stakeholder engagement.

Costing

1. Increased Preventative Health Budget	Uncosted
2. Health in All Policies (2016/17 to 2019/20)	\$5.33 million

²² Australian Health Care Reform Alliance (2015) *Policy Position Paper 3: Prevention*, Canberra, p2-3 <http://www.healthreform.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/AHCRA-Position-Paper-Prevention-FINAL-2.pdf>

²³ Australian Government (2013) *Federal Budget Papers, Number 2, Part 3, 2013-14*. http://www.budget.gov.au/2013-14/content/bp3/html/bp3_03_part_2b.htm

²⁴ Russell, L (2015) "Further news about federal funding for primary health care research" *Croaky* 9 November.

²⁵ ACOSS (2015) *Budget Analysis 2015-16*, Canberra, p27

²⁶ AIHW (2014) *Health Expenditure Australia 2012-13* Canberra, p23.

²⁷ Full document can be found at: <http://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/ctee/Joint/Submissions/PHC%20No.%2016%20-%20HiAP%20Submission%20160215.pdf>

Rationale

Recommendation 1

A health system that has a strong preventative health component is one that improves health outcomes. Over many years, Tasmania has had a resource focus that is dominated by the acute hospital sector. As a consequence there is less capacity and resources to tackling upstream factors – those factors that promote and facilitate wellness and reduce the burden on the acute system. A *Preventative Health Strategy* for the State is reportedly in the planning stage, but at the time of writing no information is available to the public.

Tasmania can lead the nation in preventative health: we can reduce our health inequities, overcome access and equity barriers, facilitate community development and empowerment, and ultimately improve the health status of every Tasmanian.

Investment in place-based preventative health measures makes good economic sense. Not only does it improve health outcomes, but social and economic outcomes also. The Tasmanian Government Health and Wellbeing Advisory Council described the social and economic benefits of prevention as “profound”.²⁸ *Australia’s Health 2014* states: “Evidence suggests that a strong primary health care system is associated with reduced costs and increased efficiency, lower rates of potentially preventable hospitalisations, reduced health inequities, increased patient satisfaction with care, and better health outcomes, including lower rates of potentially avoidable mortality.”²⁹ In contrast, health inequities are expensive.³⁰

Based on calculations by the Heart Foundation of Tasmania, we currently allocate 2.6% of our health budget to the preventative health system, and this is projected to decrease to 1.7% in 2016-17.³¹ Achieving a healthy Tasmania requires reversing this trend away from investment in preventative health. We need to increase our upstream investment, into programs and initiatives that operate in the places where people live, work and play, where the early barriers to good health can be tackled. As the World Health Organisation states: “there is ample evidence that social factors, including education, employment status, income level, gender and ethnicity, have a marked influence on how healthy a person is.”³² A lot of this type of work is happening already in the community sector, where prevention sometimes involves helping individuals to stop smoking or to eat more healthily, but more often a more holistic approach is taken. For example, obesity is addressed through providing opportunities for social interaction, low-cost transport to enable participation, education through group participation in projects such as men’s sheds, and the availability of affordable fresh produce through a community garden or cooking class.

²⁸ DHHS (2013) *A Thriving Tasmania* Hobart, Tasmanian State Government, p23.

²⁹ AIHW (2014) *Australia’s Health: Primary Health Care in Australia* Canberra, p 363.

³⁰ For example, Brown, L., Thurecht, L., & Nepal, B. (2012) demonstrate the costs to the community of health inequities that are created through low income, low education levels, insecure housing and social isolation in *The Cost of Inaction on the Social Determinants of Health Report No. 2*, Catholic Health Australia, Canberra.

³¹ Heart Foundation (2015) *Tasmanian State Budget Submission 2015-16* p2

³² World Health Organisation, *Ten Facts on Health Inequities* http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/health_inequities/facts/en/

In recent state-wide consultations Tasmanian Neighbourhood House coordinators put forward many examples of successful preventative health projects. They noted: nutrition and cooking programs, parenting programs, walking groups, drug and alcohol programs, community gardens, men's sheds, tai chi and mentoring – to name a few. The key features of the successful programs were: collaborations and partnerships with health promotion officers, social workers or regional primary health coordinators; those determined by the community's need and capacity to respond; and those in which social interaction and engagement were central.

Based on this feedback and the evidence for preventative health, an effective preventative health system in Tasmania will be characterised by:

- Investing in place-based initiatives through partnerships between community organisations and Primary Health Tasmania, the Tasmanian Health Service Health Promotion Unit, and the DHHS Public Health Services
- Eliminating access and equity barriers to good health, and
- Creating opportunities for local community health initiatives.

Recommendation 2

A strong policy framework is needed to drive an effective preventative health strategy in Tasmania. The rationale for a Health in All Policies framework is clearly articulated in the 2010 *Adelaide statement on Health in All Policies*:

Reducing inequalities and the social gradient improves health and well-being for everyone. Good health enhances quality of life, improves workforce productivity, increases the capacity for learning, strengthens families and communities, supports sustainable habitats and environments, and contributes to security, poverty reduction and social inclusion ...

This interface between health, well-being and economic development has been propelled up the political agenda of all countries. Increasingly, communities, employers and industries are expecting and demanding strong coordinated government action to tackle the determinants of health and well-being and avoid duplication and fragmentation of actions.³³

The Health in All Policies framework has been adopted by many other countries, and in South Australia, with extremely positive results.³⁴ A plethora of evidence-based resources are available to ensure the easy implementation of a Health in All Policies framework.³⁵ A robust Health in All Policies approach would send a strong message that in Tasmania we are serious about improving our health outcomes.

³³ WHO, (2010) "Adelaide Statement on Health in All Policies"
http://www.who.int/social_determinants/hiap_statement_who_sa_final.pdf

³⁴ See, for example, Finland's North Karelia Project which documents improvements in chronic disease rates over a thirty year period <http://www.kareliahealth.com/evidence/north-karelia/>

³⁵ For example the WHO have developed a HiAP training manual, which along with other resources can be found at: http://www.who.int/social_determinants/publications/health-policies-manual/en/



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Housing

Outcome

All Tasmanians have access to affordable, appropriate, secure housing

Why is this a priority?

Housing affordability is vital to economic participation, social engagement and community wellbeing for all Tasmanians. As Minister Petrusma has noted in her “Call to Action” in the Tasmanian Government’s *Affordable Housing Strategy*, it is difficult for anyone to live a full life and participate in society without a secure home.

However, housing affordability is a particularly crucial issue for low-and middle-income Tasmanians. Although housing costs in Tasmania are on average lower than in other states, wages are also lower, and there are fewer market incentives for the construction of new affordable stock.³⁶ Minister Petrusma also acknowledged in her “Call to Action” that the trends in the State are not good: home ownership in Tasmania is for the first time beginning to decline, more Tasmanians are living in unaffordable private rental, and homelessness is increasing.³⁷

- In 2014-15, 39% of low-income renters in the State were paying more than 30% of income on housing.³⁸
- In 2014, nearly 7% of renters receiving Commonwealth Rental Assistance were still paying more than 50% of their income in rent.³⁹
- Of properties sold in 2014, only 0.7% were affordable to a household with a combined income in the bottom 20-40% of household incomes. Only 20.4% were affordable to a single person in the same income bracket.⁴⁰
- Of properties available for rent in April 2015, affordability ranged from less than 1% for people on the lowest levels of income support to only 15% for an aged pensioner couple.⁴¹
- In 2013-14, 25% of clients approaching homelessness services could not have their housing needs met.⁴²

³⁶ SGS Economics and Planning (2015), “Rental Affordability Index Release Report”, November p.23.

³⁷ Housing Tasmania (2015) Tasmania’s Affordable Housing Strategy 2015-2025, p. 5.

³⁸ Housing Tasmania (2015) Tasmania’s Affordable Housing Strategy 2015-2025, p. 14.

³⁹ Report on Government Services 2015, Housing, Sector Overview, Table GA.34.

⁴⁰ Dustin Crayford, Research Officer, Real Estate Institute of Tasmania.

⁴¹ Anglicare Rental Affordability Snapshot 2015, http://www.anglicare.asn.au/site/rental_affordability_snapshot.php

⁴² Report on Government Services 2015: Housing, Table 18A.9 and 18A.10.

Recommendations

1. That adequate funding be allocated across the forward estimates to enable the full implementation of the *Affordable Housing Strategy 2015-2025*.
2. That Housing Tasmania be relieved of its historical debt to the Commonwealth to enable the construction of new public housing properties and the urgent maintenance of existing stock.

Cost

Full implementation of <i>Affordable Housing Strategy</i>	Uncosted
Relief of Housing Tasmania debt (per annum)	\$16 million

Rationale

Recommendation 1

TasCOSS has welcomed the Tasmanian Government's release of the *Affordable Housing Strategy 2015-2025*. This is a thorough, evidence-informed strategy that has the potential to lead to better housing outcomes for many vulnerable Tasmanians, and its implementation in full should be made a Government priority. Many of the Actions identified by the Strategy's Action Plan will not succeed without immediate and adequate funding, including:

- Action 2: Increasing social housing supply
- Action 3: Public housing reinvestment
- Action 6: Development of a model for, and funds to implement, partnership arrangements between Housing Connect and the private rental sector, and
- Action 18: Investment in crisis housing.

It is worth noting that many elements of the Strategy have the potential to deliver savings in other areas. For example, measures designed to get young people into stable, safe housing, such as youth head leases and supported accommodation for homeless young people, are likely to yield returns across a range of portfolios, ranging from justice to human services to health. In this light, implementation of these Actions has the potential to deliver good value for money, as well as improving the lives and prospects of Tasmania's most vulnerable young people.

It is also worth noting that the Premier, in his foreword to the Strategy anticipates that new Government investment in housing will not only ensure a better supply of safe, affordable and appropriate homes for vulnerable Tasmanians, but will also stimulate the Tasmanian economy and create jobs in the small business home building sector.⁴³

Recommendation 2

The *Affordable Housing Strategy 2015-2025* rightly identifies the need to increase access to affordable housing as essential to improving outcomes for Tasmanians on low incomes. However, until the private market and the community sector can begin to generate new affordable options, Housing Tasmania is

⁴³ Housing Tasmania (2015) *Tasmania's Affordable Housing Strategy 2015-2025*, p. 4.

likely to remain the housing option of last resort for impoverished Tasmanians. Recent Budget papers predict an increase in the number of people on the Housing Tasmania waiting list due to increasing house prices, and the National Housing Supply Council has estimated that demand for public rental housing by 2024 will exceed 2009 levels by 19% in Hobart, and 17% across the balance of the State.⁴⁴ Deeper investment consequently is required to meet the increasing and changing needs of those seeking support from Housing Tasmania.

One of the main drags on Housing Tasmania's finances is its historical and continuing debt to the Commonwealth. As a consequence of the need to service this debt while also meeting ongoing costs, Housing Tasmania is not only unable to build new properties, but is also not able to address its maintenance backlog, leading to the running down of existing assets.

Particularly given the fact that the State Government has in recent years chosen to prioritise repayment of other debts with less favourable terms, Housing Tasmania's debt should now be approached in the context of the whole State Budget. This could take a variety of forms:

- Finance General could take over the payments of principal and interest
- Housing Tasmania's funding could be increased by the amount of its annual debt repayment, and
- Interest accrued from bonds held by the Rental Deposit Authority, currently absorbed into general revenue, should be set aside for this issue.

⁴⁴ National Housing Supply Council (nd), Projections of Housing Demand in Australia, 2009-2039: Narrative Report, <http://nhsc.org.au/files/2013/03/projections-of-housing-demand-in-australia-2009-2039.pdf>



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Education

Outcome:

All Tasmanians have the opportunity and capacity to participate in learning across the lifespan

Why is this a priority?

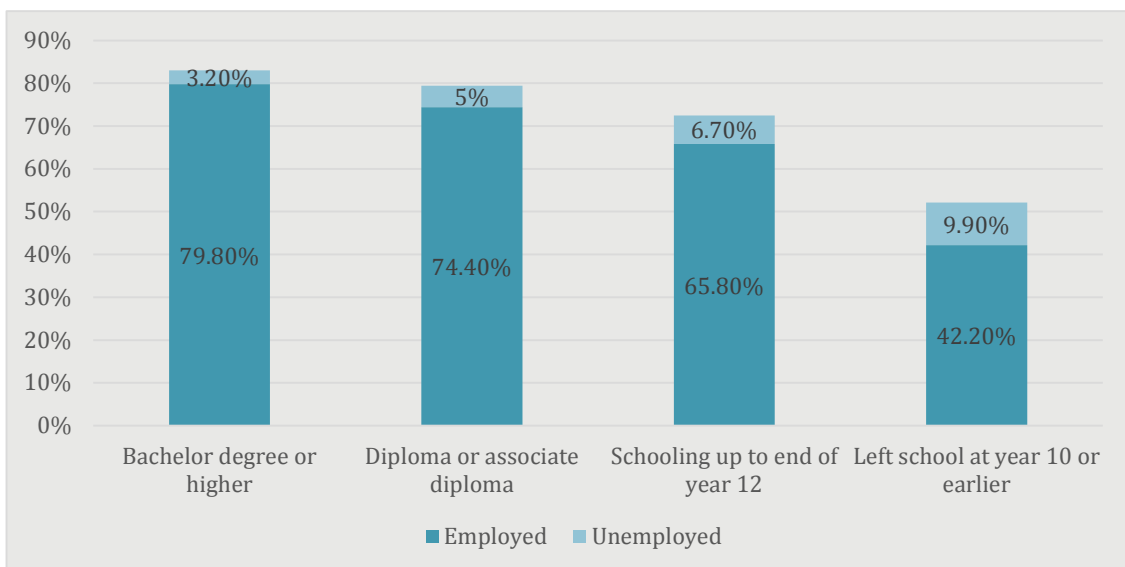
Tasmanians have the lowest level of educational participation and attainment in Australia. It continues to be our greatest challenge as a state.

The future of learning in Tasmania is full of opportunities. Opportunities to be innovative, opportunities to provide dynamic, centrally located campuses, new and exciting partnerships and a new culture and attitudes to learning by all in our community. Opportunities to offer courses of study in new and emerging industries and using advances in technology so our curriculum is cutting edge, competitive and innovative in ways never before seen. The possibilities are endless. And if we get it right, it will result in positive economic and social outcomes for individuals, regional communities and the State.

A well-educated population is key to Tasmania’s economic and social wellbeing.

What happens next is vital. Because, if what we do next it isn’t markedly different from what we’ve done before, if it hasn’t been redesigned with an understanding of what has been constraining our outcomes up until now, then there is no evidence and no rationale that our outcomes will be any different. Business as usual is not an option.

Snapshot of the economic outcomes of education⁴⁵



⁴⁵ ABS (2014), Education and Work, Australia, May 2014, Cat. No. 6227.0.

The growing rate of inequity in income and wealth in Australia is concerning.

Educational attainment has a direct relationship to this.

In addition, it's been demonstrated that:

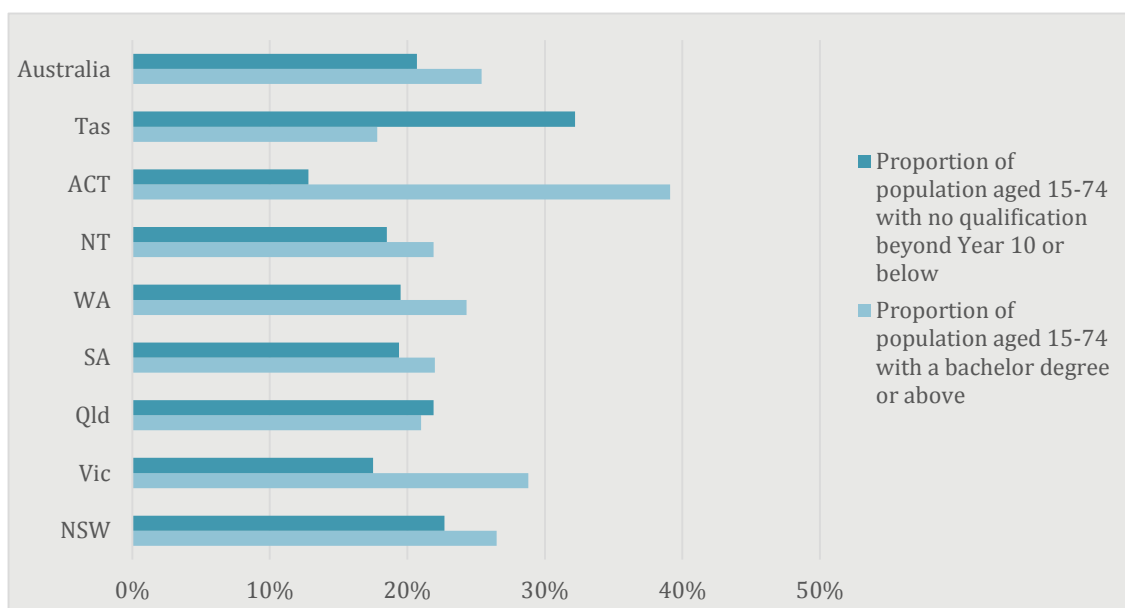
- People who complete Year 12 have lifetime earnings which are 42% higher than those who leave school at Year 10, and 64% higher than those who do not go on beyond Year 9
- The lifetime earnings of those who go on to complete a bachelor degree are 45-50% higher than those whose highest educational qualification is Year 12.⁴⁶

In light of these figures, the following Tasmanian data is worrying:

- Only 16.9% of Tasmanians aged 15-74 have a bachelor degree or higher, compared with 24.1% of all Australians in the same age range
- 34.1% of Tasmanians 15-74 have never progressed beyond Year 10, compared with 22.2% of all Australians in that age range.⁴⁷

And the most recent ABS data shows that Tasmania's apparent retention rate from Year 10-Year 12 was 69.4% in 2014 more than 13% lower than the national average of 82.5%. This is the widest gap we have seen since 1997.⁴⁸

Educational attainment by state as of May 2015⁴⁹



⁴⁶ Andrew Leigh (2008), 'Returns to Higher Education in Australia', Economic Papers, Volume 27, No.3 (September 2008).

⁴⁷ ABS (2014), Education and Work, Australia, May 2014, Cat. No. 6227.0

⁴⁸ ABS (2014), Schools, Australia, 2014, Cat. No. 4221.0

⁴⁹ ABS (2015) Education and Work, Australia, 2015, Cat. No. 6227.0

Suspensions, exclusions and part-time timetables

Participation in learning is multi-faceted. While much of the recent discussion and focus has been on Tasmania's low retention rates, data demonstrates that even in primary school there are worrying trends in participation. This includes attendance, suspensions and exclusions.

During 2014 there were a total of 85 students excluded across the State, split almost evenly between the North (43) and the South (42). Of these exclusions seven occurred at a primary school level and 78 at a higher school level. The majority of exclusions were the result of physical abuse, verbal abuse and disobedience. The average length of exclusion was 23.8 school days. A disproportionate number of these students were indigenous Tasmanians (12 students out of 85 or 14.1%).

Across the State in 2014 a total of 275 students were issued with Certificates for Part-Time Attendance, meaning they do not attend school on a full-time basis. 176 of these students were in the South (33 at primary school, 143 at high school) and 99 were in the North (26 at primary school, 73 at high school). The majority of these were issued to enable the 'Flexible Provision' of education. Again, a disproportionate number of these students were Indigenous Tasmanians (59 students of 275 (21.5%).⁵⁰

Recommendation

That the Minister appoint an independent Participation Taskforce that works in partnership with the University of Tasmania's Underwood Centre.

That the Taskforce undertake an assessment and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data available and make recommendations for action based on:

- Barriers and enablers to participation from early years through primary, secondary, senior secondary, tertiary and adult learning and training.

The work of the Taskforce would be supported by the Underwood Centre through its existing and emerging research programs.

Costing

Taskforce (one-off cost)	\$250,000
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These funds would be allocated to the Underwood Centre in three core areas to:

1. Complement work already underway by extending its scope to include educational participation and attainment across the lifespan
2. Support the work of the Taskforce to travel state-wide and meet with stakeholders and hear first-hand the barriers and enablers to participation across Tasmania, and
3. Prepare a final report with recommendations for action to the Minister.

The acceptance and implementation of recommendations from the final report may require additional Budget allocation at that time.

⁵⁰ Tasmanian Parliament, Hansard (2015), Legislative Council, Reply to a question from the Member for Murchison, The Hon Ruth Forrest, 24 Sept 2015.

Rationale:

There are many stakeholders across the Tasmanian community who have a shared interest in the engagement and participation of all Tasmanians in education, training and lifelong learning. There has also been much comment and interest, and many conversations in Tasmania relating to the reasons for Tasmania's low education participation and attainment rates.

What we know is that if “business as usual” continues, our outcomes will continue to be the lowest in Australia.

Not only is there a need for schools to recognise and prioritise support for the most vulnerable students with a high level of expertise and attention, but there is clearly also a need for shared responsibility for learning outcomes that involves solutions that go beyond the school gates.

The establishment of the Underwood Centre provides the opportunity for a non-partisan approach to developing a deeper understanding of the barriers and enablers for educational participation. It also provides the opportunity to ensure that responses to these barriers and enablers are based on evidence that has been independently captured and assessed.

The impact of low educational attainment on both our State and our population is profound. Therefore, participation needs to be considered through a range of perspectives – academic, curriculum, pedagogy, community, demographic and geographic challenges and opportunities and parents' influence, to name only some.

In addition, it cannot be looked at only within the context of the current primary, secondary and senior secondary public system. Data suggests that participation rates are low across all areas of learning in Tasmania. Therefore, this recommendation includes:

- Early years
- All primary, secondary and senior secondary schools (Public, Catholic & Independent)
- University of Tasmania
- Vocational Education and Training
- Adult learning in the community – both formal and informal

The Taskforce would be made up of independent individuals who would bring skills, knowledge and experience from a broad range of areas.

This recommendation aligns with key existing government initiatives.⁵¹

⁵¹ Tasmanian Liberal Party, *2014 Election Commitment*; Department of State Growth: *Population Growth Strategy*; Tasmanians Government: *Our Plan for the next 365 Days*; State of Tasmania and the University of Tasmania – *Making the Future Partnership*.

Employment

Outcome:

All Tasmanians will be able to participate in stable, adequate, appropriate employment

Why is this a priority?

The Tasmanian Government already recognises the importance of boosting employment to the future of individual Tasmanians and of the State, and has undertaken a number of initiatives intended to stimulate jobs growth. However, while Tasmania's unemployment rate is indeed falling, this is not yet cause for celebration for many low-income and disadvantaged Tasmanians, particularly those living outside Hobart.

Unemployment: an increasingly localised problem

- In July 2015, unemployment was 6.4% for Tasmania as a whole. However, this figure was unevenly spread across the state—6.7% for the South-East and 7.5% for the West Coast and North-West, in contrast to Hobart's 5.6%.⁵²
- From January to September 2015, unemployment fell by 3% in Hobart, but by much smaller margins in other regions.⁵³
- Unemployment rates vary widely by local government area. In June 2015, the unemployment rate in Brighton was 9%; in Derwent Valley: 7%, and in Tasman: 6.9%; and in Kingborough: 2.7% and in Hobart: 3.7%.⁵⁴
- Rates show even more dramatic variation at the SA2 level.⁵⁵ In June 2015 unemployment in Bridgewater-Gagebrook was 25.6%, in Ravenswood: 21.2%, and in Rokeby: 15.8%; however, in Cambridge it was 2.2%, in Old Beach-Otago: 2.4%, and in Sandy Bay: 2.5%.⁵⁶
- Unsurprisingly, unemployment rates and the level of socioeconomic disadvantage of areas go hand in hand. In September 2014, the unemployment rate in the least disadvantaged quintile of areas in Tasmania was 3.5%, while in the most disadvantaged quintile of areas it was 14.5%.⁵⁷

⁵² ABS (2015), Labour Force Australia Detailed, Cat. No. 6291, Table 16

⁵³ ABS (2015), Labour Force Australia Detailed, Cat. No. 6291, Table 16

⁵⁴ Department of Employment (2015) Small Area Labour Markets, LGA data tables.

⁵⁵ ABS (2011) 'The Statistical Area Level 2 (SA2) is an area defined in the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS), and consists of one or more whole Statistical Areas Level 1 (SA1s). Wherever possible SA2s are based on officially gazetted State suburbs and localities. In urban areas SA2s largely conform to whole suburbs and combinations of whole suburbs, while in rural areas they define functional zones of social and economic links.' Census Dictionary 2011, Cat. No. 2901.0

⁵⁶ Department of Employment (2015) Small Area Labour Markets, SA2 data tables

⁵⁷ Public Health Information Development Unit (PHIDU) (2015), Monitoring Inequality in Australia: Tasmania.

Long-term unemployment: hard to budge in a competitive environment

- In August 2015, 72.2% of those receiving Newstart and Youth Allowance had done so for more than 12 months, up from 70.5% in August 2014 (although down from May 2015, at 73.4%).⁵⁸
- As of August/September 2015, there were still 6.2 unemployed persons for every job vacancy in the state.⁵⁹

Underemployment: growing and gendered

- In May 2015, the overall level of underemployment in Tasmania was 10.7%, up from 9.8% in May 2014. Among women, the rate was 14.3%, up from 12.3% in May 2014; among males it was 7.6%, down from 7.7% a year earlier.⁶⁰
- Notably, over a third of the Tasmanian workforce (35.4%, or 85,000 out of 240,200) is employed part-time; and 52% of women who work do so part-time.⁶¹
- Women workers also disproportionately face casualisation, with 26% of female workers employed on a casual basis in July 2013, compared to 17.6% of male workers.⁶²

Opting out: localised and also gendered

- In September 2015, participation for the State as a whole was 60.4%, but only 55.6% for women (65.4% for men).⁶³
- The South-East has particularly low rates of participation at 50.3% overall, and only 44.5% for women.⁶⁴
- As in the case of unemployment rates, participation rates and the level of socioeconomic disadvantage of areas are linked. In September 2014, the participation rate in the least disadvantaged quintile of areas in Tasmania was 65.4%, while in the most disadvantaged quintile of areas it was 54.3%.⁶⁵

Recommendation

That the Tasmanian Government fund the development of a Workforce Participation Plan aimed specifically at ensuring that all Tasmanians have the best possible opportunity to participate in adequate, appropriate employment.

Cost

Workforce Participation Plan

\$250,000

⁵⁸ Tasmanian Labour Market Trends, September 2015

⁵⁹ ABS (2015), Labour Force Australia Detailed, Cat. No. 6291, Table 16 and ABS (2015) Job Vacancies, Australia, Cat No. 6354.0

⁶⁰ ABS (2015), Labour Force Australia Detailed, Cat. No. 6291, Table 16

⁶¹ ABS (2015), Labour Force Australia Detailed, Cat. No. 6291, Table 02

⁶² ABS (2014) Australian Labour Market Statistics, July 2014, Cat. No. 6105

⁶³ ABS (2015), Labour Force Australia Detailed, Cat. No. 6291, Table 16

⁶⁴ ABS (2015), Labour Force Australia Detailed, Cat. No. 6291, Table 16

⁶⁵ PHIDU (2015), Monitoring Inequality in Australia: Tasmania.

Rationale

While an improving economic situation may deliver better employment prospects to some Tasmanians, market forces alone are unlikely to sweep away the barriers faced by others. Tasmanians who are already likely to face disadvantage – including vulnerable young people, Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, single parents, older people, people with low levels of education, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities – often face multiple and complex barriers to employment, thereby compounding their disadvantage. Long-term unemployment and intergenerational unemployment bring their own challenges to people trying to enter or re-enter the workforce. Government, business and the community sector will have to work together to break this nexus between disadvantage and unemployment.

TasCOSS calls on the Tasmanian Government to develop a Workforce Participation Plan for all Tasmanians which includes measures that particularly support vulnerable Tasmanians. This plan should develop strategies and action plans focused on:

- Building vulnerable people’s skills and capacities:
 - Keeping young people engaged in education and supporting those at risk of disengagement from the earliest age
 - Expanding access to training opportunities matched with current and future labour market demand
 - Building community-based education and employment pathways.
- Creating the jobs that vulnerable people need, where they need them:
 - Promoting regional development and local area solutions
 - Investing in job-creating social projects and infrastructure
 - Supporting social enterprises
 - Providing jobs, training and support through the community sector.
- Developing flexible and inclusive workplaces that provide adequate hours and predictable work schedules:
 - Expanding wage subsidies
 - Promoting workplace diversity and supporting employees
 - Encouraging flexible workplace practices
 - Setting equity targets.
- Improving labour mobility and availability:
 - Expanding well-located affordable housing options
 - Providing public transport where it’s needed
 - Improving access to childcare.



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Transport

Outcome

All Tasmanians are able to travel where they need to go to participate in work, training, education, volunteering, and social and recreational activities, and to access services

Why is this a priority?

TasCOSS consultations consistently reveal access to transport as one of the most important issues facing low-income and disadvantaged Tasmanians. While many people focus on transport for elderly and disabled Tasmanians, in fact the most transport-disadvantaged groups in the State are young people who do not yet have their licence, people living on low incomes who cannot afford to run a car, and people who have lost their licence.

“What I would really love to have is public transport.”

— Kelsie, 16, Rosebery⁶⁶

Despite good efforts in recent years by Metro Tasmania and other service providers, transport services in the State are still substantially characterised by:

- Limited hours and frequency of operations
- Limited geographic scope
- Limited integration in ticketing, physical location and timetables
- Limited affordability, and
- Limited eligibility.

Needs are particularly acute outside Hobart and Launceston.

In the North West, the trip between Burnie and Devonport—a 35 to 45-minute car trip—takes more than two hours and two different bus companies, if buses run at all.

A trip from Queenstown to the University of Tasmania’s Cradle Coast Campus in Burnie (via Devonport) takes 7.5 hours using three different operators—and is only possible on Mondays and Wednesdays.

Although these issues severely hamper the mobility of transport-disadvantaged Tasmanians, they also discourage people with access to a car from shifting away from driving towards more environmentally sustainable and healthy public or communal transport.

⁶⁶ Bottom Line Blog, *Being young on the West Coast of Tasmania*, 25 August 2015

Recommendation

That the State Government begin the process of bringing its level of transport funding to \$300 per capita per year, or \$150 million per year.

In the first year, this money should be spent to:

- Finalise and develop an action plan for, and begin implementation of the long-awaited *Transport Access Strategy*
- Fund at least two projects—one rural, one peri-urban—trialing innovative feeder services into Metro or other existing bus services
- Launch a centralised passenger transport information website, and
- Overcome the barriers to establish a direct Burnie-Devonport bus service.

Cost

Public Transport Improvement Project (per annum)	Approx \$50 million ⁶⁷
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Rationale

At under \$200 per year, Tasmania's per capita spending on transport is the lowest in the nation. Even the Northern Territory, the next lowest spender, spent \$270 per capita per annum in 2013.⁶⁸ As the examples above demonstrate, this level of funding is demonstrably inadequate for meeting the transport needs of Tasmania's dispersed transport-disadvantaged population.

Business as usual forces relevant government departments and transport operators to focus more on cost management than on better service provision for transport-disadvantaged Tasmanians, and prevents any exploration of innovative services such as feeder services for Metro or other existing bus services.

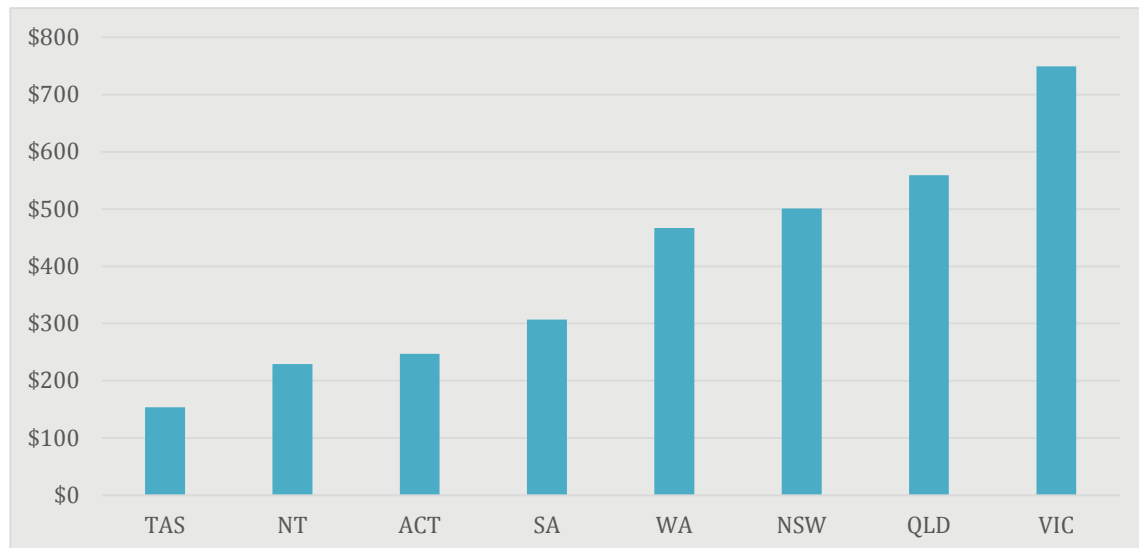
TasCOSS has already expressed its concerns about the lack of funding in the 2015-16 Budget for the finalisation of the *Transport Access Strategy*, an election commitment which will be vital to setting out strategic directions for further action. The Strategy is now overdue; it needs to be finalised and implemented. One of its action areas should be two projects trialing feeder services aimed at overcoming the "last mile" problem facing many transport-disadvantaged Tasmanians living outside the centres of urban areas. The lessons from these projects will be crucial to rolling out similar feeder services across the State.

⁶⁷ This will depend on the timeframe in which it is possible to increase spending on transport to meet this target.

⁶⁸ TasCOSS (2014), *Transport in the Community: Final Report*, p 13.

<http://www.tascoss.org.au/Portals/0/Documents/Publications/Reports/TasCOSS%20Transport%20in%20the%20Community%20Project%20report%20Oct%202014.pdf>

State Transport Spending Per Capita⁶⁹



Tasmania is the only Australian state to lack a centralised website providing comprehensive transport information for residents and tourists alike. All participants in TasCOSS' 2014 *Transport in the Community* project agreed that such a website will make potential users aware of transport options and greatly simplify multi-modal or multi-operator trips. Service Tasmania has already expressed strong interest in hosting the site.⁷⁰

The DPAC-funded Wheels for Work and Training grant awarded in 2014 to Merseylink/Phoenix Coaches has already come up with a full design—routes, timetables, costing—for a direct Burnie-Devonport bus service. We understand that additional funding will be required to overcome barriers associated with existing contracts.

⁶⁹ ABS 3101, Australian Demographic Statistics, March 2015; 2015-16 State and Territory Budget Papers. Both Victorian and NSW figures are for selected projects only and sharply understate the total public transport spend.

⁷⁰ TasCOSS (2014), *Transport in the Community: Final Report*, p 23.

<http://www.tascoss.org.au/Portals/0/Documents/Publications/Reports/TasCOSS%20Transport%20in%20the%20Community%20Project%20report%20Oct%202014.pdf>



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Energy

Outcome

Vulnerable Tasmanian households will be able to reduce their energy usage and costs, know where to go for assistance and avoid disconnection

Why is this a priority?

1,555 Tasmanian households had their electricity disconnected in 2013-14 and in the same year, more than 5,000 Tasmanians had an electricity debt.

In spite of a decrease in electricity prices in 2014, prices rose again in 2015. Gas prices in Tasmania have also risen with a doubling this year of the fixed charge component, as well as an increase in usage charges.

High energy prices are a major challenge to Tasmanian households living on low-incomes.⁷¹ Tasmanians use more electricity than other Australians, and low-income Tasmanians spend a higher proportion of their incomes on electricity (see graphs). This makes low-income households vulnerable to energy hardship, debt and to disconnection for non-payment.

Recommendation

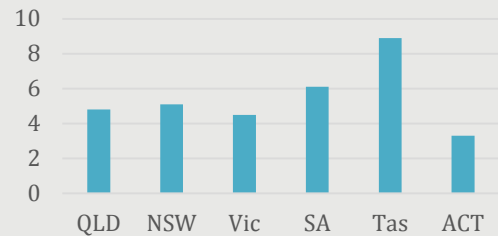
That funding be allocated to a project to produce resources and run workshops across the State for front-line community services workers to enable them to assist their vulnerable clients to better manage their energy use and bills and to avoid disconnection.

Cost

Community-based affordable energy workshops

\$60,000

Energy expenditure as a share of income (%)



Annual Energy Bill (\$)



⁷¹ These graphs show annual electricity as a share of benchmark low income household's disposable income (without concession) jurisdiction specific 'low' consumption levels June 2013 and 2014. Source: AER, 2014, Annual Report on the Performance of the Retail Energy Market 2013-14, Figure 3.1 , p. 40.

Rationale

Energy bills have long been a cause of financial stress and hardship for many low-income households in Tasmania, and particularly in the past decade when prices have risen significantly. Disconnections have increased in recent years and energy debt remains high among low-income earners.

Many low-income Tasmanians live in poor quality housing where heat generated by electric, gas or wood heaters is lost through gaps, uncovered windows and thin, uninsulated ceilings, floors and walls. Many have uninsulated electric hot water cylinders and uncovered pipes exposed to cold temperatures, and/or inefficient showerheads that release more hot water than is needed. All of these examples of energy inefficiencies can be improved by often very simple and inexpensive energy efficiency measures. But people need information to address these inefficiencies and need to know where to find it.

While various assistance measures are available to households in financial hardship, these are provided by a range of government, community sector and private organisations and, as a consequence, not all of those in need are aware of the nature and extent of help that is available.

In addition, energy bills can be complex, confusing and difficult to read and to understand. Many energy consumers are not fully aware of what 'drives' their bills, that is, what kind of usage and behaviour contributes to increasing costs. For instance, consumers may not be on an appropriate tariff so will be paying more than they need to for the energy they use; or those with APAYG pre-payment meters may not be aware that different prices are charged at different times of day and in winter versus summer.

The proposed project, *Staying Connected: Energy literacy for frontline community service workers* is based on a successful project run in 2015 by the Queensland Council of Social Service. The project will comprise a series of workshops and the production of written and online resources.

The workshops will be offered across the State to train frontline community service providers and volunteers to provide information and resources that they can share with their clients as they seek help. Frontline workers include: Financial counsellors; Emergency relief providers; Housing assistance, family support, family violence, disability support and youth workers; Child and Family Centres staff, and Neighbourhood house staff and volunteers.

Community sector workers who are well-equipped with energy-related information and knowledge can make a significant difference to their clients. By sharing that information and enabling their clients to find further assistance, clients can develop their own understanding of how household energy works and how it could work better and be more affordable for them. Project outcomes include a fall in energy disconnections and in energy-related debt as a result of consumers being better informed and equipped to manage their energy bills and usage. As a result of this project, consumers will:

- Understand what drives their energy bills
- Know how to use energy more efficiently to save money, increase comfort and reduce their contributions to greenhouse gas emissions
- Be aware of the various payment options available to them
- Be able to access concessions and other assistance they are entitled to, and
- Know where to go for help.

Planning

Outcome

Tasmania's planning system supports and promotes the social goals of affordable housing, good health, and social inclusion through access to work, learning, services and social hubs

Why is this a priority?

If Tasmania's social and economic situation is to improve, the State's planning system must be an active partner in efforts to eliminate disadvantage. The planning system may seem remote from the daily concerns of Tasmanians, particularly those on a low income or facing disadvantage. But many low-income and disadvantaged Tasmanians already grapple with issues that can be traced to past and current planning decisions and frameworks.

- The State's supply of affordable housing is far short of current demand, and seems unlikely to keep up with future demand—a situation that could be addressed by planning requirements, as in South Australia
- Broadacre public housing projects are isolated from shops, services and employment
- In the absence of a transit-oriented development framework, people are more and more dependent on cars, and
- Many neighbourhoods lack infrastructure that encourages healthy activity, such as safe and well-connected footpaths, cycleways, or adequate public open space.

Proportion of Tasmanian shops carrying an adequate range of fresh fruit and vegetables that are located in low income areas: 5%⁷²

Effective spatial planning for social inclusion has been one of TasCOSS's key interests in recent years. Good planning in relation to land use, transport and services infrastructure, and urban design has the potential to facilitate and encourage the supply of affordable and sustainable housing and transport, to promote healthy and socially connected lifestyles, and to support access to education, employment, basic services, and participation in the community. In the absence of overarching guidance at the State level, however, market forces alone are not guaranteed to deliver adequate results, particularly in the area of housing affordability but also in areas such as access to healthy food and transport.

⁷² Heart Foundation, <http://ausfoodnews.com.au/2014/07/28/fruit-and-vegetables-out-of-reach-for-tasmanians-university-study.html>

Business as usual isn't delivering affordable housing.

- Tasmanian housing supply needs to 2031:
 - Average affordable new dwellings a year: 656 (27%)—a total of 13,112 low-priced homes in 15 years.⁷³
- Proportion of dwellings sold in 2014 affordable to households in the second quintile (bottom 20-40%) of household income with no debts or dependents:
 - One-person household: 20.4%
 - Two-person household: 0.7%⁷⁴
- Proportion of rental properties affordable (<30% of income) to low-income renters
 - Between 0.2% and 15%.⁷⁵
- The decline in housing affordability has been exacerbated by a passive bias in Tasmanian land use planning frameworks towards single-occupancy dwellings, despite the fact that the State already has both a higher than average percentage of sole occupancy households and the highest percentage of separate housing stock in the nation.⁷⁶
- The experience of other Australian states shows that statewide planning mechanisms have the potential to contribute significantly to the development of affordable housing. In its first eight years, for example, South Australia's 15% affordable housing requirement delivered more than 1220 affordable houses, with a further 2800 committed in future developments as of 2013.⁷⁷

Recommendations

1. That the State Government allocate funding to the development of a range of overarching planning policies detailing the planning system's objectives, strategies, and guidelines for planning in relation to social issues including housing, health, transport, and economic development.
2. That the State Government fund comprehensive community consultation to inform the development of the above policy statements.

Costs

Planning Policy Program (Recommendation 1)	\$250,000
Community Consultation Project (Recommendation 2)	\$50,000

⁷³ Housing Tasmania (2015), Affordable Housing Strategy, p. 12.

⁷⁴ Dustin Crayford, Research Officer, Real Estate Institute of Tasmania

⁷⁵ Anglicare Rental Affordability Snapshot 2015

⁷⁶ Office of the State Architect 2011, p. 3.

⁷⁷ Housing Strategy for South Australia 2013-1018, http://www.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/42564/Housing-Strategy-SA-2013-18.pdf

Rationale

Recommendation 1

The creation of a statewide planning scheme is only the first step towards a reorientation of the Resource Management and Planning System towards planning for positive social outcomes. The Government must also deliver an overarching set of high-level statements of principle that lay out the planning system's social, economic and environmental objectives and identify strategies and guidelines for achieving them.

It is time for the Government to begin work on the suite of new and revised State Policies flagged, for instance, by Minister Gutwein in his address to the TCCI in October 2014. We believe that a strong suite of planning policies on social issues such as affordable housing and healthy spaces are necessary to guide State and local government planners in their use of the reformed planning system to deliver effective planning for social inclusion in the State. These will add substance to the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act's* new objective of promoting "the health and wellbeing of all Tasmanians".

Recommendation 2

The reform of the planning system currently underway presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to engage Tasmanians in the discussion about the social objectives of the State's planning system—what the planning system is FOR. Spatial planning in Australia has tended to be top-down and the province of highly specialised bureaucratic cultures and operating systems. This situation runs contrary to the basic object of planning processes, which is to create environments that are pleasant, efficient and safe for all residents—a series of criteria that can only be judged by Tasmanians themselves.⁷⁸ Indeed, one of the objectives of the Tasmanian Resource Management and Planning System is "to encourage public involvement in resource management and planning."⁷⁹

A series of consultations across the State will inform the Government of what stakeholders and residents across the State think the planning system's key social goals and concerns should be. Consultations must include Tasmanians whose voices can be hard to hear, including low-income and disadvantaged Tasmanians, older and younger people, people living with disability, Aboriginal Tasmanians, and people from CALD backgrounds. Consultations should include as a minimum:

- Hobart and the South East
- Launceston and the North East, and
- The North West and West Coast.

⁷⁸ *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993 (LUPAA), Schedule 1 Part 2.*

⁷⁹ *LUPAA, Schedule 1 Part 1.*



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Community Services

Outcome

Tasmania community service organisations maximise client outcomes

Why is this a priority?

All parts of the non-government community services sector are facing significant and rapid change. Sector leaders are dealing with changing service delivery models, increasing demand and higher expectations of services. The risk profile of service delivery has changed dramatically, forward planning is challenging and government reform requirements overlapping and continuous. Parts of the sector are reporting significant problems with both maintaining viability and a consistent loss of skilled staff due to funding uncertainty;⁸⁰ they are also struggling with new concerns around management of cash flow, debt management and client relationship management. While these are familiar problems for the private sector, the transition from block funding to fee-for-service for non-government organisations has been difficult for organisations with historically low levels of cash reserves.

There is a risk that without transitional support from government some small to medium local services will not be able to maintain viability due to issues which are not related to service quality.

Losing small to medium-sized Tasmanian services raises the risk that the State Government, as procurer of services, and the community, as clients of these services, will lose access to flexible services that are strongly connected to local communities and that provide specialised service delivery, particularly to hard to reach populations.

The challenge for the non-government sector within this environment is to find ways to continue to provide consistently good, even improved, services for the clients with whom they work.

Recommendation

That the Tasmanian Government fund:

1. A Strategic Partnership Fund, and
2. An Outcomes Reporting and IT Capacity Building Project.

Cost

Strategic Partnership Fund (per annum for three years)	up to \$250,000
Outcomes Reporting and IT Capacity Building Project	\$63,000

⁸⁰ TasCOSS regional consultations (2015); TasCOSS HACC-CHSP Providers' Forum (Oct 2015)

Rationale

Recommendation 1

Non-government organisations have extensive experience of informal partnership arrangements. To date, where the State Government has contributed to the costs of partnerships, it has been to fund these as a component of contracted service delivery.

Increasingly, Tasmanian NGOs also have experience of innovative new models of collaboration, such as sub-contracting under lead agencies, consortia arrangements and collective impact models managed with the assistance of ‘backbone agencies’. While these innovations have not yet been seen in the contracting of Tasmanian health services, the consortia models and collective impact models being developed by NGOs are innovations also being used in the private sector. These models first emerged in the European oil and petroleum sector and in Australia have been used extensively in major infrastructure projects; in the private sector they are called *alliance contracting*. These newer models of contracting (*alliance contracts, consortia, collective impact models*) emphasise collaboration, cooperation and shared outcomes.⁸¹

Partnerships can be important first steps in the creation of new entities – but new entities must be properly designed to suit current and future needs. They need to have the support of senior management, boards and member associations; potential sources of conflict must be identified and minimised. New entities have to be more than sustainable - they need to be viable; new entities should be well placed to respond strategically and innovatively to future challenges. And to generate the maximum efficiencies, transaction costs (those associated with the decision to formalise a new partnership, such as consultant costs) and implementation costs need to be kept to a minimum.⁸²

A useful partnership approach to the current business pressures faced by the sector is to explore shared services. This could be shared financial services: bookkeeping, payroll, financial reporting and planning; shared human resources: advertising and recruitment, shared workers, induction, OH&S, industrial relations, policies and procedures and employee assistance; shared infrastructure: Information Technology, equipment and facilities and spaces. The rollout of the NBN also provides opportunities to rethink how shared services are developed and managed and to develop scale and capability in both back-of house functions and front office capability.

Some partnership approaches may proceed to full mergers. A number of TasCOSS members report that they wish to begin or they are already exploring other governance arrangements such as mergers or the creation of new entities for business purposes to promote collective goals, streamline contracting and reporting, and to support the sustainability of their organisations.

⁸¹ McGough R & Dunbar-Rees R 2013, ‘Team effort: Commissioning through alliance contracts’, *Health Service Journal*, 22 November, 2013

⁸² Local Government Association Tasmania (2015), “Local Government Amalgamations and Resource Sharing: what do we know already? – A Background Paper”, LGAT, Hobart
<http://www.gsbc.tas.gov.au/webdata/resources/files/LGAT%20Paper%20Voluntary%20Amalgamations%20April%2030%202015.pdf> viewed 5 November 2015

Last year it was estimated that nationally around 30% of not-for-profit boards were discussing, or were taking action to merge with another not-for-profit.⁸³

The organisations most vulnerable to the changes in the market are those with income of \$5 million per annum or less who are going through the rapid reform processes associated with consumer directed care, the introduction of the national Disability Insurance Scheme and its extension to clients of mental health services, and the aged care reform process.

TasCOSS and the University of New South Wales have conducted a comprehensive survey of the non-government organisations working in Tasmania. The findings of this survey suggest that while the numbers of organisations who are vulnerable are not enormous, they represent a significant proportion of the organisations working in these sectors in Tasmania. For example, 65.5% of organisations have incomes of \$1 million a year or less; 82.7% have incomes of \$5 million a year or less.⁸⁴

Organisations providing non-residential aged care, disability and carer, or mental health services

Organisational size (by income per annum)	Number	%	Cumulative %
<\$50,000	24	21.8	21.8
\$50,000—\$250,000	24	21.8	43.6
\$250,000—\$500,000	8	7.3	50.9
\$500,000—<\$1million	16	14.5	65.5
\$1million—<\$5million	19	17.3	82.7
<\$5million	19	17.3	100.0
Total	110	100.0	

Mergers or partnerships can fail if not properly supported with expertise and resources. In the community services sector such failure can leave vulnerable clients unsupported.

Successfully preparing for and formalising such changes requires resources. Organisations may require legal or accounting advice to develop partnership agreements, contracts or business plans.

⁸³ Australian Institute of Company Directors (2014), *NFP Governance and Performance Study: Examining governance practices and opportunities in Australia's NFP sector*, Australian Institute of Company Directors

⁸⁴ TasCOSS-UNSW, unpublished data. The TasCOSS Community Services Survey was distributed to 360 Tasmanian community services. This included all organisations funded by DHHS, all organisations providing services to clients who are registered as charities in Tasmania, all who are registered with the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission, and private businesses registered to work with the National Disability Insurance Agency. The survey was conducted in the first two weeks of November 2015 and attracted a 59% response rate. The survey results will be released in February 2016.

Should a partnership proceed, organisations may require project planning support to implement and monitor the process.

A *Strategic Partnership Fund* would assist organisations to explore their business options. It would be similar to the resource-sharing funding program offered to local government to help councils identify cost savings.⁸⁵ Appropriate aims for it would be to:

- Support the exploration of formal partnerships between Tasmanian community sector organisations
- Encourage new partnerships between Tasmanian community sector organisations
- Build capacity within the Tasmanian sector to manage these processes.

TasCOSS suggests that this fund be managed by the Community Sector Relations Unit (CSRU) in DHHS, and that successful fund applicants be directed to an approved panel of providers selected by CSRU.

While partnerships and new business structures, even if successful in the short-term, will not address *all* the viability issues confronting the sector, support for organisations to look at these approaches could help stabilise the sector through a period of rapid change, and ensure that organisations do not fail, leaving clients unsupported and at risk.

Recommendation 2

TasCOSS is seeking funds to build the capacity of Tasmanian community services to better use technology to measure and understand the impact of their work. This capacity building has many benefits in terms of improving the quality of services available for clients; it is also a necessity for DHHS contracts under the new *DHHS Outcomes Purchasing Framework*. TasCOSS research into how organisations were responding to the *DHHS Outcomes Purchasing Framework* identified that difficulty purchasing appropriate information and client management systems was a significant barrier to implementing outcomes measurement and monitoring systems.⁸⁶

TasCOSS will partner with Infoxchange to deliver this program. Infoxchange is a national not-for-profit community organisation that works to raise the level of digital proficiency within the community services sector. Infoxchange has recently been commissioned by the NZ Government to conduct capacity building workshops across the country to support the introduction of Results Based Accountability reporting there.

The Tasmanian program will leverage off workshops to be delivered by TasCOSS on Results Based Accountability, the performance measurement framework which is the theoretical core of the *DHHS Outcomes Purchasing Framework*.

⁸⁵ Mather A (2015) "State Government provides funds to help local councils create efficiency reform models", *The Mercury*, 11 February, 2015. <http://www.themercury.com.au/news/tasmania/state-government-provides-funds-to-help-local-councils-create-efficiency-reform-models/story-fnj4f7k1-1227215996120>, viewed 5 November 2015

⁸⁶ TasCOSS (2015), *Community Services and Outcomes Measurement: Survey Results*, TasCOSS, Hobart.

The program will deliver the following:

- An understanding of what systems are currently used by Tasmanian non-profit organisations to deliver services and measure outcomes, and identify where systems can most help organisations, and
- Assistance for community sector organisations to:
 - Understand the types of systems available to capture service delivery and outcome information
 - Identify systems that could meet their needs
 - Understand the process they should go through to select and successfully implement a system, and
 - Provide (limited) guidance to help them select a system.

This would be delivered through a three stage process:

1. Research into the systems being used in the Tasmanian non-government community sector and identification of appropriate systems for the sector
2. Support for organisations to select a case management system provided through a series of workshops, which will run in sequence with training on Results Based Accountability; and
3. 1:1 mentoring to support system implementation.

Funding would enable this series to be provided in Launceston and Hobart with a contribution towards costs being made by participating community sector organisations.

The success of these projects will depend on a commitment from the State Government that organisations participating will be able to reinvest efficiencies created by the project into service delivery.