

2019/2020
TASCOSS BUDGET
PRIORITIES
STATEMENT

*Unlocking our
Potential: an
inclusive growth
strategy for Tasmania*





INTEGRITY COMPASSION INFLUENCE

The Tasmanian Council of Social Service (TasCOSS) is the peak body for Tasmania's community service sector.

Our Mission is to challenge and change the systems, behaviours and attitudes that create poverty, inequality and exclusion.

Our Vision is of one Tasmania, free of poverty and inequality where everyone has the same opportunity.

TasCOSS and Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania have a long history of working together to hear the voices of Tasmanians and their communities.

As organisations we are committed to representing their issues and backing community generated solutions to the "wicked problems" facing Tasmania,

and to trust in communities to develop innovation. Together we call for major changes to the way we address the challenges of Tasmania.

We believe that the role of government needs to continue to shift to ensure we work in partnership with and invest in

local communities and that those solutions are led and developed with communities.



It is an exciting time for Tasmania. Our economy is growing, visitors are coming to the State in record numbers, more of our young people are participating in school, and billions of dollars will be invested in job-creating projects over the next 10 years. Our challenge is to make sure that the growth is inclusive so that all Tasmanians can participate and prosper.

To do this we need to unlock the potential that is dormant in our communities. One-quarter of Tasmania's population lives in poverty. This means around 120,000 Tasmanians are trying to live on less than \$433 a week. Every day they need to find the resources to look after their family and to look for work. They have to make choices that many of us aren't forced to make, like having to move out of major population centres because there is no affordable housing.

They are faced with other barriers beyond their control such as a lack of access to reliable, affordable transport that can get them to services, training and work. They experience cultural barriers like prejudice, stigma and exclusion. And they face very personal barriers with low levels of literacy, dental problems and poor physical and mental health. These challenges are exacerbated in our regions where our economy isn't growing as strongly as it is in our capital.

Inequality is one of the wicked problems. It is complex and generational and can feel too big and too hard to change. But in Tasmania it is possible, and *Unlocking our Potential* sets out how Tasmania can build a team and deliver change.

At TasCOSS we have spent the past year listening to people in all parts of Tasmania talk about the strengths in their communities, the barriers they face, and their hopes for a good life. This budget proposal represents their voices. These are the people who are at risk of missing out in a time of economic prosperity. They are the experts in their own lives and they need to be at the centre of the decisions that are made about their lives.



> it is time now to make sure everyone can participate in a good life

The Premier said in his recent speech delivered at the Committee for Economic Development of Australia's State of the State Address that we '*must find those ways to ensure all Tasmanians are feeling the benefits of a strong economy, and that no one is left behind*'.

By investing in our people, in our social infrastructure, we build resilient communities with strong relationships and strong systems, so they can withstand any future shocks to our economy. To achieve this we need to do things differently and we need to work together, the three levels of government with the community sector, businesses and people in their local communities. We need a game-changer.

Our vision at TasCOSS is for 'One Tasmania, free of poverty and inequality where everyone has the same opportunity'. With opportunities opening up across the State it is time now to make sure everyone can participate in a good life.

WHO IS AT RISK OF MISSING OUT?

According to ABS labour force figures there are 15,600 unemployed Tasmanians in our State and around 4,400 who are long-term unemployed (52 weeks or longer). While these rates have been improving over the past year, Tasmania has the highest long-term unemployment rate as a percentage of the labour force of all jurisdictions. In Hobart and the south-east there are 8,200 people unemployed. In Launceston and north-east there are 4,000 unemployed and 3,400 in the west and north-west.

Our youth unemployment rate is 15.1 per cent compared to 12 per cent nationally. That is 6,500 Tasmanians aged between 15 and 24 who are actively looking for work.

One of the challenges that remains for Tasmania is our relatively low participation rate. At around 61 per cent, it remains more than 4 per cent behind the national rate. Almost 24 per cent of Tasmania's working age population is over 65 compared to 19.5 per cent of the national population.



LOCAL PEOPLE INTO LOCAL JOBS

Our aim through an inclusive growth strategy is to get local people into local jobs. The opportunities are there through infrastructure investment and the expansion of sectors such as tourism and aged care. The latest Internet Vacancy Index data shows the number of job vacancies in Tasmania is 17.7 per cent. That is almost 30 times higher than the national growth rate at 0.6 per cent compared to the same time last year.

The Government's Infrastructure Project Pipeline sets out a forecast spend of \$13.9 billion on infrastructure over the next ten years. This includes investments in roads and rail, ports and airports, telecommunications, energy, water, irrigation, rail and social infrastructure such as housing, health, education and recreation.

We need to make sure Tasmanians can access these local jobs. Just as the strategic investment in irrigation has led to an expansion of our agriculture sector, so we must now make a significant strategic investment in our people so everyone has the opportunity to participate.

Social investment is already being made through community-driven projects across Tasmania. Right now in four communities local residents are coming together to find ways to get local people into local jobs. In the partnership between TasCOSS, the TCCI and the State Government we are tackling the complex problem of unemployment in the Derwent Valley, the South-East, the Break O'Day municipality and now the West Coast. *Unlocking our Potential* builds on this approach by making strategic investments over the next five to ten years.

INVESTING IN COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

In our consultations Tasmanians have told us about the barriers they face trying to get work. They have also told us about the strengths in their communities and their hopes for the future.

Unlocking our Potential is a strategic investment in the supports Tasmanians need to help them participate in work and in community life. The solutions come directly from them, and can be led by them. This is a community designed, community-led approach tailored to the unique needs of our regions.

To get local people into the sort of local jobs that will be available through the Infrastructure Pipeline and other growth industries we need a strategic investment in five priority areas:

- 1 Innovative demand-based transport systems
- 2 Targeted training in skills and work readiness
- 3 Adult literacy and digital inclusion support
- 4 Access to essential services
- 5 Community leadership



ESTABLISHING A REGIONAL INVESTMENT FUND

TasCOSS proposes the establishment of a Regional Investment Fund with a minimum budget allocation of \$5 million per annum over the next five years. The Regional Investment Fund would provide the resources for local communities to put in place solutions to address the barriers they know are preventing local people taking up local jobs. Regional communities of priority would be selected based on identified projected employment growth. The Regional Investment Fund would unlock the potential in four Tasmanian communities per year, with a total of 20 communities supported over the next five years.

In addition, TasCOSS proposes an increased funding allocation across the five priority areas. This would enable the necessary adjustments based on demand and need in existing programs across the priority areas and support state-wide action in adult literacy, digital inclusion, skills and training and extend trials of innovative transport systems.

Shining the spotlight on the dormant potential and unlocking 20 Tasmanian communities will ensure the barriers that are preventing Tasmanians from taking up local jobs will be tackled head on. It will ensure Tasmania's growth is inclusive, no matter where you live or what parts of the system have been preventing you from participating. The Regional Investment Fund will ensure our current economic growth is sustainable, inclusive and enables all Tasmanians to live a good life.



We want to get Tasmanians into local jobs.

By developing a five phase approach we can quickly plan and take action to remove the barriers.

The Regional Investment Fund will unlock Tasmania's potential.

A collaborative approach between the three tiers of government, the community, the community sector and our greatest asset – our people – will make it happen.

The vision

One Tasmania, free of poverty and inequality where everyone has the same opportunity



The objective

Tackle the systems and barriers that prevent participation



The outcome

Local people into local jobs

Unlocking our Potential: an inclusive growth strategy for Tasmania

PHASES 1, 2 & 3

Analyse, plan and prioritise

Analyse barriers and plan actions to address



Identify priority communities



Map community capacity and plan for action

PHASES 4 & 5

Deliver

Innovative transport responses

Targeted training

Adult literacy and digital inclusion support

Access to essential services

Community leadership



FIVE BUDGET PRIORITIES

1 Innovative, demand-based transport systems

Many Tasmanians, especially those who live in regional and rural areas, can't participate in activities that most people take for granted simply because they do not have transport. Not being able to get where you need to go can impact on someone's ability to get a job, access education or training, healthcare and other services or make social connections, as well as just to buy the essentials for living such as groceries.

The jobs that are on the increase are in hospitality, tourism and agriculture, in places that are not necessarily serviced by public transport. For example, 37 per cent of Tasmania's young people do not have a driver's licence, making it nearly impossible for them to get to a job.

Community-led solutions are already under way in the Derwent Valley with support from the State Government. More communities could be given the opportunity to come up with innovative solutions that help them get transport when they need it, especially for training and work.

2 Targeted training in skills and work readiness

Employers and job seekers agree that more support is needed to lift the skills and qualities for work readiness. To access the jobs through the Infrastructure Project Pipeline and other growth industries an investment in specific skills will be needed. It may also be the case, especially for young people and those experiencing complex disadvantage, that there will need to be a focus on more basic skills.

Community-led solutions may include targeted training in skills for specific Infrastructure Pipeline and other growth industries projects, and supports for people experiencing complex disadvantage.

3 Adult literacy and digital inclusion support

Around 48 per cent of Tasmanian adults do not have the literacy and numeracy skills they need for life in a technology-rich world. Based on the OECD Program for International Assessment of Adult Competencies (2011-12 data) 182,200 Tasmanian adults are below level three for literacy and around 218,000 are estimated to be below level three for numeracy. This means they struggle with activities like meeting government requirements online and reading the information they need to look after their health. It is a significant barrier to gaining and holding employment.

Despite the work of our nation-leading adult literacy program, 26TEN, the rates are still high. Community-level investments are needed to lift literacy so that local people have the confidence and skills to apply for work.

The latest Australian Digital Inclusion Index report shows that Tasmania remains Australia's least digitally included State because of barriers to affordability and capacity. We need to address these barriers to ensure Tasmanians are not left behind.

4 Access to essential services

Many Tasmanians face challenges such as poor physical, mental and oral health that prevent them getting work. They also experience prejudice and stigma associated with being unemployed.

In the recent *St Lukes Health Report: 25-34 year olds* poor dental health is identified as the most common reason for preventable hospitalisation of 25 to 34 year olds. The cost of dental care was confirmed as a reason for delaying a visit to the dentist by more than a quarter of all Tasmanian adults (Tasmanian Population Health Survey 2016). Nearly 53,000 Tasmanian adults experience high to very high levels of psychological distress and 104,500 have mental and behavioural conditions (ABS National Health Survey for 2014-15).

To be able to participate in employment people need support through essential services in their communities. These include access to affordable housing, childcare, GPs, oral health and mental health services. Every community is different and mapping existing services and gaps will help tailor the solutions to specific needs.



5 Community leadership

Leading change in your community could be a daunting prospect when you're used to other people doing it. Some people who live on the margins are used to not having a voice, and may not have the confidence to participate. But their participation is vital if we are to make change that lasts in communities.

Long term change will be achieved when we build on the leadership capabilities within our communities.

Community members, including those who are unemployed and experience disadvantage, need to be at the centre of decision-making. Through innovative community engagement we will ensure their voices are heard and that solutions are implemented that work best for them.



FIVE PHASES

In five phases over the next five to ten years we will work with target communities to help them get ready for the jobs that are coming online. We will work with local people – residents, councilors, service providers, businesses and others – to understand in detail their strengths, challenges and opportunities. Then we will target the investment based on their unique needs and the Regional Investment Fund will unlock their potential.

1 Putting the team together Timeframe: Q3 - Q4 2019

In the first phase we would identify the statewide systems-wide barriers to employment and who is responsible for leading change in these areas. Employment services barriers are a Federal Government responsibility while transport may require a State Government solution.

Unlocking the Potential is a community-driven model but it also requires a high level, long term strategic approach. A governance model would be established in this phase to oversee the roll out of the inclusive growth strategy. The responsibilities of members of the governance body would include: Ensuring community members are at the centre of decision-making, ensuring partners work collaboratively, clearing the path of process barriers that inhibit innovation and progress, and overseeing the allocation of funds.

2 Identifying target communities Timeframe: Q3 - Q4 2019

We would identify the first four target communities based on existing capacity and employment forecasts. They would be chosen according to the likelihood of major projects being implemented, as identified in the Infrastructure Pipeline and other growth industries. For example, to make sure people from George Town can get the jobs created by the new Low Head Wind Farm we would need to invest now in supports and services such as transport and skills.

3 Mapping community capital Timeframe: Q3 - Q4 2019

To gain an understanding of the strategic strengths and challenges in target communities we would first map the community capital. This would include using the ‘five capitals’ framework as outlined in the Productivity Commission Study Report on Transitioning Regional Economies. The five capitals – human, financial, physical, natural and social capital – would be used as a strategic framework to assess the adaptive capacity of each region to determine where the investment needs to be made. This map could be overlaid with urban and regional planning considerations. It could also include existing State, Federal and Local Government social and economic strategies to ensure consistent approaches, clarify responsibilities and avoid duplication.

4 Building partnerships and local leadership

Timeframe: Q1 2020 – Q4 2021

Unlocking our Potential only works on the strengths of the relationships. It relies on a strong emphasis on the building of partnerships – between the three levels of government, community sector, community members and businesses. Through an innovative community engagement process using co-design principals, people will be brought together to build trust and skills in leading the solutions. Out of this process a community leadership group will be formed to implement the solutions with the help of government and community sector partners.

5 Delivering innovative solutions

Timeframe: Q1 2020 – Q2 2024

Through the community engagement process, using the capitals mapping, data and local knowledge, solutions will be identified to help local people into local jobs. Each community will have access to funding through a Community Investment Fund. They will be encouraged to come up with innovative solutions based on the idea that the problem can't be solved with the same thinking that created it. Processes will be streamlined so communities can prototype, learn, evaluate and scale up. The role of State Government would be as funder and to clear process barriers so that ideas can be implemented and tested quickly.

This new approach to solving unemployment makes sure lessons are learned and taken on board throughout the process. Ideas along the way need to be tried and tested, from the way partners work together to the community solutions themselves. *Unlocking our Potential* includes a continuous evaluation process that feeds back what works and what doesn't so we can learn for the next community. This may involve a partnership with the University of Tasmania.

FUNDING

According to the Tasmanian Infrastructure Project Pipeline, the State Government's forecast investment in capital infrastructure over the next 10 years is \$8.1 billion. Over the next four years the projected government spend is \$1 billion.

We propose an investment in social infrastructure – our people.

> By making this investment we will tackle the entrenched barriers that have held Tasmanians back.

Tasmanians want to work and this will build a path to better physical and mental health. The investment will reduce long term impacts on our health system and build stronger, resilient communities that are less reliant on government support into the future. An investment of this size is the game-changer Tasmania needs.

THE TIME IS NOW

Tasmanians know what's not working, and they know what they and their communities need. It is time for a team approach. Together we can make this happen.

With establishment of the Regional Investment Fund we can deliver place-based, community-driven solutions to address the barriers to participating in our economy and our society. We have a once-in-a-lifetime chance as our economy grows, to make sure all Tasmanians can participate and prosper, and have a good life.

OUR VISION: One Tasmania,
free of poverty and
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INTEGRITY
COMPASSION
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