



Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc.

Tasmanian Sport and Active Recreation Strategy

December 2021



**INTEGRITY
COMPASSION
INFLUENCE**

About TasCOSS

TasCOSS's vision is for one Tasmania, free of poverty and inequality where everyone has the same opportunity. Our mission is two-fold: to act as the peak body for the community services industry in Tasmania; and to challenge and change the systems, attitudes and behaviours that create poverty, inequality and exclusion.

Our membership includes individuals and organisations active in the provision of community services to Tasmanians on low incomes or living in vulnerable circumstances. TasCOSS represents the interests of our members and their service users to government, regulators, the media and the public. Through our advocacy and policy development, we draw attention to the causes of poverty and disadvantage and promote the adoption of effective solutions to address these issues.

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Introduction

TasCOSS welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Tasmanian Sport and Active Recreation Strategy. Involvement in sport and active recreation can play an important part in maintaining a healthy lifestyle, which can help us all to live a good life. Opportunities to engage in these activities can also create opportunities to be involved in community life, whether through participating in a local team, volunteering with a recreation association or club, or simply enjoying the natural spaces in our suburbs, cities and parks. However, we know some Tasmanians are not able to fully participate in active recreation, for reasons including accessibility issues with sporting infrastructure, limited transport options, or financial difficulties.

This submission discusses the importance of physical activity for mental and physical health, particularly preventative health, and the need for more inclusive and accessible recreation facilities and spaces for Tasmanians. It makes broad recommendations that focus on the following key areas:

- The importance of sport and active recreation as a preventative health measure, as well as an opportunity to strengthen community engagement and social cohesion.
- The need to support diverse groups of Tasmanians to engage in sport and recreation.
- How to improve access to sport and recreation activities and facilities for all Tasmanians, through concepts such as co-design, by offering increased opportunities for community consultation and collaboration to develop initiatives that better meet the communities needs and promote inclusivity.

Sport and active recreation as an important preventative health measure

The Tasmanian Government has acknowledged the important role sport and recreation can play in maintaining good physical and mental health and wellbeing.¹ This is consistent with what we heard from Tasmanians during our consultations for the Good Life Project,² in which our participants highlighted the important role of having a healthy body and mind.

Unfortunately, our health statistics show Tasmanians have notably worse health than the Australian average,³ with 22 per cent of the population having two or more chronic conditions (compared with the national average of 18.7 per cent,⁴ and high rates of adverse lifestyle risk factors for chronic disease.⁵ In particular, Tasmanians on low incomes have much worse health than their more advantaged peers,⁶ particularly in relation to conditions that are considered to be preventable through lifestyle factors and

¹ Department of Communities, *Tasmanian Sport and Active Recreation Strategy: Discussion Paper* (2021), 6.

² The Good Life is a project undertaken by TasCOSS, following a number of community consultations throughout Tasmania around the question, "What do you need for a good life?". The project identified key priorities for Tasmanians, which has allowed TasCOSS to identify goals, targets and indicators around which to engage in policy development and advocacy.

³ See Australian Bureau of Statistics, *National Health Survey 2017-18*, First Results, Table 2.3, age-standardised.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ For a range of risk factors, see www.primaryhealthtas.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Needs-Assessment-Report-1-July-2019-30-June-2022-1.pdf

⁶ See TasCOSS, Preventing Hospitalisations in Tasmania: 2020/2021 TasCOSS Budget Priorities Statement and Australian Bureau of Statistics, *National Health Survey 2017-18*, First Results, Table 33.4.

early detection and intervention, such as heart disease, stroke or diabetes.⁷ Tasmanians on low incomes have lower rates of exercise – in Tasmania’s least advantaged community, the rates of exercise are only 69 per cent of that of Tasmania’s most advantaged community in 2017-18.⁸

Tasmanians who are experiencing other forms of disadvantage are also more likely to experience poor health. For example, Aboriginal people in Tasmania report poorer health⁹ and are more likely to be hospitalised due to potentially preventable conditions.¹⁰ Communities who face stigma and discrimination, such as LGBTQIA+ Tasmanians, are more likely to experience poor health and high/very high psychological distress.¹¹

Given the above, it is important the Tasmanian Government explores ways of supporting those who are not currently accessing or able to access programs and/or facilities involved with physical recreation and activities, as a way of improving health outcomes for all Tasmanians. We discuss this further below.

Sport and active recreation as a community engagement initiative

As well as the significant physical benefits and positive impacts on psychological health and wellbeing, studies have noted that ‘[p]articipation in sport also has important social impacts, as it assists in building social cohesion and in reducing isolation, anti-social behaviour and crime’.¹² Involvement in clubs, groups or organisations centred around sport and recreation is an important part of the social life of many Tasmanians and participation can create opportunities for social and community engagement. Importantly, for marginalised communities the impact of sport can be particularly significant. For example, in the context of refugees, studies note that, ‘participation in sport can promote ethnic and cultural harmony and strengthen communities’ and that sport ‘can assist in building links and trust both within refugee communities and between refugees and the broader community, thereby acting as an entry point for the wider participation of refugees in community life’.¹³

In our consultations as part of the Good Life project Tasmanians told us they want opportunities to build strong and healthy relationships with others and to have supported communities with inclusive local connections. We believe sports and active recreation initiatives which utilise community development principles can therefore play a powerful role in creating opportunities for social connection.

⁷ See PHIDU [Social Health Atlases](#)

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ See www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/indigenous-health-and-wellbeing.

¹⁰ Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2021, Primary and Community Health, Table 10A.59. Aboriginal Tasmanians are also 1.1 times as likely to be hospitalised for a potentially preventable acute condition as non-Aboriginal Tasmanians (rate per 1000, 2017-18: 13.4, non-Aboriginal Tasmanians 11.8)

¹¹ Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2021, Part E (Health), Section 13 (Services for Mental Health), Table 13A.64.

¹² Refugee Council of Australia, *A Bridge to a New Culture: Promoting the participation of refugees in sporting activities* (June 2010), 10.

¹³ Ibid.

How can we better support all Tasmanians to engage in sport and recreation?

While there are many Tasmanians who are able to engage in regular sporting and recreational activities, many others need support to increase their participation in these types of activities. TasCOSS recommends the Government consider the particular needs of certain communities to understand and address their barriers to participating in sport and/or active recreation.

Supporting older Tasmanians to engage in sport and recreation

Tasmania has the highest median age (42 years) of all Australian states and territories, as well as the highest proportion of the population aged over 65 years at (19.4 per cent - almost 100,000 people). This population has also experienced the fastest rate of growth, increasing by 7.0 per cent and almost 30,000 people from 1996 to 2016. As the Council on the Ageing Tasmania (COTA) noted, 'Tasmania's population will continue to age and about 25 per cent of the population is predicted to be aged over 65 years by 2037...[and] almost a third of Tasmania's population is predicted to be over 65 years of age by 2060'.¹⁴ This means Government strategies must consider the needs of older Tasmanians as a key priority when developing health strategies and measures.

The Tasmanian Government has recognised the importance of ensuring older Tasmanians have opportunities to engage in physical recreation activities, making this a focus area in their Active Ageing Plan.¹⁵ TasCOSS supports the recommendations of COTA in their State Budget Community Consultation Submission in relation to supporting older Tasmanians¹⁶, which include the following:

Recommendations:

- **Funding for existing programs designed to support the physical health of older people, such as the 'Living Longer, Living Stronger' program, should be extended.**
- **Investment in preventative infrastructure and services to support Tasmanians at various stages of life should be increased.**
- **The Government should adopt a 'health in all policies' approach to programs, initiatives and plans.**

Supporting younger Tasmanians to engage in sport and recreation

A healthy childhood can play an important role in ensuring children and young people develop habits and skills to maintain good health throughout their life. However, many Tasmanian children experience poor physical and/or psychological health: for example, 10 per cent of Tasmanian children are developmentally vulnerable in physical health and wellbeing, and this percentage increases in disadvantaged communities (16.4 per cent in Tasmania's most disadvantaged community).¹⁷

¹⁴ Council on the Ageing (COTA) Tasmania, *Embracing the Future: Tasmania's Ageing Profile Part 1* (2018), 10.

¹⁵ See Department of Premier and Cabinet, *Strong, Liveable Communities: Tasmania's Active Ageing Plan 2017–2022* - the Government has committed to the following: supporting older people to connect with local initiatives and community groups; promoting and supporting the provision of high quality physical environments in which people can enjoy a wide range of physical activities; establishing partnerships with arts, parks and sporting organisations to promote low cost, local activities with a specific focus on activities for older Tasmanians; and promoting programs that build muscle strength to reduce the likelihood of serious injury from falls.

¹⁶ Council on the Ageing (COTA) Tasmania, *2021-2022 State Budget Community Consultation Submission*, 16-18.

¹⁷ PHIDU [Social Health Atlases](#)

Through consultations with the Government during the development of the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, Tasmanian children shared the importance of being able to participate in active recreation activities in their community. For example, the Government heard that '[c]hildren and young people want a range of recreational and social activities in areas where they live'¹⁸ and have committed to helping children and young people to participate in organised activities.¹⁹

There are a number of Tasmanian initiatives aimed at increasing the participation of children and young people in sports and recreation, including the Ticket to Play program,²⁰ which provides families on low incomes with vouchers for their children to engage in various sporting activities and clubs, as well as the Risdon Vale Bike Collective,²¹ which works with young people to teach them bike maintenance skills and promote riding.

TasCOSS supports the development of further initiatives in consultation with children and their families, as well as the maintenance of local areas (such as skate parks and recreation facilities) which could increase the participation of children and young people in local recreation activities. We also acknowledge that we cannot support children's physical health and wellbeing without addressing the underlying factors contributing to the exclusion of many young people from their communities, such as poverty, homelessness and a lack of social and family connection or support.

Recommendation: Through the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, the Government should continue to engage with children and young people about their sport and recreation access needs and preferences.

Supporting Tasmanians who live in rural areas

Statistics show Tasmanians who live in rural areas have worse health than Tasmanians living in urban areas.²² In 2018-19, the rate of potentially preventable hospitalisations for chronic conditions among people living in outer regional Tasmania was 13.3 per 1000, compared to 12.9 for inner regional Tasmania,²³ while the proportion of residents in rural local government areas who reported fair/poor health was significantly higher than the state average,²⁴ meaning Tasmanians living in rural regions have a higher relative risk of mortality than Tasmanians living in the greater Hobart and Launceston areas.²⁵ Poor outcomes in preventable health conditions among Tasmanians living rurally can be correlated with a range of risk factors, including insufficient activity and muscle strengthening.²⁶

¹⁸ Tasmanian Government, *'It Takes a Tasmanian Village: Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy'* (August 2021), 11.

¹⁹ Ibid, 29.

²⁰ See [Communities Tasmania - Ticket to Play](#).

²¹ See [Risdon Vale Bike Shed — RISDON VALE BIKE COLLECTIVE \(rvbikecollective.com\)](#).

²² See [www.primaryhealthtas.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Needs-Assessment-Report-1-July-2019-30-June-2022-1.pdf](#)

²³ Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services 2021, Part E (Health), Section 10 (Primary and Community Health), Table 10A.66.

²⁴ Department of Health and Human Services, Report on the Tasmanian Population Health Survey 2019, 6.

²⁵ See Primary Health Network Tasmania, Needs Assessment Report (2019 - 2022) and Department of Health and Human Services, Report on the Tasmanian Population Health Survey 2019.

²⁶ Department of Health and Human Services, Report on the Tasmanian Population Health Survey 2019, 47.

The Government should therefore specifically consider initiatives that increase access to sport and recreation activities for Tasmanians in rural areas.

Recommendation: The Government should work with local councils and communities to identify and provide opportunities for Tasmanians in rural areas to increase participation in sport and active recreation, as well as increased funding for local organisations and associations.

Supporting women and girls

Fewer Tasmanian women and girls are as involved in sport as men.²⁷ Women and girls may have limited opportunity to be involved in sports for various reasons, including lifestyle changes, parenting and caring responsibilities and financial pressures.

Other jurisdictions in Australia have developed targeted programs and initiatives to create more opportunities for women and girls to be physically active. One example is the ‘Changing Our Game’ initiative from VicHealth in Victoria,²⁸ which aims to not only increase female participation, but also has a focus on gender equality in sport to ensure women and girls are supported to participate and achieve their sporting goals in a wide range of sporting activities.

Another example is the Bicycle Network’s ‘Women’s Community: Towards 50/50’ program, which ‘aims to encourage, empower and inspire more women to ride bikes — through tailored initiatives across our events, programs and partnerships that support healthy and happy women’.²⁹ TasCOSS recommends the development and implementation of similar initiatives in Tasmania, to develop programs in collaboration with Tasmanian women and girls to make sure programs are tailored to their particular needs, as well as improving access to and inclusion in mainstream sporting activities.

Recommendation: The Tasmanian Government should co-design sport and recreation initiatives with women and girls to increase their participation in sport.

Supporting Tasmanians with disabilities

Initiatives and programs to support Tasmanians with disabilities to engage in active recreation should be a key focus of any Government planning in this area, given the high proportion of Tasmanians who have a disability. Our state has the highest rate of disability in Australia: data from 2018 indicates that 24,500 Tasmanians (or 5.8 per cent of the state’s population) had a profound or severe core activity limitation, with a further 31,100 people (or 13.2 per cent of the population) experiencing moderate or mild limitations.³⁰ Many Tasmanians with a disability face barriers to participating in sport and active recreation programs, due to limitations of mainstream programs including accessibility, affordability and stigma.

²⁷ Department of Communities, *Tasmanian Sport and Active Recreation Strategy: Discussion Paper* (2021) 8.

²⁸ Information about this initiative can be found at <https://changeourgame.vic.gov.au/>.

²⁹ For more information go to www.bicyclenetwork.com.au/rides-and-events/womens-community/.

³⁰ Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services* (2020), Part F, Section 15, Table 15A.9.

There are a number of existing programs designed to support Tasmanians with a disability to engage in sport: for example, sailing programs through the Making Waves foundation,³¹ and sporting programs offered through ParaQUAD Tasmania.³² The availability of targeted and specialist programs is important however the Tasmanian Government has also acknowledged the importance of making community-wide changes to recreation services and facilities to develop greater inclusivity and accessibility. The Sport and Active Recreation Framework for People with Disability acknowledges this and has identified the following priority areas and strategies:

- Capacity building, to support inclusivity within the sport and recreation sector and to increase participation of people with disability through strategies including education, increasing employment of people with disability, and providing greater opportunities for engagement in programs and competitions;
- Collaboration, to increase opportunities for sector organisations to work together, with community and with Government, and to create networks to improve communication and service delivery;
- Awareness and promotion of inclusive sport and active recreation opportunities; and
- Accessibility of programs, services, facilities and environments.³³

TasCOSS supports the implementation of the above principles and encourages the Government to draw on the expertise and experience of the Tasmanian community and disability sector organisations to identify how services and programs can be more inclusive and better tailored to the needs of Tasmanians with a disability.

Recommendations:

- **The Government should implement the strategies identified in the Sport and Active Recreation Framework for People with Disability.**
- **The Government should work with people with disability, their families and their service providers to ensure services and programs can be more inclusive and better tailored to their needs.**

Supporting diverse communities

Our sporting clubs and associations should be reflective of the diversity of our community but due to accessibility, cost and other factors, some Tasmanians are excluded from mainstream sports and active recreation activities. We encourage the Tasmanian Government to implement initiatives which allow a wide range of Tasmanians, from different economic and cultural backgrounds, to participate in active recreation.

Opportunities to allow greater participation from families and individuals on low incomes should be prioritised, through increasing access to low-cost activities, affordable concession pricing, 'come and try'

³¹ See, for example, information about the 'Winds of Joy' program, which is run in various locations, including Hobart, at <https://makingwavesfoundation.com.au/winds-of-joy>.

³² See programs at [Home - PDST \(pdstasmania.org\)](http://Home-PDST(pdstasmania.org)).

³³ See [Department of Premier and Cabinet \(dpac.tas.gov.au\)](http://Department of Premier and Cabinet (dpac.tas.gov.au)).

activities or increased opportunities for individuals, families and groups to borrow sports equipment as needed.

Recent reports have recognised a general trend away from formal sports (by participation in a league or as a member of a sporting club, for example) and towards informal sporting activities. Although these trends are observed community wide, the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) have noted that, [i]nformal opportunities often appeal to groups that traditionally engage less in club-based sport, including people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and/or low socioeconomic backgrounds' and that 'CALD groups are particularly active in creating community-oriented informal participation opportunities'.³⁴ To cater for the development and support of these informal activities, CMY makes several recommendations, including more inclusive policies around facility usage, greater opportunities for funding for smaller groups (rather than affiliations or associations), and diversified membership and participation options.³⁵

Facilities and program offerings should be tailored to the needs of the community, and ideally developed in consultation and collaboration with community members. Initiatives such as the 'single gender programming' currently on offer at Fawkner Aquatic Centre in Victoria is an example of how existing facilities can operate low-cost initiatives that increase access for diverse communities.³⁶ Clubs, associations and sporting facilities should also be encouraged to engage with the community and provide information about sports and services to those people who may not be familiar with their operation (for example, newly arrived migrants), and also support to ensure they feel comfortable and welcomed.³⁷ As well as funding initiatives which support particular groups who may be marginalised from participating in mainstream active recreation, the Government should also develop initiatives and frameworks to assist clubs and associations to promote greater inclusivity and diversity in their programs.³⁸

The Tasmanian Government should also look to the work of other jurisdictions to develop frameworks and strategies to better support communities who may be marginalised from mainstream sports. For example, VicHealth recently commissioned an analysis of programs in Victoria to promote the engagement of LGBTQIA+ inclusion in sport,³⁹ which included the following recommendations:⁴⁰

- Programs to promote LGBTQIA+ inclusion and end discrimination need meaningful and long-term funding;

³⁴ Jeanes, R., Penney, D., O'Connor, J., Spaaij, R., Magee, J., O'Hara, E., and Lymbery, L. (2021) *Informal Sport as a Health and Social Resource for Diverse Young People*, Monash University/CMY report, 8.

³⁵ Ibid, 10.

³⁶ For information about this program, go to <https://www.activemoreland.com.au/programs-and-services/single-gender-programs/>.

³⁷ For an example of a recent program, see VicHealth, Count Me In: Research Summary at

https://www.clubhelp.org.au/sites/default/files/resources/VH_Count-me-in_research-summary_final.pdf

³⁸ Ideas about initiatives to promote inclusion can be found on the website [Healthy Clubs | Club Help](#), which also includes details about particular inclusion frameworks, such as 'Barwon Game Changer: Steps to Gender Equality' (more information found here: [BGC_A5_steps_to_gender_equality_EMAIL\(clubhelp.org.au\)](#))

³⁹ Jeanes, R., Denison, E., Bevan, N., Lambert, K & O'Connor, J, *LGBTI+ inclusion within Victorian sport: A market analysis*, Monash University (2020).

⁴⁰ Ibid, 23-24.

- Government should work with and support sporting bodies to develop and implement education programs to address homophobic and transphobic discrimination, language, attitudes and approaches; and
- There is a need for sport participation data for the LGBTQIA+ population, as well as effective research to evaluate different approaches to promoting inclusion and ending discrimination.

Recommendations:

- **Governments should work to address some of the financial barriers to participation in sports and recreation, by increasing access to low-cost activities, offering affordable concession pricing, creating more opportunities to engage in ‘come and try’ activities or for individuals, families and groups to borrow sports equipment as needed.**
- **More inclusive policies should be developed around facility usage, greater opportunities for funding for smaller groups (rather than affiliations or associations), and diversified membership and participation options.**
- **The Government should fund initiatives which support particular groups who may be marginalised from participating in mainstream active recreation, including people with disability, people from CALD backgrounds and Tasmanians on low incomes.**
- **The Government should develop initiatives and frameworks to assist clubs and associations to promote greater inclusivity and diversity in their programs, such as for LGBTIQ+ Tasmanians.**

How can we ensure sport and recreation facilities/activities are accessible for all Tasmanians?

While targeted initiatives to increase access and participation for particular communities are important, we also recommend the Government embrace whole-of-community approaches towards infrastructure and facilities for sport and recreation.

TasCOSS has previously advocated for universal design approaches to Government services,⁴¹ noting that systems which meet the access needs of Tasmania’s most vulnerable residents will meet the needs of most Tasmanians including when they experience a limited period of vulnerability. Designing sports and recreation infrastructure according to these principles could result in improved access for many Tasmanians; for example, installing access ramps may improve access to facilities for people with physical disability, but the ramp may also benefit otherwise able-bodied people (for example, a parent pushing a pram, or someone carrying a heavy load).⁴²

Similarly, the Government should consider initiatives which not only increase access to particular recreation activities, but allow all Tasmanians to make active, healthy lifestyle choices. One example would be increasing the walkability of towns and neighbourhoods by ensuring there are footpaths, adequate lighting to make sure people feel safe to travel by foot and access to public toilets and water

⁴¹ See TasCOSS, Submission to Department of Health, ‘Our Healthcare Future’ (February 2021) 18 and 38.

⁴² For an example of universal design in sport, see [A3_Infographic_1-FINAL \(goodcdn.app\)](#).

fountains. TasCOSS recommends community planning initiatives which incorporate some or all the principles outlined in *Healthy Spaces and Places*, which include the following:⁴³

- Planning for active transport (such as walking, cycling or using public transport which is accessed through walking or cycling).
- Environments for all people, with suitable facilities for people of different ages, physical abilities, cultures or incomes.
- Mixed density residential development to promote diversity, as well as mixed land use
- parks and open space.
- Supporting infrastructure to encourage regular and safe physical activity (such as footpaths, adequate lighting, access to water and signs).

Access to transport is a significant issue for many Tasmanians, particularly those on low incomes who live in peri-urban, rural and remote areas.⁴⁴ In 2014, residents of Tasmania's least advantaged suburb were 2.3 times as likely as the average Tasmanian to report difficulties getting where they need to go, and 3.3 times as likely as residents of Tasmania's most advantaged area.⁴⁵ Increasing the offerings of public transport services, as well as reconsidering appropriate pricing structures, is likely to have a significant impact on accessibility of Tasmania's beautiful natural spaces, promoting active recreation outdoors. Many groups in our communities have highlighted the need for comprehensive transport reform; for example, in a recent report,⁴⁶ the Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT) identified many children and young people have issues with the availability, pricing, accessibility and safety of public transport. They made the following recommendations to address these issues:⁴⁷

- Co-design transport policy and initiatives with young people
- Increase the safety of young people using public transport
- Increase public transport accessibility for all young people
- Make public transport more affordable to all young people; and
- Promote alternative, environmentally sustainable transport options.

TasCOSS believes these principles and recommendations could be adopted by the Government not only in relation to young people, but to also improve the experience of all Tasmanians in using and accessing public and alternative forms of transport (such as cycling).

Sporting and recreation activities should be grounded in place-based principles which reflect the needs and preferences of the local community. Activities should be developed in consultation with community groups and leaders, to better understand community preferences and to determine what is likely to work, as well as how to overcome any particular barriers to access. Programs which are targeted at particular groups of people (for example, youth), should also be developed in accordance with co-design principles,

⁴³ Planning Institute of Australia, *Healthy Spaces and Places: a national guide to designing places for better living* (August 2009).

⁴⁴ See, for instance, Clarence City Council Community Health and Wellbeing Advisory Committee, *GP Access Project* (August 2017), 12-14.

⁴⁵ PHIDU, *Social Health Atlases*

⁴⁶ Youth Network of Tasmania, *Transport: A Report on Young People's Ideas and Solutions for Transport in Tasmania* (September 2021).

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 4.

to allow for greater levels of consultation and collaboration with the community and to ensure programs and initiatives meet their needs.⁴⁸

The challenges of COVID-19 led to greater offerings of online services for sport and recreation activities, as many organisations and services tailored their classes to reduce the need for people to attend in person. Online offerings have been beneficial for many Tasmanians who would have otherwise struggled to attend a class, for reasons including limited physical mobility, lack of classes/recreation options in their local area, or time. However, many Tasmanians continue to face digital exclusion, particularly Tasmanians on low incomes, who 'lag behind the state average in both access to digital services and the ability to use them effectively.'⁴⁹ According to the 2021 *Australian Digital Inclusion Index*, Tasmania is the most digitally disadvantaged state in the country,⁵⁰ and particular communities within Tasmania (including older Tasmanians and Tasmanians who live in rural areas, especially the North West) are at particular risk of exclusion. Initiatives relying on high levels of digital literacy and/or access to telecommunications devices may therefore not be appropriate or meet the needs of many Tasmanians. The problem can be partially solved by providing more Tasmanians access to no or low-cost devices and data such as through an Accessing Digital Activity grants program where sporting and recreational associations apply for funds so they can lend devices to their clients.

Recommendations:

- **Facilities and spatial planning should encompass the principles of universal design, increased walkability and active transport and co-design with users.**
- **The Government should review public transport options, particularly in relation to access to sporting facilities and natural areas where active recreation can be enjoyed.**
- **The Government should establish a grants program to allow sport and recreation associations to lend digital devices to clients, as well as working to address digital exclusion.**

Conclusion

In the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy the Tasmanian Government acknowledges the important role sport and active recreation activities play in preventing illness and promoting good physical and mental health, as well as helping us to create and maintain strong and healthy connections with each other and our community. However we believe the Strategy needs to embed principles of access and inclusion to ensure all Tasmanians have meaningful opportunities to participate. We therefore encourage the Government to explore ways of expanding services and initiatives designed for the needs of particular groups, including older Tasmanians, children and youth, women and girls, people with disability and marginalised communities, such as refugees and LGBTQIA+ Tasmanians.

We also stress the importance of community development principles in planning and implementing projects and services and encourage investment in programs and initiatives that are co-designed with the

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ TasCOSS, Submission to Department of Health, *'Our Healthcare Future'* (February 2021) 11.

⁵⁰ Thomas, J., Barraket, J., Parkinson, S., Wilson, C., Holcombe-James, I., Kennedy, J., Mannell, K., Brydon, A. (2021). *Australian Digital Inclusion Index: 2021* Melbourne: RMIT, Swinburne University of Technology, and Telstra.

community, place-based and adopt the principles of universal design. These principles will help to identify underlying barriers (such as access to transport or digital exclusion) that act as barriers to participation from some groups in sport. We believe the recommendations in this submission would, if implemented, ensure more Tasmanians have the opportunity of staying active, healthy and well – key dimensions of living a good life.

Recommendations

- Greater investment in preventative infrastructure and services to support Tasmanians at various stages of life.
- Promotion of inclusivity and diversity in sport and recreation programs, memberships, associations and facilities.
- A 'health in all policies' approach to programs, initiatives and plans.
- Increased Government engagement with particular groups (for example, children or people with disability and their carers) to identify and address their sport and recreation access needs and preferences.
- Focus on increasing opportunities for participation in sport in rural areas, as well as increased funding for local organisations and associations.
- Implementation of existing strategies identified to support particular groups, such as the Sport and Active Recreation Framework for People with Disability.
- Address some of the financial barriers to participation by increasing access to low-cost activities, offering affordable concession pricing, 'come and try' activities or access to equipment for rent.
- Increased funding of initiatives supporting particular groups who may be marginalised from participating in mainstream active recreation, including people with disability, people from CALD backgrounds and Tasmanians on low incomes, as well as ongoing funding for existing programs (such as the 'Living Longer, Living Stronger' program).
- Implementation of the principles of universal design, increased walkability and active transport, and co-design with users
- More public transport options, particularly in relation to access to sporting facilities and natural areas where active recreation can be enjoyed.
- Development of a grants program to allow sport and recreation associations to lend digital devices to clients.