



TasCOSS 2025/26 State Budget Briefing

30 May 2025



INTEGRITY
COMPASSION
INFLUENCE



Adrienne Picone

Chief Executive Officer

Tasmanian Council of Social Service (TasCOSS)



Political Representatives:

Hon Roger Jaensch MP, Minister for Community Services

Hon Dean Winter MP, Leader of the Opposition (Tasmanian Labor)

Dr Rosalie Woodruff MP, Leader of the Tasmanian Greens

Meg Brown MP, Shadow Minister for Community Services (Tasmanian Labor) *(online)*

Cecily Rosol MP, Tasmanian Greens Member for Bass

Helen Burnet MP, Tasmanian Greens Member for Clark

Tabatha Badger MP, Tasmanian Greens Member for Lyons

Kristie Johnston MP, Independent Member for Clark

David O'Byrne MP, Independent Member for Franklin

Hon Michael Gaffney MLC, Independent Member for Mersey

Budget Theme



- "Building a better Tasmania, now and for the future, by investing in the things that matter most."
- Tasmanians tell us the things that matter most are investing in people and building resilient communities, through:
 - Preventative health;
 - Affording the basics (i.e. housing, food security, energy, transport);
 - Digital inclusion;
 - Children and young people; and
 - A sustainable community services industry.

State Finances



- **\$7.34bn net debt** (36% higher than 2024/25), increasing to **\$10.8bn** in 2028/29 (26% higher than 2027/28).
- **\$350.6m interest** in 2025/26 (57% higher than 2024/25), increasing to **\$649.3m** in 2028/29 (47% higher than 2027/28).
- **\$2.06bn** in interest payments over four (4) years (51% higher than last year's Forward Estimates).

Gender Budget Snapshot



Positives:

- Youth engagement in work/study improving.
- Women on governance boards: increasing representation.
- Sport & health: strong female participation, high rates of breast cancer screening.
- Social housing: gender-sensitive analysis improving.

Persistent Gaps:

- Gender pay gap plateaued at 5.2% (~\$5,000/year). Labour force participation: stagnant and below national average.
- Industry segregation: worsening. Women in leadership/self-employment: below parity, declining. Political representation: stagnant.
- Violence & safety: high rates of family and sexual violence, harassment and unmet service needs. Mental health: suicide rates for men and women among highest nationally.

Key Budget Announcements (1)



- \$9.9bn invested into education, children and young people over four (4) years, representing 24% of budget expenditure.
- \$4.4m to progress Closing the Gap, including establishing Tasmanian Aboriginal Truth-Telling and Healing Commissioners.
- \$357m over four (4) years for concessions (energy, water, transport, rates).
- \$1m to Hamlet for employment and training of people with disability.
- \$520k for Camp Clayton infrastructure upgrades.
- \$132k to support and expand Beyond the Rainbow services.
- \$700k to provide free Working with Vulnerable People Cards for the next two years and implementation of a Volunteering Strategy.

Key Budget Announcements (2)



- \$1.4m for Community Participation and Appeals Fund.
- \$500k for Troublesmiths to support highly disadvantaged young people with employment.
- \$239k for the development of the next Carer Action Plan.
- \$202k for LGBTQIA+ Strategy Implementation.
- \$200k for Multicultural Action Plan implementation.
- \$1.3m for Neighbourhood Houses Community Connector Program.
- \$853k for Older Tasmanians Action Plan implementation.
- \$9.62m for Sexual Assault Support Services and Laurel House to provide specialist therapeutic services to victim-survivors of sexual violence.

Health



Budget Asks:

- Allocate 5% of health spending to a preventative health budget.
- Increase investment in community mental health.
- Develop a coordinated state mental health workforce strategy.

Key Announcements:

- \$14.5bn invested into the health system over the next four (4) years — 34% of the Budget.
- \$942m to meet increased demand for health and mental health services.
- \$1m for Healthy Tasmania Strategy.

Affording the Basics — Housing

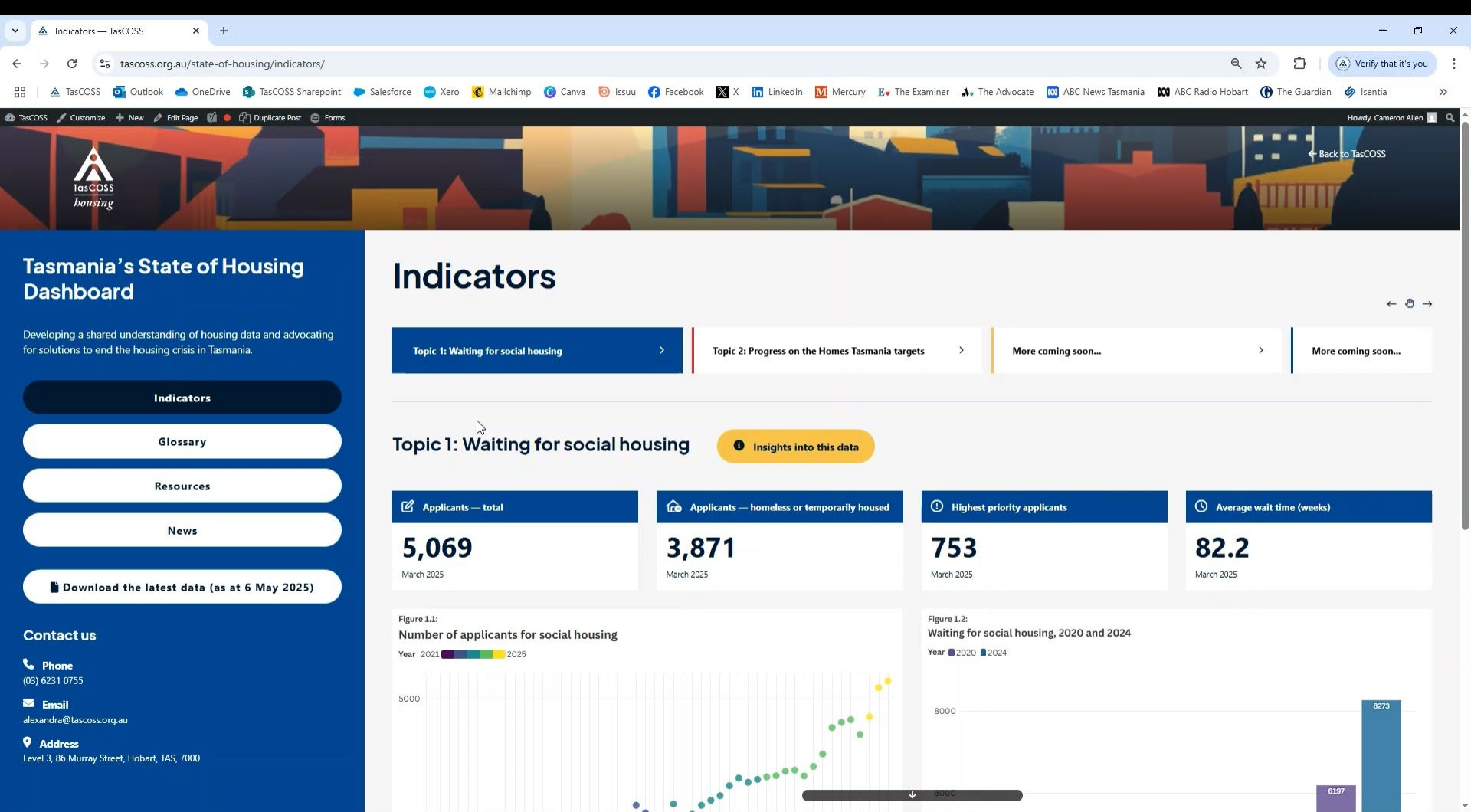


Budget Asks:

- Bring forward review of the *Residential Tenancy Act*.
- Investment pathway to increasing social housing to 10% of stock; increased spending on homelessness services.
- Better regulation of short-stay accommodation, including limiting transfer of whole homes.
- Increase funding for statewide tenancy advocacy services.

Key Announcements:

- \$500m over four (4) years under the '10,000 social and affordable homes' strategy.
- \$2.4m to support women and children at-risk of homelessness (former Bethlehem House).
- \$2.8m for new Bethlehem House.
- \$674k for Hobart Women's Shelter — Safe Place; \$467k for Indigo Lodge tenant relocation; and \$100k to Shekinah House to expand homelessness services.



Affording the Basics — Food Security



Budget Asks:

- \$200k p.a. to support Food Secure Tasmania.
- \$800k p.a. for resilience-focused projects.
- Additional funding to expand School Lunches Program.
- Map the demand for emergency food relief and funding gap to providers.

Key Announcements:

- \$7m over four (4) years to support emergency food relief programs across the state.
- \$400k for place-based food pilot to address food insecurity in local communities.

Affording the Basics — Energy



Budget Asks:

- Better targeted Renewable Energy Dividend (RED).
- \$500 Energy Bill Relief Fund payments as electricity costs increase.
- Double funding to the Energy Hardship Fund.
- Substantial investment in household energy efficiency upgrades.
- Fund an energy consumer advocate.

Key Announcements:

- \$150k per year to Energy Hardship Fund over four (4) years.
- No energy bill relief announced over the Forward Estimates, despite 26% higher electricity prices.
- \$300m capital contribution to Project Marinus, without releasing a business case or a final investment decision.

Affording the Basics — Transport



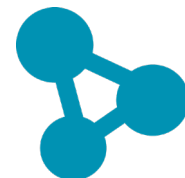
Budget Asks:

- Increase per capita, investment in public transport.
 - Last year, a McKell Institute report found the Government has not adequately funded the public transport system (least per capita investment of any state or territory) and was not adequately serving the areas of greatest need.
- Review of public transport services to identify areas of need and investment.
- Free bus fares for students, seniors, concession and low income Tasmanians.
- Compliance with Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport.

Key Announcements:

- Bus fares to double from 1 July 2025, with half-price fares for students and regional Tasmanians extended for 12 months.

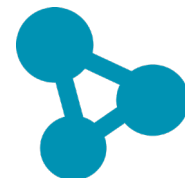
Affording the Basics — Digital Inclusion



The Digital Divide:

- Tasmania is the second-most digitally disadvantaged state or territory in the country.
- One-in-four Tasmanians (more than 144,000 people) face some form of barrier to digital inclusion.
- 54,000 Tasmanians are either unable to get online, or if they can, lack the ability to navigate the online world.
- \$54m economic and social benefit to closing the digital divide in Tasmania.

Affording the Basics — Digital Inclusion



Budget Asks:

- Access — expand free Wi-Fi and internet in regional areas; devices and data for school students.
- Affordability — telecommunications concession; low-cost broadband.
- Ability — double funding for digital skills and literacy; support ICT industry to upskill the community services industry workforce; support ICT industry to deliver scam, cyber security and AI awareness programs for the community.
- Implementation of PESRAC recommendations and establish a digital consumer advisory group.

Key Announcements:

- \$125k for Libraries Tasmania 26TEN Communities Program.



Children and Young People



Budget Asks:

- Cross-sector network for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Increased investment in targeted prevention initiatives to keep children safe in community, expanded opportunities for children and their families to engage in early intervention.
- Adequate resourcing for oversight bodies (including the Office of the Implementation Monitor).
- Support for initiatives which promote and protect the rights and participation of children.

Key Announcements:

- \$155.3m on the new youth detention facility at Pontville.
- \$9.9m over four (4) years Commissioner for Children and Young People.
- \$5.9m over four (4) years for Office of Implementation Monitor.
- \$204m for claims related to child sexual abuse in state care.
- \$500k for Office of National Preventative Mechanism.

Industry Sustainability



Budget Asks:

- Funding certainty — five (5) year contracts, appropriate indexation, outcomes-based framework.
- Sustainability program — standard contracts, reduced reporting, streamlined processes, shared services.
- 10 year update of *The State of Tasmania's Community Service Sector Report*.
- Mid-term review of the *Community Services Industry Plan (2021-31)*.

Key Announcements:

- Commenced stage one of the transition to longer-term, five (5) year funding arrangements for community service organisations and an outcomes framework.
- \$150k for a community services sustainability initiative.



The Hon Roger Jaensch MP

Minister for Community Services
Tasmanian Government



2025/26 State Budget

Q&A Session with
Minister Jaensch

Policy Conversation: Unpacking the Budget with Professor Richard Eccleston



: 10am-11am, Tuesday 3 June 2025, Online (Microsoft Teams)

: tascoss.org.au/events-training/upcoming/pc-2025-26-budget

Join **Professor Richard Eccleston** (Tasmanian Policy Exchange, University of Tasmania) to unpack the 2025/26 State Budget. The session will focus on the implications for the community services industry, and how well the budget addresses some of the most pressing issues facing Tasmanians today.



Community Services Industry Networking Function with Tasmanian Labor Leader, the Hon Dean Winter MP



: 5pm-7pm, Tuesday 17 June 2025, Peppers Silo Hotel, Launceston
(Kings Wharf Lounge West)

: tascoss.org.au/tc-events/labor-networking-2025

Join TasCOSS in Launceston to hear directly from the **Leader of the Opposition, the Hon Dean Winter MP**, about Tasmanian Labor's vision for the state and the community services industry, as well as network with industry leaders, peers and colleagues.



TasCOSS Conference 2025

Shaping our future together

📍 Tailrace Centre, Launceston

📅 12–13 August 2025

