

Submission to the *Healthy, Active Tasmania* *20-Year Preventive Health Strategy* *2026-2046*

From Change for Health

May 2025



**ASTHMA
AUSTRALIA**



**Cancer
Council**
Tasmania



**diabetes
australia**



eat well
tasmania



**HEALTHY[®]
TASMANIA**

salveo
healthcare

Stroke
FOUNDATION



Key Recommendations:

- **Engage with the established Change for Health advocacy group** as a trusted partner in preventive health reform.
- **Embed preventive health into the wider architecture of government in the form of an independent statutory authority for preventive health**, to elevate its strategic importance and operational focus.
- **A significant investment in preventive health**, with a target of at least 5% of the overall health budget.
- **Support meaningful public–private partnerships** that drive innovation and on-the-ground outcomes.
- **Launch a bold, evidence-informed campaign** to involve, activate and engage the Tasmanian community.
- **Collectivise the use of data** to drive coordinated, community-led action and shared accountability.
- **Form a leader's group** that reflects a diverse range of community stakeholders outside the usual medical/clinical/public sector with representation from private and public organisations.
- **Commit to a budget**, plan, and timeline that enables the process to be delivered with the investment it deserves.
- Aim to achieve multi-party, **political consensus** beyond election cycles.

About Change for Health

Change for Health (C4H) is a network of committed and passionate organisations working together to improve health outcomes in Tasmania. We are a collective, coordinated community sector health policy voice which came together in response to a gap in the collective representations of health-related, community-focused, for-purpose organisations to government, other stakeholders and the community. Change for Health includes members from not-for-profit organisations, non-government organisations and values-driven private businesses.

Our mission is to drive change to the way Tasmania approaches health, as the most significant challenge facing the state. We are motivated by the urgent need to turn around our nation leading poor health outcomes and become the healthiest state in the country.

We have a vision for all people living in Tasmania to experience better health and wellbeing as a result of having the opportunity to be informed and have access to healthy lifestyle options.

Our mission is to create impactful changes to the health ecosystem in Tasmania independent of members' funding arrangements with Government, leveraging our combined skills, experience and insights into health in Tasmania.

Our focus is on the drivers of good health. We want to create a health system that focuses on health not sickness - keeping people living well for longer, in their homes, communities, and with their families and friends.

C4H in the *20-Year Preventive Health Strategy* Context

C4H is well-positioned to be a go-to group for government and others who want to understand the Tasmanian health ecosystem. We are a trusted source of community voice that informs smarter, faster decision-making. We offer:

- An established group with existing relationships and positive group dynamics.
- Communications and media expertise to mobilise the narrative across the population.
- Networks, influence, and stakeholder relationships that can be leveraged.
- Perspectives on consumer and community voices that are closer to the people we serve.
- Data, information and intelligence that can be interrogated for new approaches.

Drawing on community voices and stories of success sourced through our broad networks we can shift understanding and attitudes of decision makers by connecting them with real life people, stories and solutions. This will counteract negative social and mainstream media narratives and position community organisations as central to preventive health.

By supporting the Tasmanian Government to implement some elements of the *20-Year Preventive Health Strategy* we can expand the ownership of the preventive health agenda beyond the Department of Health and enable more sustainability of initiatives, outside of the political cycle.

We encourage the Government to engage with C4H as a key partner in developing and delivering the *20-Year Preventive Health Strategy*.

Introduction

The *20-Year Preventive Health Strategy* is a once in a generation opportunity to do things differently, embedding a preventive approach in how we define a healthy Tasmania and provide the necessary systems and funding to facilitate this change.

The Tasmanian Government has an opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to the health and wellbeing of all Tasmanians by:

- Setting a bold vision that inspires and mobilises Tasmanians to take up the challenge.
- Substantially increasing state government investment in preventive health initiatives.
- Harnessing the potential of collaborative public, private and community partnerships to drive systemic change, including building a shared understanding and roadmap to achieve the vision.
- Exploring innovative models for managing health and wellbeing in Tasmania.
- Making informed decisions drawn from existing models that are already working.

We can't ignore the clear and increasing evidence that without systems change, Tasmanians will continue to become sicker, not healthier.

We need a health system that prioritises wellness over illness. One that not only encourages us but enables us to take a proactive approach to our own health and wellbeing.

A system that measures success not by the number of people we treat in our hospitals, but by the number of people we support to stay out of them.

A system that gives all Tasmanians the greatest opportunity to live our best lives, and be healthy, active, and engaged members of our many incredible communities right across the state.

This is not the system we have...yet.

We cannot keep doing what we've always done and expect different results. The development of this *20-Year Preventive Health Strategy* is a critical opportunity to shift from a sickness-focused system to one driven by prevention, empowerment, and community — and we must act now. Critical to this process will be:

- Acknowledging that creating a bold, community-owned vision and a clear roadmap with shared milestones is an investment in collective understanding and commitment.
- Forming a leader's group that reflects a diverse range of community stakeholders outside the usual medical/clinical/public sector with representation from private and public organisations.
- Committing to a budget, plan, and timeline that enables the process to be delivered with the investment it deserves.
- Aiming to achieve multi-party political consensus beyond election cycles.
- Recognising that this work cannot be led solely by the public health sector, the ideas and solutions must not be limited by bureaucratic system thinking. The community sector, with its real-time, ground-truthed knowledge, must play a leading role. Their insights should not only be sought, but genuinely valued and acted upon.
- Understanding/agreement that there is value in the process itself in terms of education, health literacy, changing values/thinking/narratives, challenging systems that are not working – and ultimately an outcome in terms of a strategy that is truly understood and *owned by* Tasmanians.

The unique and vital role of the collective NGO/NFP/Private sector in a reimagined healthy future for Tasmania

The *20-Year Preventive Health Strategy* has the opportunity to:

- Highlight what's working – celebrate the great preventive health work already happening.
- Support successful programs – expand the initiatives already making a difference.
- Fill the gaps – Identify areas that need more attention and launch projects to address them.

In this context, the Tasmanian health NGOs/NFPs and private operators represent the majority of the work of these aspirations. Together, we:

- Understand the lives of Tasmanians.
- Do the 'heavy lifting' in health promotion, support, services and education, often with limited resources.
- Hold extensive data, stories and insights that can inform future directions.
- Are trusted by those we are trying to help.
- Are independent, and provide real-time insight from communities that's grounded in what's actually happening at a community level.
- Move freely, speak openly, and connect across silos.
- Bring value in our networks, community reach, and credibility, which gives us a collective strength.
- Are responsive, reflective, and deeply connected.
- Bring different perspectives, shared purpose, and a strong understanding of how systems work (and don't).
- Information, insights, and expertise in what's working for Tasmanians.
- Exist beyond election cycles.

Collaboration isn't new to us. It's how we work, and how we've survived for decades. This is our everyday. Tackling complex health challenges is what we do, and we cannot underestimate the power of a collaboration of like-minded organisations to shift the current direction of the health agenda.

As a sector, NGOs, NFPs and private providers bring unmatched expertise and deep commitment to engaging Tasmanians in meaningful conversations about health and delivering on-the-ground action that genuinely changes lives.

Opportunities under the Strategy

Greater investment and structural commitment to prevention

Government has an important role as the policymaker, funder and enabler for preventive health. It should create the conditions, offer the funding, and help connect effort across agencies. We need government to empower and act as the important enabler. That's how we'll build something sustainable.

It could be timely to investigate and lead the thinking, research and advocacy around a feasibility study for a Preventive Health Statutory Authority (or an alternative if the research suggests this). A dedicated body, with its own board, focused solely on prevention could potentially drive the Strategy. This structure would allow us to respond to what's happening on the ground, not bound by

policy timelines, and it allows us to be more agile outside of government – in community, we're face-to-face, we can act in real-time. The strategy will stay adaptable. Such a structure can sit outside the political cycle and is protected from shifting government priorities. A statutory authority with a clear preventive health mandate, supported by law can focus on the long game – not just election cycles.

To improve the chances of success, and to meaningfully shift Tasmania's focus toward prevention, there must be a dedicated and ongoing budget commitment of at least 5% of the total health budget. This investment should be locked into the forward estimates and structurally separated from broader Department of Health spending to signal its elevation as a statewide priority not just in words, but in action.

Partnerships across all sectors:

Partnerships across public, private, and NFP sectors are *essential*. We all bring something different, and without each other, we're always going to be missing pieces of the puzzle. There is a ready and willing workforce of trained, qualified, professional health providers in the private sector who are deeply committed to prevention. If we're serious about making progress, we need to open the door to *all* parts of the sector. Not just in words, but in funding and governance.

It starts by being honest about what collaboration *really* means – it's not just inviting different voices to the table, it's giving them real power and responsibility. Shared boards, co-design processes, and multi-sector project teams are key and including private providers are skilled, care – and want to be part of the solution.

Expanding the picture of health:

Greater awareness of the role, impact, and drivers of the social determinants of health, including poverty and inequality, in shaping health inequalities will help to focus effort on achieving structural change as well as to the conditions of daily life for Tasmanians. The main benefit of taking an approach guided by the social determinants of health is that it focuses effort on structural issues driving health inequalities, rather than on delivering individual supports.

Fostering greater public and political support for community-based health initiatives will lead to better recognition of community services industry in policy, strategy and funding and will address funding inequities to support smaller, grassroots organisations that are often overlooked but play a crucial role in health outcomes.

Engaging Tasmanians to aspire:

A major aspirational health campaign would be an outstanding opportunity to encourage Tasmanians to 'think healthy' and reshape the doom narrative. It would change people's perceptions and understanding of what health is and how they want to interact with their own health and wellbeing and may drive a growing expectation amongst the electorate for the government to commit to sustained preventive health efforts.

As part of this trajectory, pivoting the current consultation into a bigger and bolder opportunity could create a community-owned strategy through a process that has an additional objective of engaging and involving Tasmanians and mobilising a social movement that changes the narrative and the way Tasmanians think about health.

This health campaign should be a bold, evidence-based initiative built on the proven success of major public health campaigns such as those addressing HIV/AIDS, tobacco control, sun safety, and road safety. These campaigns changed behaviour at scale because they were unafraid to be direct, targeted, and sustained.

Tasmania deserves no less.

It should also be underpinned by a commitment to codesign with the community, involving Tasmanians in the development of the vision, the roadmap and the milestones. It should also be underpinned by a commitment to codesign with the community, involving Tasmanians in developing the vision, the roadmap and the milestones.

Developing simple, tailored and targeted public education and awareness messages/campaigns relating to preventive health is key but must also engage through involvement and ownership. This wholistic approach is how to positively influence the attitudes and behaviours of the Tasmanian community and for them to drive their own health and wellbeing aspirations.

This approach should be designed not just to help Tasmanians make healthier choices in their own lives to generate a widespread community expectation of politicians that they will commit to preventive health as a policy priority.

Collectivising data:

The current system does not support a collectivised effort to harness the considerable strengths of existing preventive health efforts to create enduring positive change. Nor does the current system draw together the stories, insights, data and research into a collective whole, where success can be leveraged and magnified cost effectively.

There is an abundance of data - 'hard' and 'soft' - from all the community consultations that have taken place across Tasmania in recent years. There are also volumes of data from routine reporting to government under funding agreements. Forming this valuable information into a 'whole picture' of health initiatives in Tasmania and the data behind them, could be transformational in designing future initiatives that work for the people of Tasmania. Data collectivism should focus on 'data of the people *for* the people' and is a vital ingredient in 'reading back' to the community to secure their engagement in initiatives.

Mapping and collating available data from government and community service organisation consultations and programs and making it publicly available will equip preventive health advocates, communities and decision makers with stronger evidence to support preventive health policy making. Producing 'meaty' economic data or modelling that demonstrates the savings inherent in preventive health approaches, we can demonstrate the economic and political value of preventive health policies to decision makers across the spectrum.

This abundant data, information and intelligence is the raw material of a major aspirational community campaign – it exists now, in reports, minutes and presentations. What it needs now is to be brought to life.

Concluding remarks

This response to the *20-Year Preventive Health Strategy* is an initial body of work by Change 4 Health and we welcome the opportunity to further develop our approach both within our group, with other stakeholders, the Department of Health and Government departments, recognising this is a shared challenge that requires widely supported solutions.

We see a Tasmania where our people can expect to experience better health and wellbeing outcomes because our government, communities, and people, understand the inherent value in helping people stay well, through preventive action.

A healthier Tasmania where:

- All Tasmanians are empowered to make informed and healthy choices.
- There is increased access to healthy options.
- There is a culture of health and wellbeing.
- Governments, communities and people understand the power of preventive health.

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