



TasCOSS

2025 Tasmanian Election Priorities

The Tasmanian Council of Social Service (TasCOSS) is the peak body for the community services industry in Tasmania. Together, we advocate to challenge and change the systems, behaviours and attitudes that create poverty, inequality and exclusion, to ensure all Tasmanians have the same opportunity to live a good life.

TasCOSS 2025 *Tasmanian Election Priorities*

Tasmania remains in a cost of living crisis. Many households are struggling to afford the basics and are anxious about their financial security, the direction of our state and the future for their children.

This election presents an opportunity to act on the issues that really matter to Tasmanians — a safe, affordable place to call home; action on the cost of living; support to live a healthy, active life; and ensuring our children are safe and supported.

Underpinning these priorities is the need for a sustainable community services industry to deliver essential support for people in need — whether that be providing emergency housing, support to women fleeing violence, food relief for families doing it tough, mental health support or literacy and digital skills.

But right now, there are Tasmanians missing out on these essential supports, with community services forced to turn people away because they do not have the funding and resources to support everyone looking for help.

Investing in people, as well as the services that support them, will result in a healthier population, better outcomes and cost savings for government.

Tasmanians deserve better. They are crying out for action.

It is time for brave, bold leadership from our elected representatives to create the change needed to invest in Tasmanians and their wellbeing. Because if we don't, it is our people that miss out.

TasCOSS's *2025 Tasmanian Election Priorities* statement focusses on industry sustainability and proposes a number of evidence-informed recommendations that better target government spending to improve the wellbeing of Tasmanians:

1. Prioritising Community Services Industry Sustainability
2. Improving the State of Tasmania's Housing
3. Bringing Down Household Energy Costs
4. Transforming Child and Youth Safety
5. Closing the Digital Divide
6. Keeping Tasmanians Healthy

TasCOSS's SIX KEY ELECTION PRIORITIES

1. Prioritising Community Services Industry Sustainability

Government relies daily on community service organisations to deliver essential support for people experiencing poverty, disadvantage and financial hardship. But right now, essential service providers are at crisis point — cutting hours, reducing staff, changing service delivery models and forced to turn away people seeking support, because they do not have the funding and resources they need to support everyone looking for help.

To ensure Tasmanians can access the support they need, when they need it, Tasmania's community services industry needs greater funding certainty and investment in sustainability measures to deliver productivity improvements and meet increasing demand, resulting in more timely and higher quality services for Tasmanians.

TasCOSS is calling on the next state government to:

- **Fast-track the implementation of five year funding contracts across the industry, accompanied by a funding review process that starts at least six months before the end date of a contract.**
- **Consult with the industry on the development of an indexation formula that reflects the true cost of doing business.**
- **Deliver a Partnership Agreement with the Tasmanian Coalition of Community Services Peaks that sets out a shared vision for government and industry working together, with appropriate resourcing for implementation.**
- **Invest \$200,000 in a Sustainability Program that considers the barriers to developing more flexible, innovative and efficient service delivery and identifies a suite of measures to promote sustainability.**

Finding essential services

A growing number of Tasmanians are battling a cost of living crisis, and it can be hard to know where to find the right help. [FindHelpTAS](#) is Tasmania's most trusted and comprehensive online directory of community services, connecting thousands of Tasmanians each year to over 900 services from 562 providers. It plays a critical role in helping people access support when and where they need it, preventing escalation into crisis and easing pressure on our acute and emergency services.

FindHelpTAS requires further investment to be more user-friendly, connect to more services and improve outcomes for Tasmanians. TasCOSS is calling on the next state government to:

- **Invest \$690,000 over three years to expand and enhance FindHelpTAS.**

2. Improving the State of Tasmania's Housing

Tasmania is experiencing a housing affordability crisis, which is characterised by rising rental prices, extremely low rental vacancy rates, high interest rates and a high proportion of properties exiting the long-term rental market to become short-stay accommodation.

For too many Tasmanians, a secure, healthy and affordable home is out of reach, especially for those living on low incomes. The supply of social housing has not kept pace with population growth and demand, leading to the social housing waiting list reaching record highs and significant adverse impacts for Tasmanians — many of whom are living in inadequate, unhealthy, overcrowded or temporary housing conditions, and facing increasing rates of homelessness.

TasCOSS is calling on the next state government to:

- **Immediately commence a review of the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997* to ensure it is contemporary, fit-for-purpose and provides better protections for renters.**
- **Better regulate short-stay accommodation to limit the permitting of whole-homes in areas with low rental vacancy rates.**
- **Double the proportion of social housing in the Tasmanian Housing Strategy and committing to a clear pathway to social housing being 10% of all housing stock in Tasmania.**

3. Bringing Down Household Energy Costs

Tasmanians are struggling to afford their electricity bills that have increased by 26% in just three years, adding around \$500 extra per year in higher energy costs to the median household budget.

Energy rebates to support customers in need are necessary in the current environment of high prices and a cost of living crisis, but should be better targeted to provide the greatest support to those most in need. Bill relief that delivers financial support to all households, including the wealthy, are inefficient and expensive. This funding could be better spent on household energy efficiency measures that improve the thermal efficiency of our poor housing stock, reducing energy bills over the long-term.

TasCOSS is calling on the next state government to:

- **Extend the *Energy Bill Relief Fund* by providing low income households with a rebate of \$300 per year indexed to regulated price increases.**
- **Provide significant investment in home energy efficiency upgrades for low income housing and implement mandatory energy performance standards for rental properties.**

4. Transforming Child and Youth Safety

Following the *Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings*, there is growing recognition of the need to prioritise the safety, wellbeing and rights of all children and young people in Tasmania. While the reform agenda has been ambitious and necessary, too many children are still being left behind.

Real and lasting change requires sustained, long-term investment in what we know works — prevention, strong and connected families and communities, and institutions that are transparent and accountable. It also requires a genuine commitment to listen to children, to uphold their rights, and to support the environments, relationships and services they need to grow, feel safe and thrive.

TasCOSS is calling on the next state government to prioritise the rights and wellbeing of children and young people by:

- **Maintaining momentum to advance the *Change for Children Strategy* through the resourcing and delivery of evidence-based reforms and community-led programs that improve outcomes for children and young people.**
- **Embedding the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into the *Youth Justice Act 1997*.**

5. Closing the Digital Divide

One-in-four Tasmanians face barriers to digital inclusion and Tasmania has the lowest levels of digital literacy and skills in the country. Being digitally excluded compounds other forms of disadvantage and has the profound effect of locking Tasmanians out from fully participating in economic, social and community life.

The digital economy delivers huge social and economic benefits, but those benefits are not being equally shared. Access to adequate and affordable telecommunications, together with the skills and confidence to navigate digital services, are essential to ensure those who face barriers to digital inclusion — particularly Tasmanians who are older, on low incomes and living in regional areas — do not fall further behind.

TasCOSS is calling on the next state government to commit to closing the digital divide and:

- **Invest \$500,000 per year in digital skills and literacy programs to support priority groups at greater risk of digital exclusion.**
- **Support the Tasmanian ICT industry to develop and expand digital literacy programs designed for the community services industry and community groups to build scam, cyber security and artificial intelligence awareness.**

6. Keeping Tasmanians Healthy

Tasmania faces a heavy and growing chronic disease burden and the Tasmanian health system is struggling to keep up with increasing demand, reflected in long waiting lists for appointments with GPs and specialists, ambulance ramping and long wait times in Emergency Departments, as well as significant service gaps, especially for mental health services.

A large proportion of our chronic health conditions are lifestyle-related and preventable. TasCOSS is advocating for investments that reduce the prevalence of chronic diseases and mental health conditions, prevent hospitalisations and improve wellbeing for all Tasmanians.

TasCOSS is calling on the next state government to:

- **Implement a 20 Year Preventive Health Strategy to address the social and economic drivers of poor health outcomes — including poverty, inequality and discrimination — resourced by 5% of total health spending dedicated to preventive health measures and initiatives.**



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