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# Have Your Say

## Pre-Budget Consultation 2026-27

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### Submission Form

#### Introduction

As the Tasmanian Government begins preparations for the 2026-27 State Budget, we invite all Tasmanians to share their ideas and perspectives to help shape the decisions ahead.

The Government is committed to making thoughtful and responsible choices that secure Tasmania's future. Whether your focus is on improving public services, strengthening the economy, or ensuring fairness in how public funds are allocated, your input is valued.

Budgeting to protect future generations and provide flexibility in the event of another COVID-type occurrence remains a key and necessary priority. Rising costs in service delivery – particularly in health and education – combined with broader economic pressures mean that difficult decisions will be required. The Government is focused on long-term fiscal sustainability, and this consultation provides an opportunity for the community to help identify practical savings, opportunities to reprioritise and smarter ways to invest public resources.

This consultation reflects the Government's commitment to transparency, collaboration, and commonsense decision-making. Please note that grant programs and other funding opportunities offered by the Tasmanian Government are managed separately. The purpose of this engagement is to inform how the Government prioritises the services, projects and initiatives it undertakes on behalf of the Tasmanian community.

#### About this Document

This document is the official **submission form** for the *Have Your Say – Pre-Budget Consultation 2026-27*. Please use the sections provided to share your feedback and suggestions. Your input will help inform Government's decision-making and ensure the State Budget reflects the needs and aspirations of Tasmanians.

The form includes five key questions designed to guide your feedback on Budget priorities and savings opportunities. These questions aim to keep submissions focused and consistent across contributors.

All fields in this form are optional. You are welcome to respond to as many or as few questions as you wish, or to focus on the most relevant to you or your organisation. All feedback is valued.

If you have additional material you would like to include, you are welcome to attach it. Supporting documents are entirely optional and not expected.

**Submissions are due to Treasury by 7 December 2025.**

## Contact Details

Contact details are collected by Treasury and provided to Ministers and agencies. The provision of this information is voluntary.

Organisation	Tasmanian Council of Social Service (TasCOSS)
Contact Name	Adrienne Picone
Position in Organisation	Chief Executive Officer
Email	adrienne@tascoss.org.au

## Consultation Questions

1. *Which programs/projects could be refocused to deliver core outcomes with more streamlined resources or refined focus?*

Click or tap here to enter text.

2. *Are there initiatives or investments that could be reconsidered helping balance the budget now, without losing sight of long-term goals?*

Click or tap here to enter text.

3. *Are there programs or services that could be transitioned out as the needs of Tasmanians evolve and priorities shift?*

Click or tap here to enter text.

4. *Where could government activities be re-calibrated to operate more effectively, while still meeting essential needs?*

Click or tap here to enter text.

5. *For any new funding ideas (specifying whether operational or capital), what savings or offsets could be identified elsewhere to ensure the overall budget remains balanced?*

**Knock to Stay Connected** is a program designed to prevent electricity customers from being disconnected from their energy supply due to inability to pay.

When a customer is at risk of disconnection, energy providers conduct a personal visit to their home to provide information on available support and discuss options, promoting a human-centered approach to avoid disconnection.

Aurora Energy and TasNetworks are signatories of the *Knock to Stay Connected* program. According to Aurora Energy's website:

*"In addition to the mandatory payment reminders and disconnection notices, this initiative will see a TasNetworks representative contact the account holder at their property. Hand-delivering essential information to customers and informing them*

*about available support, before the disconnection process begins, this adds a final and direct pre-disconnection contact attempt to help customers avoid disconnection. Please be aware that you may be responsible for any fees or charges incurred as part of the disconnection and collections process.”*

Inquiries by TasCOSS have revealed that TasNetworks charges a \$116.27 (excl.GST) “Miscellaneous Service” fee for the *Knock to Stay Connected* visit. If that visit is successful in preventing the customer from being disconnected, the fee is passed on to the customer by the retailer. If a customer’s electricity supply is disconnected following a *Knock to Stay Connected* visit, TasNetworks waives the miscellaneous service fee and charges a higher disconnection fee of \$168.10 (excl.GST), that is passed on to the customer.

TasCOSS supports the *Knock to Stay Connected* program for its proven results in significantly reducing disconnection rates for customers, keeping customers connected to an essential service and encouraging engagement with retailers. A key aspect of the program is the in-person visit, advice and provision of support materials. TasCOSS is concerned that vulnerable customers, in particular those experiencing financial hardship and unable to afford their energy bills, are incurring additional charges in order to receive the vital support they need to maintain their electricity supply.

Aurora Energy reported in the 2023-24 Financial Year, 580 *Knock to Stay Connected* visits were conducted with a 65% success rate and in the 2024-25 Financial Year, 857 visits were conducted with a 71% success rate. That equates to 987 ‘successful’ knocks resulting in an additional \$125,000 (incl.GST) in fees that have been charged to vulnerable customers at risk of disconnection.

With electricity prices increasing by 26% since 2022, as energy rebates are reduced and the number of customers entering into energy debt surges to near record levels in the past year, it is foreseeable that more customers will experience financial hardship and be at risk of disconnection.

This brings into focus the value and importance of the *Knock to Stay Connected* program in supporting increasing numbers of customers at risk of disconnection, but also the need for investment to ensure the program can meet any projected increase in demand.

TasNetworks has advised TasCOSS it cannot absorb the full costs of the *Knock to Stay Connected* program. In the 2023-24 and 2024-25 financial years, returns to government from its energy businesses were \$451.6 million.

TasCOSS proposes an investment of \$379,200 in the 2026-27 Tasmanian Budget (0.08% of the energy businesses’ returns to government over the past two years) to refund *Knock to Stay Connected* fees already incurred by vulnerable customers and to fund the *Knock to Stay Connected* program over the 2026-27 Financial Year. This calculation is based on:

2023-24 @ \$47,900 (based on 377 ‘successful’ visits)

2024-25 @ \$77,300 (based on 609 ‘successful’ visits)

2025-26 @ \$127,000 (estimate of 1,000 visits)

2026-27 @ \$127,000 (estimate of 1,000 visits)

**TOTAL      \$379,200**

This proposal will maintain a vital circuit-breaker to prevent disconnection for vulnerable customers and ensure they receive the support they need without being charged additional network fees.

## Submission Context

Please indicate the primary portfolio area your submission relates to – this should be the area that best matches the focus of your feedback.

Energy and Renewables

If you are including any supporting documents, please list the file name(s) below. While additional material is optional, we encourage submissions to remain focused and concise.

Please enter file name(s)

## Next Steps

1. **Complete your Submission:**  
Fill out this submission form and save it as a Word document (.docx). Name the file using your organisation's name.
2. **Email Your Submission:**  
Send an email to **communityconsultation@treasury.tas.gov.au**, attaching your completed submission form and any supplementary documents.
3. **Submission Deadline:**  
All submissions must be received by **7 December 2025**.
4. **Acknowledgement:**  
Treasury will acknowledge receipt of each submission.
5. **Consideration of Submissions:**  
All submissions will be made available to Ministers and relevant departments for consideration as part of the formal 2026-27 Budget development process.  
  
It is the responsibility of the relevant agency to review the *Have Your Say – Pre-Budget Consultation 2026-27* submissions and to provide a response through the relevant Minister where appropriate.

**Budget Management, Department of Treasury and Finance**

communityconsultation@treasury.tas.gov.au

www.treasury.tas.gov.au