



A Partnership Approach to a Healthier Future for Tasmania

TasCOSS 2026/27 Pre-Budget Submission



About TasCOSS

The Tasmanian Council of Social Service's (TasCOSS) 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 together, 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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Summary of Investment Proposals

In the 2026/27 Tasmanian Budget, TasCOSS seeks an investment from the Tasmanian Government to:

1. **Commit significant funding to the implementation of the *20 year Preventive Health Strategy* (the Strategy), by establishing a dedicated Prevention Fund with guaranteed funding, amounting to at least 5% of the overall health budget.**
2. **Leverage TasCOSS's established relationships with Government and the expertise of the community services industry to maximise the impact of the Strategy by investing \$2.38 million over three (3) years. This figure includes the following investments:**
 - a. \$786,811 in FindHelpTAS to improve Tasmanians' access to support services and enhance coordination across the community services industry. *This funding request has also been submitted to the Tasmanian Department of Health, through Public Health Services.*
 - b. \$1,267,031 towards the TasCOSS Health Literacy Project to engage Tasmanian community services in building strong health literacy infrastructure in service of the Strategy. This figure includes costing for a Preventive Health Manager that will oversee the Health Literacy Project, as well as the Prevention and Early Intervention Funding Dashboard and the Cross-Sector Community Preventive Health Campaign, as outlined below. *This funding request has also been submitted to the Tasmanian Department of Health, through Public Health Services.*
 - c. \$90,982 to support TasCOSS to develop and implement a Prevention and Early Intervention Funding Dashboard to monitor and publicly report on Tasmania's preventive health investments, ensuring sustained accountability throughout the Strategy.
 - d. \$239,350 to enable TasCOSS to contribute to a Cross-Sector Community Preventive Health Campaign addressing the social determinants of health.

A Partnership Approach

Tasmania's *20 year Preventive Health Strategy* represents a landmark opportunity to transform health outcomes for all Tasmanians. Looking beyond health system interventions, truly effective prevention focusses on what drives health outcomes: the social, economic and environmental conditions in which people live. This is strongly supported by the Tasmanian Government's landmark *The Wellbeing Framework* '(the Framework)', which emphasises a wholistic approach to community health and wellbeing.¹

As outlined by [VicHealth](#), Victoria's dedicated health promotion agency, while behaviours like healthy eating and exercise are important, they're just two pieces of the puzzle. Health is influenced by a complex mix of social, economic and environmental factors, including:

- Income and employment;
- Housing and neighbourhoods;
- Cultural background and identity;
- Gender and education;
- Social networks and community support;
- Behaviours and beliefs; and
- Family environments.

The community services industry works with communities and individuals to address these factors every day. We already provide prevention, delivering services which prevent homelessness, family breakdown, financial crisis, social isolation and trauma. With recognition, coordination and investment, we can become deliberate, powerful partners in Tasmania's preventive health vision.

The health system treats disease. The community services industry addresses the conditions that create it.

The Strategy's Round 1 consultation report clearly demonstrates that Tasmanians believe a healthy life includes having help and support available when they need it, as well as having safe homes and a caring community. The consultation report also identifies community service organisations as key partners for prevention.

The Framework emphasises the social determinants of health, with prevention and early intervention identified as key priorities. The Health Population Outcomes contained within the Framework strongly align with the intentions of the Strategy and highlight the community services industry as an essential mechanism for promoting greater wellbeing for Tasmanians.

The successful implementation of both the Framework and the Strategy depend not only on policy direction but on the engagement, capability and coordination of

¹Tasmanian Government (2025), [Tasmania's Wellbeing Framework](#), Department of Premier and Cabinet.

hundreds of organisations and thousands of workers who interact with Tasmanians through the community services industry daily.

TasCOSS has a proven track record as a trusted intermediary between Government and the community services industry. Through key initiatives, such as the Commission of Inquiry Industry Response Project, TasCOSS has demonstrated our capacity to facilitate the implementation of statewide policy across the industry. To drive this engagement, we will collaborate with Change for Health Tasmania² and other industry networks to expand our reach and facilitate cross-sectoral cooperation and alignment with the Strategy.

Preventive health initiatives are often characterised by short-term, project-based funding that risks sustainability and impact. A genuine commitment to prevention requires investment models that reflect the long-term and highly collaborative nature of this work. Research recently commissioned by the Tasmanian Department of Health, titled '[Funding and Resourcing Mechanisms for Long-Term Strategies](#),' demonstrates that funding mechanisms that are collaborative, flexible and sustained, offer the strongest foundation for long-term prevention.

To support the successful implementation of the Strategy, TasCOSS seeks a commitment from the Tasmanian Government to:

1. Allocate significant funding to the implementation of *the 20 year Preventative Health Strategy*, by establishing a dedicated Prevention Fund with guaranteed funding, amounting to at least 5% of the overall health budget.
2. Leverage TasCOSS's established relationships with Government and the expertise of the community services industry to maximise the impact of the Strategy by investing \$2.38 million over three (3) years. This figure includes the investment in FindHelpTAS, the Health Literacy Project, the Prevention and Early Intervention Funding Dashboard and the Cross-Sector Preventative Health Campaign, as detailed below.

1. FindHelpTAS – Connecting Prevention to Social Determinants

[FindHelpTAS](#) is Tasmania's most trusted and comprehensive online directory of community services, connecting thousands of Tasmanians each year to over 900 services delivered by 818 providers. FindHelpTAS has been co-funded and governed for over a decade by a group of Tasmanian community service organisations,³ who see the value of a coordinated service directory to make service navigation easier for Tasmanians seeking help.

² A collaboration of health focussed organisations, including Asthma Australia, Diabetes Australia, Eat Well Tasmania, Healthy Tasmania, Salveo Healthcare, Cancer Council Tasmania, Heart Foundation, Mental Health Council of Tasmania, The Stroke Foundation and TasCOSS.

³ FindHelpTAS is co-funded and governed by GenU, Care2Serve, Anglicare Tasmania, Baptcare Tasmania, Relationships Australia (Tasmania), Mission Australia (Tasmania), Uniting Vic/Tas, CatholicCare Tasmania and Hobart City Mission, auspiced by TasCOSS.

FindHelpTAS is preventive health infrastructure delivered through a social determinants of health lens. The information on FindHelpTAS is by Tasmanians for Tasmanians, a trusted source of information on low or no cost services for Tasmanians in need. By helping people to navigate the service system, find emergency relief, family violence support, mental health assistance or children and family services early, FindHelpTAS prevents crises that traditional health systems cannot address.

With further investment, FindHelpTAS can drive the Government's goals to reduce duplication, improve coordination and deliver smarter, more cost-effective preventive health.

Targeted AI investment would enhance the platform, offering a low-cost, high impact solution and positioning FindHelpTAS as a national model for AI-enabled community support.

Recommendation: Increase current investment in FindHelpTAS to \$786,811 over three (3) years to improve Tasmanians' access to support services and enhance coordination across the community services industry.

This funding request has also been submitted to the Tasmanian Department of Health, through Public Health Services.

2. Building on the TasCOSS Health Literacy Project

Prevention messages delivered through the health system reach people who are already engaged with health services. But Tasmanians facing the greatest health risks, including those experiencing poverty, homelessness, low literacy or cultural and linguistic barriers, are least likely to access traditional health information channels. They do, however, access trusted, local community services. As highlighted in the Strategy's Round 1 consultation report, prevention must be delivered where people already are.

Community services are trusted by marginalised populations who may distrust or avoid engaging with the health system.

When these organisations understand the health system and can respond to clients' needs in a more equitable and accessible way, they become powerful prevention agents.

As highlighted in the Framework, a key strategy to support Tasmanians to live healthy, active lives and make informed health decisions, is that they can easily find up-to-date health information and understand it well enough to know what to do. The TasCOSS Health Literacy Project offers scalable infrastructure to achieve this across the Strategy's 20 year horizon.

The Health Literacy Project, developed and delivered by TasCOSS, provides a proven mechanism to embed health literacy throughout the community services industry. Through its evidence-based toolkit, this project has already reached over 1,250 people

across Tasmania's community service organisations, building capacity among 300 providers who work daily with our state's most vulnerable populations.

Recommendation: Increase current investment in the TasCOSS Health Literacy Project to \$1,267,031 over three (3) years to engage Tasmanian community services in building strong health literacy infrastructure in service of the Strategy. This figure includes costing for a Preventive Health Manager that will oversee the Health Literacy Project, as well as the Prevention and Early Intervention Funding Dashboard and Cross-Sector Community Preventive Health Campaign, as outlined below.

This funding request has also been submitted to the Tasmanian Department of Health, through Public Health Services.

3. Prevention and Early Intervention Funding Dashboard

TasCOSS proposes the development of a Prevention and Early Intervention Funding Dashboard, modelled on our successful [Tasmania's State of Housing Dashboard](#), to create transparency and accountability around Tasmania's investment in prevention across both health and its social determinants.

The dashboard would document the Government's implementation of funding mechanisms, enabling evidence-based conversations and reporting on the investments Tasmania is making in prevention and early intervention. Critically, it will also provide accountability across the Strategy's 20 year timeline and keep preventive health on the agenda, across multiple governments and budget cycles.

Recommendation: Invest \$90,982 over three (3) years to support TasCOSS to develop and implement a Prevention and Early Intervention Funding Dashboard to monitor and publicly report on Tasmania's preventive health investments, ensuring sustained accountability throughout the Strategy.

4. 'Preventive Health as a Public Good' — Cross-Sector Community Preventive Health Campaign

To truly engage communities and build public support for and expectations of health and wellbeing, the Strategy must move beyond a narrative of individual responsibility to highlight how collective action can create the conditions for a healthy state.

There is powerful potential in drawing on [VicHealth's systems-focussed public health campaigns](#) and partnering with strengths-based campaigns, such as Brand Tasmania's 'Little Tasmanian' and 'Tasmanian Youth Story' projects and St Lukes' 'Healthiest Island on the Planet' initiative, to supercharge the Government's preventive health agenda.

TasCOSS recommends a strategic alliance between the Tasmanian Government, the community services industry, the health system and other influential cultural partners to build a prevention campaign that communicates about preventive health in an

accessible and inspiring way to all Tasmanian communities, especially reaching disadvantaged people and those with low literacy levels.

Together, we can craft a compelling narrative that empowers the community and positions health equity as central to the Tasmanian identity and our collective future. A coordinated public campaign could link housing with health, employment with wellbeing and social connection with longevity, while celebrating the role community services play in proactive, preventive health care.

This collaborative campaign would redefine Tasmania's prevention agenda, shifting from individual behaviour change to creating the social, economic and environmental conditions that enable every Tasmanian to live a good life.

Recommendation: Invest \$239,350 over three (3) years to enable TasCOSS to contribute to a Cross-Sector Community Preventive Health Campaign addressing the social determinants of health.



TasCOSS

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