



Media Release

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Socially responsible Budget, but questions remain

The Tasmanian Council of Social Service (TasCOSS) welcomed today's State Budget for its delivery on critical commitments for vital health, education and human services.

'Given the overall fiscal position of the State, the Tasmanian Government is to be commended for protecting previous funding commitments from cuts,' Tom Muller, TasCOSS CEO said.

Funding for health & human services

Funding has been maintained for disability services, alcohol and other drug services, primary health services and children and family services.

'We are also pleased that the State Government has delivered a promised wage increase for disability support workers who are among the most poorly paid workers in the State,' Tom Muller said.

Funding for community service organisations

Mr Muller said, 'We welcome the establishment of the *Strengthening Community Service Organisations Fund*.'

'However, TasCOSS is concerned that the Budget contains no indication of the indexation community services organisations will receive in the coming year. Any drop in the level of indexation would severely undermine the ability of community service organisations to deliver quality services,' Tom Muller warned.

Commonwealth funding

'Given the pressure on State finances, it is fortunate that the Government will be able to deliver significant and much-needed investment in housing and education infrastructure as a result of Commonwealth funding.'

Long-term unemployment

'While TasCOSS welcomes the capital funds for the new LINC's, we are concerned that unemployment is on the rise and that there are no initiatives in this Budget aimed at preventing a rise in long-term unemployment,' Tom Muller said.

'Preventing long-term unemployment is a key social inclusion test for any government because of the social and human consequences. The long-term unemployed become excluded from participating in the community and are driven further into poverty and disadvantage,' Tom Muller said.

In 2009-10 unemployment is tipped to rise to 7% and to rise further to 8.25 percent in years 2010-11 and 2011-12.

For further information and interview contact Tom Muller on 0448 310 043