

# **Sustainable Communities: Invest in Tasmania's Future**

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**Tasmanian Council of Social Service**

**Submission to the Tasmanian Government's  
2008/09 State Budget**

***Our Vision:***

A fair, just and inclusive Tasmania.



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## ***Introduction***

The Tasmanian Council of Social Service (TasCOSS) is pleased to present to the Tasmanian Government a submission to the 2008/09 State Budget process, *Sustainable Communities: Invest in Tasmania's Future*.

TasCOSS is the peak industry body for Tasmania's non-government community services sector. Its membership comprises individuals and organisations active in the provision of community services to low income, vulnerable and disadvantaged Tasmanians. TasCOSS represents the interests of its members and their clients to government, the public, the private sector and the media.

Each year TasCOSS provides the Department of Treasury with recommendations on how we believe Government resources should be invested through the State Budget to improve the lives of low income and disadvantaged Tasmanians.

The State Budget is the Tasmanian Government's most significant policy statement. The budget not only details the Government's spending priorities for the coming 12 months, but it also articulates the Government's ongoing policy and strategic vision. The State Budget has significant implications for Government-funded services, many of which are provided by the community sector, and for the capacity of low income and disadvantaged Tasmanians to access these services.

TasCOSS considers its annual submission to the State Budget process a significant advocacy and policy document. The submission represents the priority issues that have been identified by TasCOSS' member and constituent organisations through our ongoing consultation and policy development processes.

### **Sustainable Communities: Invest in Tasmania's Future**

The TasCOSS submission to the 2008-09 State Budget focuses on the need to make social investments to ensure that Tasmania's communities are sustainable into the future.

Sustainable communities are built on strong social, economic and environmental policies. We live in a society, an economy and an environment – all are equally important to sustain equity, health, well-being and a comfortable standard of living. One issue cannot be sacrificed for the benefit of the others. There is little point, for instance, in having a sustainable economy or a sustainable environment if people are excluded from active participation in society.

At the heart of a sustainable community is social inclusion. There are many in our society who are not yet fully included, such as those with few economic resources, people with disabilities, with mental illnesses, recent refugee arrivals, and many aged people. Social exclusion is simply not sustainable. For communities to function well and to be equitable, healthy, productive and supportive places to live, all must have opportunities to participate.

This submission presents budget strategies that facilitate and increase inclusion and therefore, sustainability. It provides recommendations for practical solutions to some of the challenges and barriers to inclusion such as housing affordability, health status,

educational participation and attainment, unemployment and under-employment, and access to support from community services.

It also makes recommendations for some immediate steps the Government can take to lay the groundwork for a longer term, comprehensive social inclusion strategy which TasCOSS believes is necessary to address poverty and disadvantage.

TasCOSS urges the Tasmanian Government to consider the recommendations in this submission and to implement them in order to ensure that all Tasmanians have the opportunity to both benefit from, and contribute to economic prosperity – and, importantly, to be included in a sustainable Tasmania.

### **Tasmanian Council of Social Service**

The Tasmanian Council of Social Service (TasCOSS) has served as the peak industry council for the Tasmanian non-government community services industry and its clients since 1961.

TasCOSS' vision is to be a strong organisation providing leadership in the community for a fair, just and inclusive Tasmania.

TasCOSS values:

- The rights of all Tasmanians to opportunity, justice and equity.
- Policy solutions that are socially and economically sustainable.
- The experience and talents of people affected by poverty and inequality.
- Working collaboratively and in partnership.
- The commitment and passion of people working in the community industry.
- A diversity of responses to the range of needs within the community.
- Our independence as a non party-political organisation.
- Robust civil society and the importance of a strong community sector in maintaining this.
- A strong and representative role and mandate for our work.

TasCOSS has three key areas of focus:

- Achieving a socially just society
- Strengthening the industry
- Building on the strengths of the organisation.

TasCOSS is recognised as the major peak body for welfare and related issues in Tasmania and is an independent member of the national Council of Social Service network.

### **Tasmanian Social Policy Council**

The Tasmanian Social Policy Council (TSPC) is TasCOSS' peak social policy development body. The Council is chaired by the President of TasCOSS and its membership is representative of TasCOSS' members.

The TSPC is responsible for determining TasCOSS' major policy positions and establishing the priority social issues that TasCOSS pursues. It also assists the work of the TasCOSS Social Policy and Research Unit in developing social policy positions.

### **TasCOSS' Policy Development Process**

Each year TasCOSS consults with its member and constituent organisations to identify the priority issues and recommendations contained in our submission to the State Budget process.

Organisations are asked to identify what the major issues are for their clients, services and region. These issues are then developed into policy positions by TasCOSS' social policy staff, before forming the final recommendations contained in this submission.

This policy development process is overseen by the TSPC, who initially determine the issues to be addressed in the budget submission and then endorse the final recommendations and priority issues as contained in the submission.

This process ensures that all recommendations TasCOSS makes to Government are grounded in solid consultation and are representative of the industry. They are also based on the needs of clients who use community sector services.

### **Linkages between this submission and Tasmania *Together***

TasCOSS is a partner in the Tasmania *Together* process, the State's twenty-year economic, social and environmental plan.

TasCOSS seeks opportunities to contribute to Tasmania *Together* to ensure it continues to represent the interests of low income and disadvantaged Tasmanians and the community services sector. TasCOSS fully supports the integral role Tasmania *Together* now has in Tasmanian government.

Every recommendation contained in this submission has been linked to the relevant Tasmania *Together* goal(s).

### **Costings**

Where possible, TasCOSS has costed its recommendations, or provided an approximate guide to assist departments in costing initiatives based on our recommendations.

# ***Summary of Recommendations***

## **1. Housing and Homelessness**

**Recommendation 1.1:** Allocate significant new resources for a social housing reform package to tackle the ongoing housing affordability crisis. This package should:

- Increase the supply of appropriate social housing stock;
- Ensure the operations of Housing Tasmania are sustainable and viable, and provide beneficial outcomes for tenants;
- Ensure appropriate and timely maintenance of social housing properties; and
- Increase the capacity for the development and expansion of community housing in Tasmania.

**Recommendation 1.2:** Provide funding for an infrastructure development plan targeting Tasmania's public housing areas, aimed at improving public transport networks, community services, shopping facilities, and employment growth in these areas to support communities to overcome the consequences of concentrated and long-term disadvantage.

**Recommendation 1.3:** Increase the State Government contribution to Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) services by 30% for the employment of additional staff, to reduce caseloads, to develop more sustainable responses to homelessness, and to purchase or build additional crisis and transitional accommodation.

**Recommendation 1.4:** Continue into 2008-09, and beyond, the successful Private Rental Support Scheme and the Private Rental Tenancy Support Services programs aimed at assisting and supporting low income Tasmanians to remain in private rental accommodation.

**Recommendation 1.5:** Establish a scheme that assists low income Tasmanians into first home ownership through shared equity with the Government.

**Recommendation 1.6:** Provide funding to establish a community-based home energy audit and retro-fitting service for low income and disadvantaged Tasmanians to increase, with low cost measures, the thermal efficiency of their homes.

## **2. Health**

**Recommendation 2.1:** Allocate significant new funding for health promotion activities to be delivered in partnership between State and local government, community organisations, individuals and communities in order to:

- Promote and support good health and to prevent illness and chronic disease in the Tasmanian community; and

- Promote and sustain skill development in Tasmanians of all ages in relation to maintaining healthy lifestyles.

**Recommendation 2.2:** Strengthen consumer engagement in Tasmania's health system:

- Provide funding for a representative and advocacy body for consumers in the Tasmanian health system that will represent all health consumers, as well as complement and strengthen the capacity of existing consumer advocacy groups; and
- Establish a mechanism within *Tasmania's Health Plan* for ongoing and genuine engagement with Tasmanian health consumers regarding health policy, needs, services and evaluation.

**Recommendation 2.3:** Allocate additional funding for system reform of alcohol, tobacco and drug services across government and non-government sectors, with an emphasis on integrating specialist and non-specialist service providers to ensure a coordinated service delivery system and response.

**Recommendation 2.4:** Allocate additional funds to government and non-government mental health services in order to improve services and address unmet need. Additional funds need to be directed to:

- Increase by 500 the number of mental health support packages available in the State;
- Double the number of mental health services and staff in the North and North-West of Tasmania;
- Establish specialist psychiatric facilities (3 bed units) within each public hospital for young people aged between 10 and 18; and
- Provide increased professional development opportunities for both government and non-government mental health workers.

**Recommendation 2.5:** Allocate funds to enhance the quality of life of mental health consumers; specifically:

- Increase funding for Tasmanian mental health consumers to increase their capacity to undertake systemic advocacy;
- Fund an additional three mental health advocates (one in each region); and
- Increase funding for existing support, rehabilitation, recovery and accommodation groups to provide additional social, recreational and leisure options for people with mental illness.

### **3. Education and Employment**

**Recommendation 3.1:** Allocate appropriate new resources to ensure that the proposed changes to Tasmania's Post Year 10 education system – *Tasmania Tomorrow* – will:

- lift retention and completion rates,

- remove barriers to further education faced by disadvantaged and rural students, and
- contribute to the creation in Tasmania of a culture that values education and life-long learning.

**Recommendation 3.2:** Establish a Community Partnerships to Learning program based on the Partnerships to Jobs model, for the purpose of supporting community based training and learning opportunities for low income and disadvantaged Tasmanians who experience barriers to engaging in mainstream education and training.

**Recommendation 3.3:** Increase funding to deliver life skills programs inside and outside the mainstream education system.

**Recommendation 3.4:** Provide additional funding to increase the capacity for statewide advocacy services for Tasmanian students with disabilities.

**Recommendation 3.5:** Provide funding to continue the successful Partnerships to Jobs program and expand its focus in order to:

- support community based ventures aimed at assisting disadvantaged, marginally attached and under-employed Tasmanian job seekers to become 'work-ready'; and
- invest in building partnerships between local community groups, local industry and government to create community-based solutions that will encourage and support employers in their capacity take on disadvantaged jobs seekers.

**Recommendation 3.6:** Allocate funds to develop culturally appropriate community based support programs to assist, develop skills and build on the strengths of Tasmania's culturally and linguistically diverse community, with a particular emphasis on providing pre-employment and ongoing employment support.

## **4. Human Services**

**Recommendation 4.1:** Provide additional funding to increase the capacity of existing services and initiatives to support the needs, enhance knowledge and build skills of pregnant and parenting young people.

**Recommendation 4.2:** Continue the early intervention focus within children and family services by allocating significant funding to improve support to children and families.

**Recommendation 4.3:** Increase the allocation of core funding to existing neighbourhood houses across the State.

**Recommendation 4.4:** Allocate an additional \$11.1 million per annum to disability services to address current levels of unmet need.

**Recommendation 4.5:** Allocate increased recurrent funding for the Community Equipment Scheme including provision for a review and annual indexation.

**Recommendation 4.6:** Commit to creating an independent body to assess disability services delivery against established national standards.

**Recommendation 4.7:** Investigate the need for a Community and Disability Services Commissioner in the Office of the Ombudsman.

**Recommendation 4.8:** Allocate new resources to enable an increase in brain injury support services and in the number of brain injury prevention programs across the State.

**Recommendation 4.9:** Establish a whole-of-government strategy for the protection against Elder Abuse.

**Recommendation 4.10:** Allocate increased funding for the provision and development of Home and Community Care (HACC) services.

**Recommendation 4.11:** Allocate funding to subsidise the purchase of appropriate smoke alarms for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

**Recommendation 4.12:** Allocate funding to contract the Australian Bureau of Statistics to develop and implement a survey to capture detailed information on and about volunteering in Tasmania.

## **5. Transport**

**Recommendation 5.1:** Allocate additional funding for the development of a comprehensive community transport service to enable people to participate in employment, education, training, rehabilitation and other social and community opportunities. This should build on and expand existing community transport services.

**Recommendation 5.2:** Allocate additional funding and resources to assist disadvantaged and low income learner drivers state-wide to meet the 50 hour log book requirement.

## **6. Justice**

**Recommendation 6.1:** Provide sufficient funding to implement the following recommendations, relating to community services from the *Report into Ashley, Youth Justice and Detention* in order to improve community-based youth justice services; early intervention programs and assessment; and supported accommodation for young offenders or young people at risk of offending.

*4. The Government should actively encourage and resource non-government organisations to provide supported accommodation for young people on remand and for young people exiting any period of custodial detention;*

*7. The Government urgently reassess its commitment to the community service order system, and allocates appropriate funding;*

*9. Early intervention policies and programs should be available for children and young people at risk of entering the youth justice system, including appropriate assessment for mental health, addiction, brain injury and other impediments that may be the cause of anti-social behaviour; and*

*11. That funding for Community Youth Justice services and early intervention should be increased.*

**Recommendation 6.2:** Allocate ongoing State funding to ensure the viability and increase the capacity of Tasmanian community legal centres.

**Recommendation 6.3:** Allocate appropriate departmental resources to continue the process of developing a Tasmanian Charter of Human Rights by initiating a community information campaign to promote a culture of awareness and respect for human rights in Tasmania.

## **7. Social Inclusion**

**Recommendation 7.1:** Establish a well-resourced social inclusion unit to research, develop and deliver a long-term, comprehensive whole-of-government social inclusion strategy to systematically combat poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion in Tasmania.

**Recommendation 7.2:** Introduce a system of mandatory 'poverty proofing' all Government initiatives – including legislation, programs, policies and projects – by assessing all initiatives for their likely contribution to eradicating poverty, disadvantage and exclusion in Tasmania and/or their likely exacerbation of these conditions.

## ***Detailed Recommendations***

### **1. Housing and Homelessness**

Once again – for the third consecutive year – access to affordable housing is the number one State Budget priority according to TasCOSS and its member organisations.

Secure affordable housing is a fundamental prerequisite for participation in social, economic, educational and recreational activities – it provides a secure base from which to function in society. Once the fundamental need for secure housing is met, people are able to use their home as a stable base to seek employment, establish and maintain relationships, pursue educational and training opportunities, become involved in local community networks, address health problems and organise their lives as they see fit.

A home is not only a place of shelter, but is also a location in the community and a place of belonging, of inclusion. The absence of secure and affordable housing is a key driver of poverty and can result in homelessness, isolation, poor health and severe financial hardship.

Housing affordability in Tasmania is worsening and there are few options for those who cannot afford home ownership, who find rents in the private rental market beyond their reach, and who are not in the highest priority category for public housing.

TasCOSS calls for significant increased investment to assist access to all housing tenures and increased investment in Tasmania's increasingly stretched homelessness services.

**Recommendation 1.1: Allocate significant new resources for a social housing reform package to tackle the ongoing housing affordability crisis. This package should:**

- **Increase the supply of appropriate social housing stock;**
- **Ensure the operations of Housing Tasmania are sustainable and viable, and provide beneficial outcomes for tenants;**
- **Ensure appropriate and timely maintenance of social housing properties;**  
**and**
- **Increase the capacity for the development and expansion of community housing in Tasmania.**

**Department:** Health and Human Services (Housing Tasmania)

**Rationale:** Social housing – comprising both publicly provided and publicly managed housing, and publicly provided and community managed housing – is an essential element of affordable housing. It is the only housing tenure that can protect low income and disadvantaged households from the uncertainties of the commercial housing market.

Housing Tasmania is an efficient provider of public housing but is constrained by a shortage of properties and, as changes in household composition occur, by increasingly inappropriate housing stock. The result is that only those with high and special needs can be housed and that not all are housed in the most appropriate type of dwelling.

This, in turn, impacts on the effectiveness of Housing Tasmania and its financial viability, since less rent is received and there is less opportunity for cross subsidies between tenant groups in the public housing system. Increased public housing stock would not only provide secure affordable housing to more Tasmanians, it would also allow Housing Tasmania to maintain a diverse client mix to ensure its viability into the future.

In addition to funds for new housing stock, Housing Tasmania must be adequately resourced to properly maintain and improve its existing housing stock. The current backlog of maintenance work on public housing properties is unacceptable and has the potential to affect the efficiency of Housing Tasmania and its ability to provide housing in a timely manner.

Community housing is a relatively under-developed social housing option in Tasmania, although TasCOSS believes it has the potential to play a major role in addressing the affordable housing crisis in the State. Increased assistance for community housing management and tenancy support is part of the infrastructure necessary for a growing and consistently effective community housing sector.

Housing Tasmania is constrained by its historic debt to the Commonwealth. Each year, almost 70% of Tasmania's grant under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement is returned to the Australian Government in interest and principal re-payments. TasCOSS has urged the Federal Government (and all parties standing in the coming Federal election) to fully relieve Tasmania's housing debt. This would free up around \$17 million each year to be spent on social housing and reduce the level of the State Government's contribution.

TasCOSS contends that the core argument for increased provision of social housing is its ability to deliver beneficial outcomes for its tenants in the form of secure, high quality, affordable housing.

**Estimated cost: \$30 million per annum** to fund a social housing reform package.

**Link to Tasmania Together**

- A reasonable lifestyle and standard of living for all Tasmanians. (Goal 1)

**Recommendation 1.2: Provide funding for an infrastructure development plan targeting Tasmania's public housing areas, aimed at improving public transport networks, community services, shopping facilities, and employment growth in these areas to support communities to overcome the consequences of concentrated and long-term disadvantage.**

**Department:** Health and Housing (Housing Tasmania)

**Rationale:** A number of Tasmania's public housing areas are in dire need of infrastructure development to improve living conditions, encourage inclusion and to enhance community cohesion. The provision of housing without requisite social, transport, community services and other infrastructure, and without local employment opportunities, can create and maintain disadvantage. This is particularly the case when the public housing is allocated primarily to those with high and special needs.

There is a danger of further concentration and entrenchment of disadvantage in public housing areas that are under-resourced and ill-equipped and, once established, such disadvantage is difficult to overcome.

Urgent investment is therefore needed to provide practical support to communities to become sustainable, and to both overcome the consequences of disadvantage and to prevent its further entrenchment.

**Estimated cost:** This item is un-costed.

**Link to Tasmania Together:**

- A reasonable lifestyle and standard of living for all Tasmanians. (Goal 1)
- Confident, friendly and safe communities. (Goal 2)
- Vibrant, inclusive and growing communities where people feel valued and connected. (Goal 5)

**Recommendation 1.3: Increase the State Government contribution to Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) services by 30% for the employment of additional staff, to reduce caseloads, to develop more sustainable responses to homelessness, and to purchase or build additional crisis and transitional accommodation.**

**Department:** Health and Housing (Housing Tasmania)

**Rationale:** Services to people experiencing homelessness in Tasmania are over-stretched and in urgent need of increased resources, including increased crisis and transitional accommodation, as well as better pathways to more sustainable accommodation options.

The shortage of affordable housing in Tasmania is having a serious impact on SAAP services, with crisis or transitional accommodation being blocked by the absence of longer term options for service clients. In addition, the shortage of affordable housing is contributing to an increase in demand for SAAP services.

Unmet need in SAAP services is high – in 2005-06 while 4,450 clients were assisted by SAAP services in Tasmania, another 1,150 people in need were turned away.

As a jointly Commonwealth-State funded program, increases to SAAP funding should ideally be shared between the two levels of government. However, the demand for SAAP services is so high and so urgent, TasCOSS believes that the State Government must increase its contribution to ensure that the needs of homeless Tasmanians are met.

**Estimated cost:** \$2.9 million is approximately a 30% increase to the State Government's contribution to the 2007-08 SAAP services budget of \$9,455,000.

**\$8 million** over four years to build an additional 40 properties (a 30% increase in properties).

**Link to Tasmania Together:**

- A reasonable lifestyle and standard of living for all Tasmanians. (Goal 1)

**Recommendation 1.4: Continue into 2008-09, and beyond, the successful Private Rental Support Scheme and the Private Rental Tenancy Support Services programs aimed at assisting and supporting low income Tasmanians to remain in private rental accommodation.**

**Department:** Health and Human Services (Housing Tasmania)

**Rationale:** The Private Rental Support Scheme (PRSS) and the Private Rental Tenancy Support Service (PRTSS) programs are funded under the *Affordable Housing Strategy* and provide crucial financial and other support to assist low income households to maintain private rental accommodation. Funding for both programs is scheduled to expire in 2008.

Funded by the State and provided by community service organisations, PRSS and PRTSS have been successful in assisting low income Tasmanians to secure and maintain private rental properties through the provision of security deposit guarantees and rental assistance, and of additional support in the form of advice, information and referral.

These services are becoming increasingly important in an environment of low availability of private rental accommodation, high rents and 'housing stress'. The assistance provided by PRSS and PRTSS enables many Tasmanians living on low incomes to participate in the private rental market. Without this assistance and support, many would be excluded and face financial hardship and/or homelessness.

TasCOSS urges the State Government to continue these important programs and to maintain funding at a sustainable level.

**Estimated cost:** \$4.5 million.

**Link to Tasmania Together:**

- A reasonable lifestyle and standard of living for all Tasmanians. (Goal 1)

**Recommendation 1.5: Establish a scheme that assists low income Tasmanians into first home ownership through shared equity with the Government.**

**Department:** Health and Human Services (Housing Tasmania)

**Rationale:** In the 2007-08 State Budget, a scheme was announced to assist with the purchase of Housing Tasmania (HT) properties by HT tenants (and others eligible for public housing) through shared equity with the Tasmanian Government.

TasCOSS believes the introduction of a program based on shared equity is a very positive move and we congratulate the Government on its introduction. However, we believe the program should be extended to include the purchase of non-publicly owned land and house packages and/or existing properties by people on low incomes living in private rental accommodation who wish to become first home buyers.

Low income households in private rental are more likely to experience 'housing stress' (that is, spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs) than those living in public housing where rent levels are tied to household income. In this sense, private market tenants may be in greater need of assistance to ensure a more sustainable housing solution.

We understand that by offering shared equity arrangements for Housing Tasmania properties, the Government, which already owns the assets, does not need to find new money to enter shared equity arrangements (except, of course and importantly, to replace the public housing property that is purchased in order to maintain public housing stock). However, we believe that the need for alternative and innovative solutions to Tasmania's affordable housing crisis requires that the State Government commit substantial additional funds to provide assistance in a variety of ways. The shared equity approach is ultimately rewarding for the Government in that, as an investment, Government benefits, along with the home owner, from the increased value of the property when it is eventually sold.

**Estimated cost: \$3 million** – based on providing equity contributions of \$100,000 to up to 30 households over 12 months.

**Link to Tasmania Together:**

- A reasonable lifestyle and standard of living for all Tasmanians. (Goal 1)

**Recommendation 1.6: Provide funding to establish a community-based home energy audit and retro-fitting service for low income and disadvantaged Tasmanians to increase, with low cost measures, the thermal efficiency of their homes.**

**Department:** Energy, Infrastructure and Resources

**Rationale:** Tasmanian electricity prices will increase substantially on 2008 and will have a significant impact on the household budgets of the many Tasmanians living on low incomes. Prices are likely to continue to rise as carbon pricing and other strategies are introduced to address the serious issue of climate change. Concessions and hardship measures can only go so far in assisting with increased costs. Longer term and more sustainable assistance can be provided by ensuring that dwellings are as thermally efficient as they can be and that household appliances and hot water heaters are efficient in their use of energy.

Programs operate in other states and territories which provide free energy audits for low income households and low cost or free retrofitting to effectively 'weather-proof' homes. Simple measures, such as installing pelmets, heavy curtains and insulation, and ensuring draughts are controlled with draught-stopping devices, can be taken to improve the

thermal efficiency of dwellings. Such measures can have a substantial impact on energy use and allow households to cut their consumption, and their costs dramatically in many cases.

A reduction in electricity consumption is also a central strategy in reducing greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change, and therefore is in line with the Government's proposals for a State Climate Change Strategy.

**Estimated Cost: \$1 million annually.**

**Link to Tasmania *Together*:**

- A reasonable lifestyle and standard of living for all Tasmanians. (Goal 1)
- Sustainable management of our natural resources. (Goal 12)

## **2. Health**

Tasmanians have poorer health status than most other Australians (with the exception of Indigenous Australians). This poor health status is an impediment to maximising inclusion and sustainability. Poor health can restrict people's ability to participate in the paid workforce, in education and training, and in activities such as shopping, volunteering, recreation, and social interaction. It can lead to social isolation and dependence.

Poor health of the population is also costly to the Government in the need for increased provision of expensive acute care services and in the ongoing management of chronic diseases. It can skew the health budget away from primary health care and health promotion to the acute sector – that is, away from keeping people healthy to treating those who are unwell.

This past 12 months has seen unprecedented community consultation and high level planning activities directed at Tasmania's primary and clinical health services. The result has been a comprehensive State health plan with a focus on ensuring the sustainability of Tasmania's health services into the future.

TasCOSS and many of its members participated in the planning process through providing submissions and attending consultations, and, in general, welcomed *Tasmania's Health Plan* and particularly its emphasis on primary health care and chronic disease prevention.

We were, however, concerned that the *Health Plan* did not identify a mechanism for ongoing engagement with health consumers. We were also concerned with the glaring omission from the 2007-08 State Budget of significant funding to implement the *Plan*.

In addition, there remain a number of areas within the health system that require additional investment, specifically alcohol and drug services and mental health treatment, support and advocacy.

**Recommendation 2.1: Allocate significant new funding for health promotion activities to be delivered in partnership between State and local government, community organisations, individuals and communities in order to:**

- **Promote and support good health and to prevent illness and chronic disease in the Tasmanian community; and**
- **Promote and sustain skill development in Tasmanians of all ages in relation to maintaining healthy lifestyles.**

**Department:** Health and Human Services

**Rationale:** Tasmania's poor health status, although largely determined by socio-economic factors such as income levels, employment and educational attainment which must be tackled through a whole-of-government approach, must also be addressed

through significant investment in comprehensive and coordinated health promotion activities funded and led by the State Government.

Indeed, the clear statement within *Tasmania's Health Plan* that the 'focus of the health system is on health and well-being, not just illness' requires significant new funding to be directed to health education and promotion.

While funds are already provided for successful government and non-government health promotion activities, it is clear that there has not been enough emphasis on health education and promotion in the State health budget, and not enough coordination of health promotion activities across the State.

TasCOSS recommends that a large-scale, state-wide health promotion unit be established to coordinate and deliver health promotion activities and to involve State and local government, community service organisations and other community-based groups and institutions (such as schools and businesses).

In addition to and in support of this, TasCOSS recommends that the Department of Health and Human Services investigate ways to ensure that health promotion is a fundamental and integrated aspect of all health services, as well as a prominent headline activity within the ongoing implementation of *Tasmania's Health Plan*.

**Estimated cost: \$40 million** over four years.

**Link to Tasmania Together:**

- A reasonable lifestyle and standard of living for all Tasmanians. (Goal 1)
- Confident, friendly and safe communities. (Goal 2)
- Active, healthy Tasmanians with access to quality and affordable health care services. (Goal 4)
- Vibrant, inclusive and growing communities where people feel valued and connected. (Goal 5)

**Recommendation 2.2: Strengthen consumer engagement in Tasmania's health system:**

- **Provide funding for a representative and advocacy body for consumers in the Tasmanian health system that will represent all health consumers, as well as complement and strengthen the capacity of existing consumer advocacy groups; and**
- **Establish a mechanism within *Tasmania's Health Plan* for ongoing and genuine engagement with Tasmanian health consumers regarding health policy, needs, services and evaluation.**

**Department:** Health and Human Services

**Rationale:** In last year's State Budget submission, TasCOSS highlighted the need for increased consumer engagement in the State health system and we repeat the call in this Budget submission.

There are limited advocacy and representative services available to consumers seeking information and resolution of grievances in the public health system. An outcome of this is that consumers often feel frustrated, intimidated and powerless within the large and complex health system.

Therefore, we propose the establishment of an organisation to serve as a representative body for consumers in the Tasmanian health system, and to work with existing advocacy groups that represent Tasmanians with particular medical conditions or disabilities. This organisation should be independent of Government and health service providers, but have close links with all sectors of the Tasmanian health system, including the Department of Health and Human Services, private medical and community health services, along with professional organisations such as the Australian Medical Association and the Divisions of General Practice.

In addition, and as mentioned above, TasCOSS and many of its members are concerned with the absence of an ongoing mechanism for consumer engagement in health policy and services within the otherwise comprehensive *State Health Plan*. This recommendation calls for the establishment and funding of a mechanism to facilitate that engagement, which is necessary whether or not the first part of this recommendation is accepted.

**Estimated cost: \$500,000 per annum** recurrent funding for a health consumer representative and advocacy body.

**\$100,000 per annum** to establish and fund consumer consultation processes within the Department of Health and Human Services.

**Link to Tasmania Together:**

- A reasonable lifestyle and standard of living for all Tasmanians. (Goal 1)
- Confident, friendly and safe communities. (Goal 2)
- Active, healthy Tasmanians with access to quality and affordable health care services. (Goal 4)
- Vibrant, inclusive and growing communities where people feel valued and connected. (Goal 5)

**Recommendation 2.3: Allocate additional funding for system reform of alcohol, tobacco and drug services across government and non-government sectors, with an emphasis on integrating specialist and non-specialist service providers to ensure a coordinated service delivery system and response.**

**Department:** Health and Human Services

**Rationale:** Submissions to the recent *Review of Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug (ATOD) Services* highlighted the urgent need for service reform and coordination to improve service delivery and efficacy of response.

Our members inform us that both ATOD clients and service providers are frustrated with the lack of 'smoothness' of transitions and pathways through the service system. This results in opportunities for intervention being missed or delayed. The waiting time for

access to much-needed support programs can have potentially detrimental effects on clients' efforts toward behavioural changes and rehabilitation.

The lack of feedback from specialist services to non-specialist services regarding referral outcomes can limit the effectiveness of other programs in which ATOD clients may be involved.

In particular, there is a clear need for increased collaboration and effective linkages between staff from ATOD services and staff from mental health agencies due to the increased presentation of these co-morbidities in clients.

Improved planning, comprehensive mapping and future strategic directions can only go so far without the financial investment and long-term commitment to back it up. The ATOD service system, particularly the non-government sector, is currently, and historically, stretched and under-funded. Furthermore, the capacity of existing non-government ATOD services must be strengthened in order to be able to manage the changes brought about by any system reform.

The current Review of Tasmania's Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs service system is yet to report. It is vital that any recommendations that will result in improvements to the service system be adequately resourced and properly implemented.

**Estimated cost: \$9.5 million over 4 years** [note that this estimate is made in the absence of data about the level of need in this area and the service types required to meet this need. This data is forthcoming from the Department of Health and Human Services as part of the current Review of ATOD Services].

**Link to Tasmania Together:**

- A reasonable lifestyle and standard of living for all Tasmanians. (Goal 1)
- Confident, friendly and safe communities. (Goal 2)
- Active, healthy Tasmanians with access to quality and affordable health care services. (Goal 4)
- Vibrant, inclusive and growing communities where people feel valued and connected. (Goal 5)

**Recommendation 2.4: Allocate additional funds to government and non-government mental health services in order to improve services and address unmet need. Additional funds need to be directed to:**

- **Increase by 500 the number of mental health support packages available in the State;**
- **Double the number of mental health services and staff in the North and North-West of Tasmania;**
- **Establish specialist psychiatric facilities (3 bed units) within each public hospital for young people aged between 10 and 18, and**
- **Provide increased professional development opportunities for both government and non-government mental health workers.**

**Department:** Health and Human Services

**Rationale:** In spite of the positive changes that have occurred in recent years as a result of implementing recommendations from the *Bridging the Gap Report*, there remains significant unmet need for mental health services in Tasmania. This was a consistent theme in the state-wide consultations that TasCOSS undertook for this Budget submission, both from those involved in mental health service delivery and from other community service organisations. The areas of unmet need addressed in this recommendation were identified as those that require urgent attention and additional funding.

In addition to an increase in the number of mental health packages across the State, the North and North-West regions are areas where more services and staff, as well as packages, are most needed. This has been a consistent message from community service organisations in these areas over several years.

TasCOSS welcomes the recommendation in the recent *Review of the Mental Health Act 1996: Discussion paper* (August 2007) that young people be accommodated and treated separately from adults in secure mental health units (Recommendation 60). *Tasmania's Health Plan: Clinical Services Plan* (May 2007) also recognises the need to 'develop a service strategy for the management of children and adolescents with mental illness in an acute inpatient setting . . .' (p 157). These recommendations recognise a critical need and are closely related to our recommendation for a specialist psychiatric facility for young people aged between 10 and 18. This is currently a serious and yawning gap in mental health services in Tasmania which results in inappropriate accommodation and treatment for young people with mental illness.

In addition, the need for increased professional development opportunities for the mental health workforce, both government and non-government, was also identified as significant. Opportunities to improve and expand skills, to enhance knowledge and to remain abreast of developments in mental health research and treatments are not only essential to high quality mental health services, but can also increase the confidence and lower the stress levels of the mental health workforce.

**Estimated cost: \$10 million** would fund approximately 500 new mental health support packages.

**\$100,000** new funding for professional development activities.

**Link to Tasmania Together:**

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**Recommendation 2.5: Allocate funds to enhance the quality of life of mental health consumers; specifically:**

- **Increase funding for Tasmanian mental health consumers to increase their capacity to undertake systemic advocacy;**
- **Fund an additional three mental health advocates (one in each region); and**
- **Increase funding for existing support, rehabilitation, recovery and accommodation groups to provide additional social, recreational and leisure options for people with mental illness.**

**Department:** Health and Human Services

**Rationale:** As some of the most disadvantaged and marginalised health service users, mental health service consumers require individual advocacy, opportunities and options for social interaction and, importantly, support for self-advocacy on systemic issues. Although existing organisations and services currently attempt to fulfil all of these functions, increased funding is required to allow for an increase in activity.

No-one knows better than those using mental health services the strengths and the weaknesses of the mental health service system in Tasmania. It is therefore crucial that consumers are able to contribute to the ongoing monitoring and review of the State's mental health service system. In order to effectively participate in consultations and to provide feedback, resources are needed to help build and maintain the capacity of consumers to participate. Currently the development of consumer mental health self-advocacy in Tasmania is at a relatively early stage, and TasCOSS would like to see increased funding provided to the Tasmanian mental health consumer community.

Advocacy services for people with a mental illness are seriously under-funded in Tasmania and especially in the North and North-West regions of the State. It is particularly important that people with mental illness are well-supported by specialist advocates in regions where access to appropriate services is limited. TasCOSS therefore calls for increased funding to provide for mental health advocates in North and North-West Tasmania, and for an additional position in the South.

People with a mental illness are particularly vulnerable to social and physical isolation. The support groups and services that exist throughout the State require increased funding to continue to offer support through a range of social and recreational activities. These services play a vital role in keeping people with a mental illness connected, engaged and included in the community.

**Estimated Cost: \$625,000 per annum.**

**Link to Tasmania Together:**

- A reasonable lifestyle and standard of living for all Tasmanians. (Goal 1)
- Confident, friendly and safe communities. (Goal 2)
- Active, healthy Tasmanians with access to quality and affordable health care services. (Goal 4)
- Vibrant, inclusive and growing communities where people feel valued and connected. (Goal 5)

### **3. Education and Employment**

#### **Education**

Like our health status, Tasmania's educational outcomes are poor in relation to those in most other states and territories. Poor educational outcomes can affect all aspects of an individual's life, including their health status, employment opportunities, social and civic participation, relationships and income potential. Poor outcomes can also affect the nature of the community in which we live, and act as a constraint on economic growth. Education is a key driver of poverty and disadvantage – and a key determinant of a sustainable community.

Education should not end with the completion of formal education or training, but should continue throughout life to enable people to remain engaged, mentally active, to update skills and to continue to adapt to a changing world. Life-long learning not only promotes social inclusion, but also has positive outcomes for individual and community health, well-being and sustainability.

TasCOSS believes that the State Government must prioritise education as a fundamental building block in addressing disadvantage and creating sustainable communities in Tasmania and commit, not only to lifting retention rates and post-school qualifications in the State, but also to building a culture that genuinely values education and life-long learning.

#### **Employment**

Despite the continuous growth in employment, too many Tasmanians continue to lack opportunities to participate in employment. These include mature-aged people, people with disabilities, carers, and people in regional areas and those with low skill levels .

TasCOSS is calling on the State Government to invest in strategies to assist unemployed and low-skilled Tasmanians to develop skills and resources needed to take advantage of opportunities emerging through Tasmania's relative economic prosperity.

**Recommendation 3.1: Allocate appropriate new resources to ensure that the proposed changes to Tasmania's Post Year 10 education system – Tasmania Tomorrow – will:**

- **lift retention and completion rates,**
- **remove barriers to further education faced by disadvantaged and rural students, and**
- **contribute to the creation in Tasmania of a culture that values education and life-long learning.**

**Department:** Education

**Rationale:** Major issues for the future of Tasmania, and for poverty and disadvantage in the State are the low retention rate from Year 10 to Years 11 and 12, the poor completion rate for Year 12, the barriers to education faced by disadvantaged and rural students, and the relatively low level of post-school qualifications. While the proposed re-structure of

Post Year 10 education is intended to address these issues, there has been a lack of detail to judge how Tasmania *Tomorrow* will do this.

It is essential therefore that changes to Tasmania's Post Year 10 education system are well-resourced. The changes need to focus on increasing access to Post Year 10 education, increasing retention and completion rates, increasing pathways to post-school qualifications and engendering a culture that values life-long learning. Changes must therefore be well-considered and based on consultation.

Major reforms such as Tasmania *Tomorrow* will not be successful unless adequate resources are provided to develop, implement and evaluate the policy.

**Estimated Cost:** This item is un-costed.

**Link to Tasmania Together:**

- A reasonable lifestyle and standard of living for all Tasmanians. (Goal 1)
- High quality education and training for life-long learning and a skilled workforce. (Goal 3)
- Vibrant, inclusive and growing communities where people feel valued and connected. (Goal 5)

**Recommendation 3.2: Establish a Community Partnerships to Learning program based on the Partnerships to Jobs model, for the purpose of supporting community based training and learning opportunities for low income and disadvantaged Tasmanians who experience barriers to engaging in mainstream education and training.**

**Departments:** Education and Economic Development

**Rationale:** Equality of access to education and training must be a fundamental goal of the public education system. Considering Tasmania's low retention rate beyond Year 10, the State Government has a responsibility to ensure all Tasmanians have access to high-quality affordable compulsory and post- compulsory education and training.

TasCOSS supports the Business Council of Australia's emphasis on the need for grass roots, community-based solutions rather than top-down policies as this approach is likely to have better outcomes for individuals, businesses, communities and the wider economy. This *Community Partnerships to Learning* program should provide funding to community-based organisations to assist with the cost of delivering formal certificate based training in the community, and promote and assist with partnering these organisations with appropriate registered training organisations.

**Estimated Cost: \$1 million annually.**

**Link to Tasmania Together:**

- Increased work opportunities for all Tasmanians. (Goal 9)

**Recommendation 3.3: Increase funding to deliver life skills programs inside and outside the mainstream education system.**

**Departments:** Education and Health and Human Services

**Rationale:** There are a range of excellent life-skills programs, developed and delivered by government and non-government organisations, which provide the Tasmanian community with valuable education, awareness and skill development around a range of physical, mental and emotional health issues. Examples of such programs include: mental health awareness programs; anti-homophobia and anti-bullying programs; and comprehensive sexual health and relationship education.

Unfortunately, there is often too little or only short term investment and support by the State Government to deliver such programs inside and outside the Tasmanian school system and wider community. We are calling for the State Government to provide additional funding to increase the capacity for government and non-government organisations to deliver essential life-skills programs inside and outside the mainstream education system to promote awareness and build the life skills of the Tasmanian community.

**Estimated Cost: \$1.2 million annually.**

**Link to Tasmanian Together:**

- Confident, friendly and safe communities. (Goal 2)
- High-quality education and training for lifelong learning and a skilled workforce. (Goal 3)

**Recommendation 3.4: Additional funding to increase the capacity for state-wide advocacy services for Tasmanian students with disabilities.**

**Department:** Education

**Rationale:** Equitable participation in a school system relies on the ability of students to engage with the school in the event of grievances or alternatively, to have someone to support students in the process. This would normally be a family carer or guardian.

Students with disabilities often face significant barriers to engaging in the education service system. To ensure that they can engage effectively, external advocacy is needed.

The Department of Education currently provides funding for the equivalent of one full time advocate for all State schools with services stretched across the South, North and North West regions in Tasmania.

Current funding for disability advocacy in schools is not enough to provide adequate services and support for students with disabilities.

TasCOSS calls for the Government to fund the equivalent of an additional full-time advocacy position. This would enable an increase in the capacity for requests for disability advocacy to be met across Tasmania.

**Estimated Cost: \$100,000.**

**Link to Tasmania Together:**

- Vibrant, inclusive and growing communities where people feel valued and connected. (Goal 5)

**Recommendation 3.5: Provide funding to continue the successful Partnerships to Jobs program and expand its focus in order to:**

- **support community based ventures aimed at assisting disadvantaged, marginally attached and under-employed Tasmanian job seekers to become 'work-ready'; and**
- **invest in building partnerships between local community groups, local industry and government to create community-based solutions that will encourage and support employers in their capacity take on disadvantaged job seekers.**

**Department:** Economic Development

**Rationale:** The Demographic Change Advisory Council Report 2007 identified low participation rates to be a key challenge for Tasmania now and into the future. Since July 2006 TasCOSS, through the Industry Development Unit (IDU), has delivered capacity building support services to community sector organisations seeking to apply for seed funds from the Department of Economic Development's (DED) *Partnerships to Jobs* funding program. This program funds initiatives that create jobs, or pathways into jobs, for disadvantaged job seekers. TasCOSS recommends that *Partnerships to Jobs* expand its target groups beyond the current program's focus on disadvantaged job seekers to also include:

- *marginally attached potential workers:* Those people who are available to work, want to work and could start in four weeks but do not satisfy all of the criteria to be classified as unemployed.
- *Under-employed workers:* Those people who are currently working small numbers of hours, are not exercising their full skills and experience, and who have capacity and motivation to work more hours.

Community organisations have direct contact with these groups of people as they cycle through support services according to fluctuations in work availability and pressure on household budgets. Thus locally based projects are amongst the very few mechanisms available to government agencies to develop the potential and increased the productivity of this group.

**Estimated Cost: \$1.5 million annually**

**Link to Tasmania Together:**

- High-quality education and training for lifelong learning and a skilled workforce. (Goal 3)

**Recommendation 3.6: Allocate funds to develop culturally appropriate community based support programs to assist, develop skills and build on the strengths of Tasmania's culturally and linguistically diverse community, with a particular emphasis on providing pre-employment and ongoing employment support.**

**Department:** Education and Health and Human Services

**Rationale:** New migrants and cultural diversity bring enormous economic and social opportunities. Established refugee initiated communities represent a great opportunity for Tasmania to become a vibrant multicultural island. Such communities will contribute significantly to population, culture and economic renewal.

More needs to be done to respond to the ongoing issues which lead to interstate migration: lack of employment assistance, continuing language problems, and factors relating to community development and size.

Therefore, TasCOSS is calling for the State Government to increase funding to the existing government and non-government organisations and networks to provide continuing support to culturally and linguistically diverse communities. This would enable these organisations to continue to provide support, advocacy and capacity building strategies across the board – from new entry migrants to ageing Tasmanian migrants, with an emphasis on providing mentoring and support for employment.

**Estimated Cost: \$1 million annually.**

**Links to Tasmania *Together*:**

- Vibrant, inclusive and growing communities where people feel valued and connected. (Goal 5)
- Increased work opportunities for all Tasmanians. (Goal 9)

## 4. Human Services

Access to high quality community and health services is essential to building and sustaining a growing, healthy and active community. Human services are a vital part of our community structure and play an important role in ensuring social inclusion and sustainable communities.

Over the years the community services sector has worked closely with the Department of Health and Human Services to improve the provision of services to Tasmanians. It is critical the Government increases investment in these service areas to ensure they are able to meet the unmet need, as well as the changing needs and expectations of the community, by providing quality services that deliver positive outcomes for the whole community.

According to *Tasmania's Health Plan: Primary Health Services Plan*, Tasmania's health system needs to take a partnership approach 'in which a range of groups and organisations . . . work together on improving health; integrated with the other elements of the health service system'. The Government must continue to fund, support, and work with the community services sector to provide human services necessary to ensure that disadvantage is minimised and that Tasmanians receive the services they need.

**Recommendation 4.1: Provide additional funding to increase the capacity of existing services and initiatives to support the needs, enhance knowledge and build skills of pregnant and parenting young people.**

**Department:** Health and Human Services and Education

**Rationale:** TasCOSS is calling on the Government for better support for young people who are pregnant or parenting in making choices about pregnancy and parenthood.

Tasmania's birth rate among teenagers is one of the highest in Australia and second only to the Northern Territory. The DHHS report *Making Choices: Young People and Pregnancy in Tasmania* (2005) outlines a clear strategy for a coordinated multi-faceted approach to supporting pregnant and parenting young people through service provider networks to promote information exchange and communication across sectors. It is essential that the Government continues to support the strategies and services that support pregnant and parenting young people into the longer term.

There are a range of services and programs in Tasmania for young people who are pregnant or parenting which provide supportive environments and skill development for antenatal care, breastfeeding, post-natal depression, as well as opportunities to continue with education and/or to gain access to employment and training, and more general emotional and practical support.

Enhanced support for young parents will help to reduce their and their children's social and economic disadvantage by retaining connections to schooling and education, engaging young fathers, and providing parenting education and support in an appropriate format.

**Estimated Cost:** \$100,000 recurrent funding.

**Link to Tasmania Together:**

- Active, healthy Tasmanians with access to quality and affordable health care services. (Goal 4)

**Recommendation 4.2: Continue the early intervention focus within Children and Family Services by allocating significant funding to improve support to children and families.**

**Department:** Health and Human Services

**Rationale:** Over the last three years there has been a significant review of Children and Family Services which has resulted in a comprehensive report and a new model for services developed by KPMG. TasCOSS calls on the Government to fully fund and implement this new model of Children and Family Services, with its focus on early intervention, as a matter of urgency.

There is a significant research base which now points to the need to invest in services for children younger in life. This evidence highlights that, for children, their most formative years are the first three years, and that significant development occurs from 0 – 5. By providing increased investment and services for families with children in this age bracket, significant benefits for children can be achieved.

Parents and families need supportive environments so they are able to nurture not only their children, but themselves. The parents and families of children must also be supported through the many and varied challenges of parenting, for example postnatal depression education support and visitation programs, breast-feeding promotion, support and skill development, drug and alcohol counselling/rehabilitation and relationship counselling and support.

TasCOSS recommends that the Tasmanian Government continue its early intervention focus in Children and Family Services with additional investment in a range of services for families and children, through the 2008-09 State Budget.

**Estimated Cost:** This item is un-costed.

**Link to Tasmania Together**

- Confident, friendly and safe communities. (Goal 2)
- Active, healthy Tasmanians with access to quality and affordable health care services. (Goal 4)
- Vibrant, inclusive and growing communities where people feel valued and connected. (Goal 5)

**Recommendation 4.3: Increase the allocation of core funding to existing neighbourhood houses across the State.**

**Department:** Health and Human Services

**Rationale:** Neighbourhood houses have been part of Tasmanian communities since the late 1970s, and now there are 33 houses funded across the State. Originally, neighbourhood houses provided services such as playgroup and child minding facilities, craft courses and a social meeting point. Houses were, and continue to be operated by local community-based volunteer governing bodies. Neighbourhood houses are important places of support in local communities. The community building role they play is vital in creating a fair, just and inclusive Tasmania.

Government agencies, including Youth Justice, Tasmanian Police and Child Protection, all make use of the community connections provided by neighbourhood houses and it is clearly in the DHHS and our State's best interests to invest in them further.

The recent decision to provide a three year funding cycle to neighbourhood houses is welcome; however, an increase in core funding is required both for existing houses to allow services to match increasing need, and to accommodate the increased need for state-wide coordination and support.

**Estimated Cost:** An increase of \$705,000 per year in core funding.

**Link to Tasmania Together:**

- Vibrant, inclusive and growing communities where people feel valued and connected. (Goal 5)

**Recommendation 4.4: Allocate an additional \$11.1 million per annum to disability services to address current levels of unmet need.**

**Department:** Health and Human Services

**Rationale:** Last year TasCOSS, along with other member organisations, called for an additional \$9.8m to address unmet need in the disability services sector. This recommendation was not taken up by Government so we are again calling for additional funding.

While TasCOSS welcomes the Government review into disability services, TasCOSS members continue to report their growing frustration with the continuing unmet need for basic services. They have also expressed concern about the perceived continuing lack of priority given by Government to address the basic needs of Tasmanians with a disability, along with their carers and families.

Considering that government and non-government disability services received little additional funding to address unmet need in the last State Budget, TasCOSS is again calling for an increase in disability services funding across the State in order to ensure a basic level of service is available to every Tasmanian requiring support.

It is estimated that an additional \$11.1 million is required to meet the outstanding acute needs of clients. This funding must be targeted directly at 'sharp end' services, including:

- An additional \$3.46 million to meet the operational costs for seven new group homes to be operated by non-government organisations;
- \$6.04 million to address the current waiting list for individual support packages (ISP); and
- \$1.6 million to address waiting lists for day support packages.

This funding will increase the capacity of disability services in the Government and non-government sectors and ensure every Tasmanian with a disability, who is assessed as in need of assistance, can expect to be able to access these services in a prompt and efficient manner.

**Estimated Cost: \$11.1 million** in recurrent funding.

**Link to Tasmania Together:**

- Active, healthy Tasmanians with access to quality and affordable health care services. (Goal 4)

**Recommendation 4.5: Allocate increased recurrent funding for the Community Equipment Scheme including provision for a review and annual indexation.**

**Department:** Health and Human Services

**Rationale:** The Community Equipment Scheme (CES) provides a variety of equipment and continence aids and appliances to eligible clients living in the community.

The overall budget of the Community Equipment Scheme has not increased for six years. This has limited its ability to meet demand, to increase the range and quantity of equipment on offer and to cover the cost of maintenance, repair and replacement of loan equipment. This causes delays in supplying standard equipment, unpredictable waiting times and a necessity to prioritise the provision of aids for clinical needs over aids which enable social participation. The scheme also excludes many people with disabilities.

TasCOSS is calling for increased funding to the Community Equipment Scheme to meet current demand and allow for an increased limit on expenditure for individual items. We are also calling for a review of the Community Equipment Scheme to ensure that, into the future, the Scheme is adequately funded to meet demand. It is essential that all Tasmanians with a disability have access to the level of assistance, equipment and services that they require.

**Estimated Cost:** An additional **\$800,000** for the Community Equipment Scheme plus sufficient funding for a review and annual indexation of the Scheme.

**Link to Tasmania Together:**

- Active, healthy Tasmanians with access to quality and affordable health care services. (Goal 4)

**Recommendation 4.6: Commit to creating an independent body to assess disability services delivery against established national standards.**

**Department:** Health and Human Services

**Rationale:** Consumers, family carers and other members of the community need assurance that people with disabilities are receiving a reasonable quality of service.

A complete quality assurance system provides internal and external ways of assessing all aspects of the service system, ensuring ongoing improvements within and across services in policy-making, service planning and delivery.

At the moment there are no auditable standards for the delivery of services to people with disabilities in Tasmania, and therefore no consistent method for reliably measuring service quality. This could be addressed by adopting a national standard, such as the National Standards for Disability Services.

One value of an independent audit body is its ability to provide arms-length advice to the Minister of Health and Human Services. Currently the Department (DHHS, Disability Services) performs this role which conflicts with its function as a service provider, and results in a systemic risk for all service users.

Other benefits of establishing an independent body for assessing disability services delivery would include: quality services for consumers; continuing improvement in service delivery; potentially a reduced number of interventions by advocacy services; more effective and efficient use of resources; services developing an understanding of what constitutes quality service; and provision of regular, ongoing feedback to service providers.

**Estimated Cost: \$2.5 million annually.**

**Link to Tasmania Together:**

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- Active, healthy Tasmanians with access to quality and affordable health care services. (Goal 4)
- Vibrant, inclusive and growing communities where people feel valued and connected. (Goal 5)

**Recommendation 4.7: Investigate the need for a Community and Disability Services Commissioner in the Office of the Ombudsman.**

**Departments:** Justice and Industrial Relations and Health and Human Services

**Rationale:** The rapid growth of the non-government community services industry, fuelled by the outsourcing of responsibilities once held by the Tasmanian Government, is characterised by changed qualitative dimensions, not just quantitative ones. That is, community service organisations (CSOs) are now delivering 'sharp-end' services that have very significant impacts on consumers.

It is imperative that the broader Tasmanian community maintains its trust in the capacity of CSOs to deliver consistently high-quality services. With services delivered by State Government agencies, consumers have recourse to the Ombudsman where they believe there has been a breakdown in service quality. There is no parallel system of grievance investigation/resolution which applies to the non-government sector. The powers and resources of the Ombudsman generally, and the Health Complaints Commissioner specifically, do not permit the oversight of this crucially important industry.

TasCOSS urges the State Government to examine and consider the adoption of the New South Wales Government model where a Disability and Community Services Commissioner (in effect, the Deputy Ombudsman) has specific powers to conduct individual and systemic reviews of the work of CSOs.

**Estimated Cost: \$150,000** (estimated cost for nine-month review process involving community consultation).

**Links to Tasmania Together:**

- Active, healthy Tasmanians with access to quality and affordable health care services. (Goal 4)

**Recommendation 4.8: Allocate new resources to enable an increase in brain injury support services and in the number of brain injury prevention programs across the State.**

**Department:** Health and Human Services

**Rationale:** Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) is a major, yet under-recognised health issue in Tasmania. The level of funding to ABI services in Tasmania is inadequate to meet the current needs of existing clients, let alone to address the unmet need of people with an acquired brain injury in the future. It is estimated that there are more than 2,500 Tasmanians acquiring a brain injury each year.

One in 30 children will have some form of brain injury before they reach the age of 21. About 60% of children in juvenile detention were found to have had an early brain injury. These children show behavioural deficits that look like a 'bad adolescent'; it has now been documented this is probably associated with a brain injury earlier in life. Research also indicates a trend for adults with ABI to have an increased likelihood of involvement in the criminal justice system – a cost which can be measured in financial terms (cost per inmate per day of incarceration). However, the cost for the impact on families and an individual's participation in life is immeasurable.

In some instances, the lack of specialist ABI services results in people being offered inappropriate services which do not address their stated goals. For many others it results in not being provided a service at all. The State pays a cost for this neglect; an economic cost and a human cost.

An effective and equitable level of funding needs to be provided to address the current imbalance in service provision to meet the needs of people with acquired brain injury across Tasmania. In addition, preventative education must also be funded.

**Estimated Cost:** This item is un-costed.

**Link to Tasmania Together:**

- Active, healthy Tasmanians with access to quality and affordable health care services. (Goal 4)

**Recommendation 4.9: Establish a whole-of-government strategy for protection against Elder Abuse.**

**Department:** Premier and Cabinet

**Rationale:** Tasmania stands alone among the other Australian states for the absence of a State strategy for the protection of older people against elder abuse. In all other states, governments collaborate with community-based organisations to offer protection and response services.

Without a strategy, Tasmania lacks a coordinated approach necessary to address the abuse of elderly Tasmanians and the visible means for people to act to prevent and respond to abuse.

The Tasmanian State Government has shown a willingness to address the issues of elder abuse. The *Tasmanian Plan for Positive Ageing*, *Tasmania Together 2010* and the establishment of the Demographic Change Advisory Committee, all indicate a preparedness to progress action on this undesirable social problem.

A strategy should incorporate a Government and community stakeholders' steering group, a whole-of-Government policy position and the establishment of regional community-based independent agencies to provide a visible presence within the community to deliver services. Services should include: a telephone hotline, information and advocacy services, public awareness and education resources, and community and aged care worker training.

**Estimated Cost:** \$260,000

**Links to Tasmania Together:**

- A reasonable lifestyle and standard of living for all Tasmanians. (Goal 1)
- Confident, friendly and safe communities. (Goal 2)
- Vibrant, inclusive and growing communities where people feel valued and connected. (Goal 5)

**Recommendation: 4.10: Allocate increased funding for the provision and development of Home and Community Care (HACC) services.**

**Department:** Health and Human Services

**Rationale:** In Tasmania the HACC program funds around 60 non-government organisations, as well as business units within the Department, to provide services such as community nursing, allied health, day care, domestic assistance, personal care, home maintenance and community transport.

HACC services are designed to improve the safety and quality of life of elderly people and young people with a disability, and carers in their own homes, and have been demonstrated to lessen the demand on acute care services and on residential aged care services.

However, the actual number of Tasmanians over the age of 65 is projected to increase by 10,000 every 5 years until 2030. Effectively, the current number of seniors, around 70,000, will double. This represents a large proportion of the HACC target group – the frail elderly. Funding increases are therefore required to more effectively meet the needs of the ageing Tasmanian population.

In addition to a projected increase in the demand for services, research by TasCOSS indicates that particular areas of the HACC program require additional resourcing. These are:

- projects that enhance independence and address loneliness;
- programs that are low cost and community based;
- ongoing training for HACC workers; and
- carer support programs.

TasCOSS calls on the State Government to provide additional funding to the HACC Program, to enable it to meet increased demand and to address current program shortfalls.

**Estimated Cost:** An increase of **15%** of State Government contribution to HACC services.

**Link to Tasmania Together:**

- A reasonable lifestyle and standard of living for all Tasmanians. (Goal 1)
- Confident, friendly and safe communities. (Goal 2)
- Vibrant, inclusive and growing communities where people feel valued and connected. (Goal 5)

**Recommendation 4.11: Allocate funding to subsidise the purchase of appropriate smoke alarms for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.**

**Rationale:** The majority of smoke detectors commonly available have audible alarms and are therefore not suitable for most people who are deaf or hearing impaired. Some have a flashing strobe light and/or a vibrating pad that can be placed under a pillow, and these activate when smoke is detected. While a conventional smoke detector costs around \$80, smoke alarms for people with hearing impairments can cost between \$300-\$400 plus installation costs, as they must be fitted professionally.

The purchase of a smoke detector that is appropriate for hearing impaired people is often beyond the budget of many people on low incomes. With Tasmania's rapidly aging population and thus a likely growth in the number of people who will experience hearing loss, these smoke detectors are an essential health and safety measure for many Tasmanians. An inappropriate smoke alarm can have potentially devastating and fatal effects.

**Estimated Cost: \$200,000.**

**Link to Tasmania Together:**

- Active, healthy Tasmanians with access to quality and affordable health care services. (Goal 4)

**Recommendation 4.12: Allocate funding to contract the Australian Bureau of Statistics to develop and implement a survey to capture detailed information on and about volunteering in Tasmania.**

**Department:** Health and Human Services

**Rationale:** Volunteers and volunteering provide valuable contributions to government and non-government organisations and services. Volunteering also enables people to acquire new knowledge and skills and to fully develop their personal potential and promotes community participation, inclusion and solidarity.

There is evidence, nationally and internationally, that the demographics of volunteering are changing and the impact of the ageing population will have both positive and negative effects on volunteering. Although the Australian Bureau of Statistics collects some statistics on volunteering, there is a gap in local data.

It is crucial that accurate and current data is obtained in order to adequately respond to local issues surrounding volunteering. Such data would be used to inform policy around the use of volunteers by the Government to deliver critical services such as meals on wheels, community transport and social support services to older Tasmanians.

**Estimated Cost:** This item is un-costed.

**Link to Tasmania Together:**

- Vibrant, inclusive and growing communities where people feel valued and connected. (Goal 5)

## 5. Transport

Access to appropriate transport contributes greatly to a person's ability to participate in their community, enabling people to take advantage of employment, education, training, rehabilitation, social and recreational opportunities, as well as providing access to health care services.

Access to transport is a key feature of inclusive and sustainable communities, and much more needs to be done in Tasmania to ensure transport services are adequate, affordable and appropriate. The success of the new State *Health Plan* is dependent on improvements in transport, as is the Tasmania *Tomorrow* education plan.

The Government has a responsibility to ensure all Tasmanians have reasonable access to affordable, reliable and accessible public, or publicly subsidised, passenger transport services. This issue has been the subject of a long-term review, the *Review into Core Passenger Transport Services*, and TasCOSS believes it is unfortunate that the results of the Review have not yet been released and that we were not able to consider its findings and recommendations in this submission.

The Government has committed to implementing the recommendations from the *Review of the Core Passenger Transport Services* in its 2007-08 Budget as a major initiative for the year and funding was allocated to implement recommendations from the Review.

Of course, Government funding for the review is not only welcome but essential. But while the report remains unreleased, the current system remains static and any strategies towards implementation of a fairer, comprehensive and more equitable Passenger Transport System are further delayed in a time where prompt action is needed.

**Recommendation 5.1: Allocate additional funding for the development of a comprehensive community transport service to enable people to participate in employment, education, training, rehabilitation and other social and community opportunities. This should build on and expand existing community transport services.**

**Department:** Infrastructure Energy and Resources

**Rationale:** Many low income and disadvantaged Tasmanians face a number of barriers created by a lack of access to conventional public transport. Community transport services can play an important role in enabling people to participate in fully and actively in their community.

Community transport networks need to be better coordinated and improve transport options for people attending health care services where public transport either is not available or is inappropriate.

TasCOSS is calling for the State Government to provide additional funding in the 2008-09 Budget for the development, in consultation with existing service providers, of comprehensive community transport services across Tasmania.

**Estimated Cost:** This item is un-costed.

**Link to Tasmania Together:**

- Vibrant, inclusive and growing communities where people feel valued and connected. (Goal 5)

**Recommendation 5.2: Allocate additional funding and resources to assist disadvantaged and low income learner drivers state-wide to meet the 50 hour log book requirement.**

**Department:** Infrastructure, Energy and Resources

**Rationale:** Non-government community organisations providing services to people from low income and disadvantaged backgrounds, and to refugees, are particularly concerned about the barriers preventing people from undertaking the 50 hours of driver training required before applying for a provisional drivers licence.

These barriers include a lack of access to safe, suitable vehicles; the cost of professional driving tuition; and the cost of petrol, making it an expensive exercise to practice driving for 50 hours. There is often the additional difficulty of finding a licensed driver to supervise lessons.

The outcome of this is that many people are either not able to sit for their provisional licence, are driving unlicensed, or are dependent on often inadequate public transport services.

Access to transport is an essential factor in an individual's social and economic participation. A high percentage of Tasmanians from low income and disadvantaged backgrounds live in suburban and rural areas outside our main population centres. These areas have inadequate public transport services. It is therefore vital that people have the opportunity to gain their drivers licence to maximise the chances of them participating in post-compulsory education, training or employment, and to generally become full and active participants in society.

**Estimated Cost:** \$50,000 recurrent funding.

**Links to Tasmania Together:**

- A reasonable lifestyle and standard of living for all Tasmanians. (Goal 1).
- Confident, friendly and safe communities. (Goal 2)
- Vibrant, inclusive and growing communities where people feel valued and connected. (Goal 5)

## 6. Justice

It is crucial that the Tasmanian justice system is restorative, and promotes and values the rights of all Tasmanians. In order to be fair and sustainable, all Tasmanians must have access to the justice system and be aware of their rights and responsibilities within it.

Youth Justice, community legal services and human rights are three areas that TasCOSS believes the State Government must invest in over the next financial year and into the future.

Investment in the following recommendations will work to improve safety in the community, divert young people from incarceration, improve access to justice, recognise the basic human rights of all Tasmanians, and create a culture of respect for human rights in the State.

**Recommendation 6.1: Provide sufficient funding to implement the following recommendations, relating to community services from the *Report into Ashley, Youth Justice and Detention* in order to improve community-based youth justice services; early intervention programs and assessment; and supported accommodation for young offenders or young people at risk of offending:**

- 4. The Government should actively encourage and resource non-government organisations to provide supported accommodation for young people on remand and for young people exiting any period of custodial detention;*
- 7. The Government urgently reassess its commitment to the community service order system, and allocates appropriate funding;*
- 9. Early intervention policies and programs should be available for children and young people at risk of entering the youth justice system, including appropriate assessment for mental health, addiction, brain injury and other impediments that may be the cause of anti-social behaviour; and*
- 11. That funding for Community Youth Justice services and early intervention should be increased.*

**Department:** Justice and Industrial Relations

**Rationale:** According to the *Report into Ashley, Youth, Justice and Detention* (2007) non-government organisations have 'proven conclusively' that they provide effective alternative sentencing for young offenders and that community organisations 'appear to be capable of demonstrating success, particularly in areas where the Government sector is falling well short'.

The majority of young Tasmanians involved in the youth justice system (>80%) are managed in the community. Lack of funding impedes the ability of otherwise excellent services to have a stronger and longer lasting impact. There is significant mismatch between funds used to detain a relatively small number at Ashley Youth Detention Centre

(AYDC) and the funds that support a much greater number of young offenders in the community (\$8m for AYDC and \$2.1m for community-based options).

This mismatch in funding constrains non-government organisations from providing diversionary programs that have proven successful. State Government funding for youth justice services over the next four years should attempt to close the gap between funding for AYDC and community youth justice services.

Early intervention for those at risk of offending, combined with supported accommodation for those leaving AYDC, will greatly assist young people at either end of the youth justice system to get the appropriate ongoing assistance and support they need to either avoid entering or re-entering the detention and prison system.

It is crucial that the State Government support community organisations to divert young people from entering AYDC. One of the clear ways of doing this is to offer increased support, recognition and increased funding to government and non-government services and programs that support youth justice services.

TasCOSS is calling for a 100% increase the State Government contribution to community youth justice services.

**Estimated Cost: \$4.2 million.**

**Link to Tasmania Together:**

- Confident, friendly and safe communities. (Goal 2)
- Vibrant, inclusive and growing communities where people feel valued and connected. (Goal 5)

**Recommendation 6.2: Allocate ongoing State funding to ensure the viability and increase the capacity of Tasmanian community legal centres.**

**Department:** Justice and Industrial Relations

**Rationale:** Community legal centres provide a range of legal services to individuals and their communities. These services include both legal representation in the courts and preventative services such as information and advice services, community legal education and work contributing to law and policy reform.

Demand for the community legal centre services has significantly increased in Tasmania as a result of policy changes at both a State and Commonwealth level. Services have experienced a significant increase in requests for assistance as a result of the recent changes to industrial relations laws and income support payments. However, additional funding has not been made available to increase the capacity and resources of the centres. This causes frustration for centre management and staff, and for the many Tasmanians who seek their services.

TasCOSS believes community legal centres are providing an increasingly important information and advocacy service for particularly vulnerable and disadvantaged Tasmanian workers. Casual and seasonal workers, particularly those from low income

and disadvantaged backgrounds, are often not members of unions, and it is vital that these workers have access to information on their legal rights, and have representation and advocacy in workplace disputes.

Community legal services have demonstrated both their cost effectiveness and their efficacy in providing access to justice. We believe that the State Government must invest in these important services to ensure the most vulnerable Tasmanians have access to legal services.

**Estimated Cost: \$320,000 recurrent funding.**

**Links to Tasmania Together:**

- Confident, friendly and safe communities. (Goal 2)
- Vibrant, inclusive and growing communities where people feel valued and connected. (Goal 5)

**Recommendation 6.3: Allocate appropriate departmental resources to continue the process of developing a Tasmanian Charter of Human Rights by initiating a community information campaign to promote a culture of awareness and respect for human rights in Tasmania.**

**Department:** Justice and Industrial Relations

**Rationale:** TasCOSS strongly supports a Charter of Human Rights for Tasmania because we believe it will not only protect human rights in Tasmania, but will also significantly increase community awareness of human rights and promote a culture of greater respect for the rights of all Tasmanians. Communities that respect and protect human rights are more likely to be sustainable communities.

TasCOSS would like to see funding immediately made available through the 2008-2009 Budget for a community information campaign to begin to promote a culture of awareness and respect for human rights in Tasmania.

TasCOSS recommends that the Tasmanian Government consider the additional departmental resources that would be required to implement this recommendation. Departmental resources will need to be allocated for engaging with key stakeholders on the content of a *Tasmanian Human Rights Act*, as well as providing for any structural changes within Government departments to facilitate the full implementation of a new human rights framework.

The community information campaign should seek to inform all Tasmanians on the content of the proposed Human Rights Act and what it means for them. The campaign should also seek to educate Tasmanians about how individuals and communities can work to enhance human rights within their communities. The public component of the information campaign should include advertising through the media and ensure information is made available to the community. Government agencies would also require education about their new responsibilities in being accountable to a human rights framework.

**Estimated Cost: \$100,000** for a community education campaign.

**Links to Tasmania *Together*:**

- Confident, friendly and safe communities. (Goal 2)
- Vibrant, inclusive and growing communities where people feel valued and connected. (Goal 5)

## **7. Social Inclusion**

Tasmania's income, health, educational and other social indicators demonstrate that poverty and disadvantage persist in the State despite the economic growth of recent years. The persistence of poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion in Tasmania affects us all. It is not simply a matter of insufficient income, but is complex and is caused by a constellation of factors.

Existing government-funded and provided services have not resulted in long-term and enduring improvements in the educational, health, housing and income status of Tasmanians. This means that millions of dollars are spent annually addressing the symptoms of poor health, poverty and disadvantage in Tasmania but are not having significant impact on the causes or drivers of those symptoms. This does not make social – or economic – sense.

TasCOSS calls on the State Government to provide leadership and to commit its energy and resources to developing a comprehensive policy framework to address poverty and disadvantage in Tasmania and to break down the barriers that prevent many Tasmanians from enjoying opportunities and prosperity.

While this will obviously require careful long-term planning and consultation, there are some immediate steps that the Government can commit to in this Budget. The following recommendations will lay the groundwork for the development of a coordinated, comprehensive and long-term social inclusion plan to combat poverty and disadvantage in Tasmania.

**Recommendation 7.1: Establish a well-resourced social inclusion unit to research, develop and deliver a long-term, comprehensive whole-of-government social inclusion strategy to systematically combat poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion in Tasmania.**

**Department:** Premier and Cabinet

**Rationale:** A social inclusion unit, located in the Department of Premier and Cabinet, would research, plan, and coordinate the whole-of-government, long-term strategies necessary to tackle the drivers of poverty, disadvantage and exclusion in Tasmania.

A key initial activity would be the collection of comprehensive data in order to fully understand the nature, prevalence and drivers of poverty, disadvantage and exclusion in the State, and the locations and population groups in which these conditions are concentrated. A solid understanding of poverty and disadvantage will allow appropriate strategies to be developed to target the causes of poverty throughout the State, and in particular areas and among specific population groups.

The careful analysis of data collected will allow the establishment of a 'poverty benchmark' for the State, and provide clear goals for the social inclusion strategies developed by the unit.

**Estimated Cost:** This item is un-costed.

**Link to Tasmania Together:**

- A reasonable lifestyle and standard of living for all Tasmanians. (Goal 1)
- Confident, friendly and safe communities. (Goal 2)
- Vibrant, inclusive and growing communities where people feel valued and connected. (Goal 5)
- Open and accountable government that listens and plans for a shared future. (Goal 8)

**Recommendation 7.2: Introduce a system of mandatory ‘poverty proofing’ all Government initiatives – including legislation, programs, policies and projects – by assessing all initiatives for their likely contribution to eradicating poverty, disadvantage and exclusion in Tasmania and/or their likely exacerbation of these conditions.**

**Department:** Premier and Cabinet

**Rationale:** The eradication of poverty and disadvantage in Tasmania will require long-term, comprehensive and coordinated efforts from all parts of Government. The process of ‘poverty proofing’ Government activities is a key strategy that will not only ensure that all Government activities are coordinated, but also that the issue of tackling poverty and disadvantage remains central to all Government business.

‘Poverty proofing’ was first introduced in Ireland in 1998 as part of the country’s comprehensive National Anti-Poverty Strategy. It is defined as:

*The process by which government departments, local authorities and State Agencies assess policies and programs at design and implementation stages in relation to the likely impact that they will have or have had on poverty and on inequalities which are likely to lead to poverty, with a view to poverty reduction.*  
(Office for Social Inclusion, Ireland: [www.socialinclusion.ie](http://www.socialinclusion.ie))

The introduction of ‘poverty proofing’ by the Tasmanian Government will create an awareness of poverty and disadvantage in Tasmania, and ensure that Government policies relieve, rather than exacerbate inequality and disadvantage in the State.

**Estimated Cost:** This item is un-costed.

**Link to Tasmania Together:**

- A reasonable lifestyle and standard of living for all Tasmanians. (Goal 1)
- Confident, friendly and safe communities. (Goal 2)
- Vibrant, inclusive and growing communities where people feel valued and connected. (Goal 5)
- Open and accountable government that listens and plans for a shared future. (Goal 8)

## ***Tasmanian Social Policy Council***

Alex Huntir	President of TasCOSS, St Michael's Association
Ankarah Grace	Hobart Women's Health Centre
Ann Hughes	Australian Association of Social Workers (Tas. Branch)
Dave Willans	Youth Network of Tasmania
David Clements	Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Council of Tasmania
David Owen	TasCOSS Individual Member
Deborah Smith	Uniting Care Family Services
Georgina McLagan	Centacare Tasmania
Glynis Flower	TasCOSS Board Member, Tasmanian Association of Community Houses
Gwyn Jones	TasCOSS Individual Member
Jehni Sheyan	Hobart Women's Shelter
Jo Flanagan	TasCOSS Board Member, Anglicare Tasmania
Kate Lord	Quality Management Services
Kelly Piano	Pregnancy Counseling and Support
Ken Abery	Foster Carers Association
Ken Hardaker	Advocacy Tasmania
Lianne Barden	The Link Youth Health Service
Lindy O'Neill	TasCOSS Board Member, Cerebral Palsy Tasmania
Maxine Griffiths	TasCOSS Board Member, Volunteering Tasmania
Michelle Swallow	TasCOSS Vice President, Colony 47 Inc
Miriam Herzfeld	Eat Well Tasmania
Pattie Chugg	TasCOSS Board Member, Shelter Tasmania
Grant Roberts	Tasmanian Deaf Society
Ronda McIntyre	Salvation Army
Sheila Given	Council of the Ageing Tasmania
Sue Jones	Mental Health Council of Tasmania
Sue Williams	Family Planning Tasmania
Therese Taylor	Colony 47
Tracey Bullen	Drug Education Network

### **Ex-Officio**

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Kath McLean	TasCOSS Acting/Manager Social Policy and Research
Melissa Iocco	TasCOSS Policy and Research Officer