ShelterTAS

Tasmania's Housing and Homelessness Peak

Budget Priority Statement 2025-26

Shelter Tas Submission

December 2024

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Shelter Tas is the Tasmanian branch of the Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA)

Shelter Tas acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout lutruwita/Tasmania and their continuing connection to the land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to elders past and present.

Shelter Tas welcomes and supports people of diverse genders and sexual orientations.

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List of Recommendations

Supply

Recommendation 1a: Commit to reaching 10% of dwellings across Tasmania identified as social or affordable housing, with a yearly aim of delivering at least 1,000 additional social and affordable homes (i.e. completed liveable dwellings).

Recommendation 1b: Ensure that funding models are adequate and financing options appropriate, and that ethical investment is encouraged to facilitate good quality, well-located and long-term supply options.

Funding

Recommendation 2a: Ensure that recurrent funding for operations is increased commensurate with the expansion of the housing and homelessness sector as a result of new capital expenditure and service growth.

Recommendation 2b: Increase funding for homelessness services by 20%.

Recommendation 2c: Ensure that the impacts of new and/or increasing external costs are accounted for in new contracts with Specialist Homelessness Services (SHSs) and Community Housing Providers (CHPs) and, where necessary, top-up payments are made to existing contracts.

Recommendation 2d: Ensure that all additional compliance measures for CHPs and SHS, such as those required for child safety procedures and recommendations arising from Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, are costed and that top-up funding required to undertake additional measures is provided to new and existing contracts.

Recommendation 2e: Commit to fund Shelter Tas Workforce Development Program (project funding of $84,000 [ex GST] in 2023-24) to 2028 to align with its advocacy core budget funding period (2023-28) together with appropriate indexation. *See Attachment 1.*

Recommendation 2f: Review the best way to ensure the ongoing capacity of the housing and homelessness services workforce, including recruitment and retention strategies, professional development, and pathways to support the sustainable delivery of critical services.

Young People

Recommendation 3a: Implement and fund a two-worker model in all youth services immediately, in response to the *Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*.

Recommendation 3b: Ensure services are appropriately engaged and consulted to ensure best practice and safety for children and young people.

Recommendation 3c: Ensure all homelessness services have the resources needed to comply with the *Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework* (CYSOF), recommendations from *the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*, and any other mandated changes to ensure the safety of young people and children.

Recommendation 3d: Develop a rent subsidy model for young people on extremely low incomes living in social housing.

Recommendation 3e: Extend transitional housing options, such as the Northern Youth Accommodation Coalition (NYAC) and Youth Family and Community Connections (YFCC) models, to other regions in Tasmania (providing at least one year accommodation with support).

Recommendation 3f: Maintain a suite of options for young people either experiencing or at risk of homelessness, in addition to Youth to Independence (Y2I) services.

Recommendation 3g: Develop a mental health 'in-reach' response for young people in SHSs to ensure timely assessment, early intervention and appropriate clinical care where needed, together with after-hours access for staff to receive support and guidance from qualified mental health professionals.

Women and Children

Recommendation 4a: Analyse the social housing register through a gendered lens to ensure that women and children are not waiting excessive times for access to social housing.

Recommendation 4b: Adopt all recommendations from the Somewhere to Go Report .

Recommendation 4c: Evaluate the Tasmanian Housing Strategy's Action Plans through a gendered lens and report on all subgroups listed in the Action Plan with a gender breakdown together with overall results.

Recommendation 4d: In the absence of a significant increase in new supply, review the efficacy of the Family Violence Rapid Rehousing program, and if appropriate, allocate funding to expand the number of properties available and to extend the duration of stay.

Recommendation 4e: In the absence of a significant increase in new supply, increase the availability of emergency and crisis accommodation to meet the needs of women and children escaping family violence.

Recommendation 4f: Where appropriate. endorse and implement all recommendations from the Blueprint for Reform - removing barriers to safety for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence who are on temporary visas.

Rights of and Protections for Renters

Recommendation 5a: Resolve the long-standing issue of the insufficient three-month exemption to the Residential Tenancy Act 1997 for emergency and crisis accommodation. In the current environment of severe housing shortage, we suggest consulting on a 6 to 12-month exemption, alongside protections as listed below (recommendations 5b to 5k).

Recommendation 5b: Commit adequate funding for broad consultation, including consultation with service users and tenants, to support the review of the Residential Tenancy Act.

Recommendation 5c: Commit additional resources for the Residential Tenancy Commissioner to ensure effective monitoring and enforcement of the Residential Tenancy Act, and to enable the Commissioner to be proactive in ensuring compliance with minimum standards. We suggest following the model recommended in Victoria, with an independent rental inspector and certification system for rental properties.

Recommendation 5d: Audit the funds held by the Residential Deposit Authority to ensure transparency about the holding and use of bond money, and introduce an Annual Report showing how these funds are allocated for the benefit of tenants in the rental market.

Recommendation 5e: Require the Residential Tenancy Commissioner to develop an exit survey for Tasmanian renters and landlords when bond money is claimed and returned.

Recommendation 5f: Establish a more flexible bond scheme, including portable bonds for renters who are moving between rental homes, and building-in capacity for renters to contribute via incremental bonds within a limited period.

Recommendation 5g: Ensure fair and reasonable limits are applied to rent increases within a tenancy and between successive fixed term rental agreements for the same property. (**NB -** the ACT is the only jurisdiction with some degree of rent stabilisation and is also currently the most affordable jurisdiction. See: https://x.com/SGSEcoandPlan/status/1859760102208831674

Recommendation 5h: Commit to adequate funding for the Tenants' Union of Tasmania in the Forward Estimates to ensure a sustainable model for legal representation of tenants across the state. In particular, permanent staffing of an office in the northwest is a requirement for effective tenant representation.

Recommendation 5i: Establish ethical certification and best practice standards for real estate agents.

Recommendation 5j: Commit to fair and consistent protections for people living in all rental tenures including private rental, community housing and public housing.

Recommendation 5k: In the absence of a significant increase in new supply, review the efficacy of the Private Rental Incentives Scheme and, if appropriate, allocate funding to continue said Scheme.

Short Stay Impacts

Recommendation 6a: Local councils should be empowered to limit the use of entire homes for short-stay accommodation where there is a shortfall of homes for local people.

Recommendation 6b: Commit to a review of the regulation of short-stay accommodation, so that the permit system delivers sufficient funds to ensure monitoring and compliance with permits and exemptions, and that local authorities are empowered to make place-based decisions to balance short-stay visitor accommodation against the needs of local workers and residents for appropriate rental accommodation. Review best practice regulation for short-stay accommodation as developed in other jurisdictions, including fees and time limits.

Recommendation 6c: CBOS to create a data matching system that monitors the number of dwellings currently available as short-stay accommodation that were previously available as long-term rentals.

Recommendation 6d: MyBond to report monthly on total bond lodgements by LGA and/or region, so the size of the long-term rental market can be monitored.

Recommendation 6e: When implemented, the new tax on short stay accommodation should be used to support construction of more social housing rental stock.

Elder Abuse

Recommendation 7: Develop appropriate housing solutions for Tasmanians escaping from elder abuse.

Energy Efficiency

Recommendation 8a: Include minimum energy efficiency standards in the Residential Tenancy Act.

Recommendation 8b: Review options to ensure all new builds include infrastructure for connection to NBN, with government grants for social housing to include the necessary funding.

Models

Recommendation 9: Commission a project to re-imagine and revisit new and innovative models to deliver more affordable and well-located housing options. Project outputs would include regional forums, a comprehensive options report, and recommendations for pilot projects and initiatives.

Recommendation 10: Convene an expert group of stakeholders, including CHPs, to implement the above initiatives and recommend additional ways to expedite social and affordable housing planning and delivery.

Recommendation 11: Expand the Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI) program to all regions of Tasmania.

Recommendation 12a: In the absence of a significant increase in new supply, expand the Rapid Rehousing for people exiting prison to 50 properties and implement a Housing First approach.

Recommendation 12b: In the absence of a significant increase in new supply, establish a Rapid Rehousing program for veterans of up to 16 properties.

Recommendation 12c: In the absence of a significant increase in new supply, establish a Rapid Rehousing program for patients exiting mental health care facilities of up to 10 properties.

Recommendation 13: Improve housing outcomes for Aboriginal Tasmanians through consultation, partnership and pathways to Aboriginal-owned and led housing and homelessness services.

Recommendation 14: Provide funding for Safe Space Key Development Coaches to each Safe Space Service for the full period of the funding agreements (5 years+5 years) to see the level of positive impact for people experiencing homelessness continue. Indicative costing is $146,000 per role, plus CPI adjustments.

Other

Recommendation 15: Review the minimum standards for Specialist Homelessness Services and Supported Accommodation Facilities used in other jurisdictions in order to develop appropriate standards for Tasmania.

Recommendation 16: Pet-friendly options should be developed and funded for all shelters, and pet accommodation be included in any new purpose-built shelters.

Recommendation 17: Commit sufficient funding to plan for and implement an effective statewide Primary Stakeholder/Consumer Participation program for the housing and homelessness sector.

Introduction

About Shelter Tas and our Members

Shelter Tas is the peak body for housing and homelessness services in Tasmania. Each year, Shelter Tas is invited to represent the sector on housing and homelessness issues via a submission through the State Government Budget Process.

Drawing on regular consultation with, and input from, our statewide membership, Shelter Tas' **Submission to the 2025-26 State Government Budget Priority Statement Process** is a substantial piece of work that identifies opportunities to improve housing outcomes and end homelessness across Tasmania.

Shelter Tas represents the interests of low to moderate income housing consumers, not-for-profit Community Housing Providers (CHPs) and Specialist Homelessness Services (SHSs) - comprising crisis and emergency shelters - across Tasmania. The membership of Shelter Tas includes all funded homelessness services and all National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH) registered and larger scale CHPs in Tasmania. The housing and homelessness sector directly employs more than 1,200 people across Tasmania.[1] The workforce has seen some small expansion with the increased number of community housing properties, new and expanded emergency and crisis accommodation, increased need for Specialist Homelessness Services and increased need for support and tenancy workers. Notably however, this limited expansion is proving insufficient in responding to the current housing environment.

Shelter Tas is a member of national housing and homelessness peaks, including the Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA). Shelter Tas is the State CHIA representative and a member of National Shelter.

Shelter Tas' vision is for affordable, appropriate, safe and secure housing for all and an end to homelessness.

Context – Housing and Homelessness in Tasmania

Despite good intentions and aspirational targets, Tasmania continues to face an ongoing, statewide housing crisis. House prices and rental costs are growing much faster than people's incomes, with the worst impacts felt by those who can least afford it. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data shows that in 2019-20, 30.8% of Tasmanian low income renter households were paying more than 30% of their income on housing costs (13,997 out of 45,394 households). This is up from 24.2% in 2017-2018 (8,899 out of 36,788 households).[2]

Anglicare's 2024 Rental Affordability Snapshot shows that low-income households have very few choices in accessing appropriate and affordable rentals in the private market, and that the situation is worsening. In fact, people reliant on government payments including Youth Allowance, Jobseeker Payment, Disability Support Pension, the Age Pension and Single Parenting Payment as their sole income have **no appropriate and affordable options** in the private rental market at all.[3] This situation immediately exposes many Tasmanians to housing stress and the risk of homelessness.

[1] Shelter Tas sector survey 2023 (unpublished).
[2] ABS (2022) Housing Occupancy and Costs, Australia, 2019-20, Table 13.1 Lower income renter households paying more than 30% of income on housing costs, by state and territory, 2007-08 to 2019-20.
[3] Anglicare Australia (2024), Rental Affordability Snapshot, Regional Reports 2024, 15th edition, https://www.anglicare.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Rental-Affordability-Snapshot-Regional-Reports.pdf

The Rental Affordability Index (RAI), which measures median rent in the current market as a percentage of rental household income, reports that in Tasmania median rents have remained relatively stable over the past year. While this is an encouraging sign, rents had increased significantly and rapidly over the previous decade, far outstripping people's incomes and capacity to pay. Since 2016, the median rental rate in Hobart has grown by over 60% (consistent across dwelling sizes). Rents are now only 10% lower than the Melbourne median, despite the average rental household income being over 18% lower. The report shows the average rental household in Greater Hobart is paying 28% of their total income in rent, and for the rest of Tasmania the figure is 27%. This is dangerously close to the definition of rental stress – where households are paying more than 30% of their income on housing costs.[4]

Last year saw the release of ABS homelessness statistics, showing that at the 2021 Census a total of 2,350 people in Tasmania were homeless, up from 1,622 in 2016. That's an additional 728 Tasmanians experiencing homelessness, with the total increasing by 44.8% in the five years since 2016.[5] Our statewide homelessness services assisted 6,700 people in 2022-23, and AIHW data reports that each day 37 people were turned away, usually because there were no available rooms in which to accommodate them.[6] Some SHSs report that for each person or family they can accommodate, two or more are turned away.

At the same time, funding for SHSs and CHPs is declining in real terms. Indexation at a level of only 3.5% has lagged behind both inflation and rising operational costs over several years. The sector has now become unsustainable, as services simply do not have the operational funds needed to undertake their essential work effectively and safely.

The housing crisis is most acute for people on lower incomes, who live mainly in the private rental market. The demand for rental homes, both private and social, is greater than supply. Since the 2016 Census, the Tasmanian population has grown by 10.8%, while the number of private dwellings has increased by only 7%.

There are around 15,000 social housing dwellings, accounting for 6.2% of the total dwellings in Tasmania. Pressure on the Tasmanian Housing Register (the Register) remains high. In October 2024 there were 4,912 households on the Register - a significant increase from the figure shown for October 2023.[7] Similarly, as at October 2024 the average time taken to house priority applicants was 87.9 weeks. At the same time as we are experiencing significant increase in demand, the rate of new dwelling approvals has dropped. The decline in 2023-24 sits at 16% in comparison to 2022-23 figures (i.e. from 3,079 building approvals in 2022-23 to 2,580 in 2023-248)[8] and there has been a slowdown in the delivery of new social housing, with just 63 social homes built in September 2024 (compared to 95 in September 2023). [9] The cost to construct together with the cost to borrow and the limited asset base from which to leverage has further hamstrung CHPs who have traditionally been the largest developers of new supply (in partnership with state government).

There is a nationally recognised need to improve conditions for renters.[10] Across the state, over 50,000 Tasmanian private renter households face the challenges of a fiercely competitive private rental market with

[4] SGS Economics and Planning (2024), Rental Affordability Index,
[5] ABS (2023), Estimating homelessness: Census, 2021, Table 1.3 State and Territory of Usual Residence, Number of homeless persons, by selected characteristics, 2006, 2011, 2016 and 2021.
[6] AIHW (2024), Specialist homelessness services annual report 2022-23, https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/homelessness-services/specialist-homelessness-services-annual-report/data
[7] https://www.homestasmania.com.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0027/282168/Homes-Tasmania-Dashboard-September-2024.pdf
[8] Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2024, Building Approvals, Australia, August 2024.
https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/industry/building-and-construction/building-approvals-australia/latest-release
[9] Refer to KPI 2 on the Homes Tasmania Housing Dashboard,
https://www.homestasmania.com.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0027/282168/Homes-Tasmania-Dashboard-September-2024.pdf
[10] See Appendix 2 for an overview of national rental sector trends.

rents rising much faster than people's incomes, low vacancy rates, homes of poor standard, heightened insecurity, and the fear that asking for even modest repairs can place tenants at risk of losing their homes.

In recognition of the need for a sustained and strategic response to Tasmania's housing crisis, the twenty-year *Tasmanian Housing Strategy* and *Action Plan 2023-27* were released in 2023. These documents provide the blueprint for a holistic approach to ensuring a sustainable and responsive housing market for all cohorts and delivering new supply as per the State Governments' commitment of $1.5 billion for 10,000 new social and affordable homes by 2032. The current environment renders this initial funding commitment inadequate in the face of increased fiscal challenges.

Overview of Shelter Tas' Budget Submission

Shelter Tas and our members support the *Tasmanian Housing Strategy* and *Action Plan 2023-27* but note that achieving its intended outcomes will only be possible with adequate investment in both the increased supply of new dwellings and for ongoing staff and resourcing associated with the operational work across the housing and homelessness sectors.

Successful housing outcomes and crisis responses to people experiencing homelessness depend on skilled professional staff to assist people to build their capacity to establish and maintain tenancies. This workforce also provides direct support, together with empowering people, in relation to challenges in life domains such as mental health concerns, substance use, escaping domestic and family violence, legal and financial issues.

Furthermore, we note that there has been an observable reduction in new dwelling targets from those originally anticipated, following the bold announcement of 10,000 new social and affordable dwellings in early 2022. Whilst we recognise the impact of changing circumstances and external pressures, Shelter Tas remains committed to advocating for both an expanded supply target and adequately funded support services in light of the continuing housing crisis.

Ending homelessness and keeping all Tasmanians securely and affordably housed will ensure equitable and positive social and economic outcomes for everyone.

Our Submission contains:

- Eight key priorities (Section 1); and
- A suite of additional recommendations to support the *Tasmanian Housing Strategy* and its *Action Plan* (Section 2).

SECTION 1 – Eight Key Priorities

Shelter Tas has identified eight key priorities for our 2025-26 Budget Submission:

1. Increasing the supply of social and affordable rental homes
2. Ensuring the ongoing viability of the housing and homelessness services workforce
3. Meeting the housing needs of young people
4. Meeting the housing needs of women and children in Tasmania
5. Rights and protections for renters
6. Managing the impact of short stay accommodation on the long-term rental market
7. Meeting the housing needs of older people
8. Introducing minimum energy efficiency standards for rentals and promoting digital inclusion

PRIORITY 1: Increasing the supply of social and affordable rental homes

Our first budget priority is increasing the supply of social and affordable rental homes, to achieve an equitable and sustainable housing system that meets the needs of all Tasmanians.

Shelter Tas recognises that commitments have been made and that new supply is on the agenda, however, despite these interventions, demand continues to outstrip supply. This can be seen not just through the ability of the private rental market to continue to charge unaffordable rentals but also through extremely low vacancy rates and an increase in expressed demand, namely the Tasmanian Housing Register.

The lower than predicted population growth is in part due to the departure of Tasmanians which has not been countered by new arrivals. Anecdotally this outcome is in response to the reduction in affordable housing within the market.

From an economic perspective, affordable, appropriate and secure housing underpins our economy's ability to attract and retain a skilled workforce. In addition, the lack of secure and affordable rental housing directly undermines our community's health, education, participation and overall wellbeing.[11] Addressing this shortage is vital if we are to have a thriving economy - delivering a boost for health, employment and community building across the State. Recent data from Homelessness Australia shows a shortage of affordable social housing in all Tasmanian electorates.[12]

Importantly, Tasmania's deepening shortage of affordable and social housing has serious implications for the many individuals and families affected by insecure housing and homelessness, and for the Tasmanian community as a whole. With persistently high levels of unemployment in specific areas and underemployment more generally, it will become even harder for working Tasmanians to find a home they can afford. Vulnerable and low-income Tasmanians will be left further behind – facing poverty and hardship – and at risk of becoming homeless. Recognising social and affordable housing as an investment in both

[11] Productivity Commission (2016) *Productivity Commission Study Report, Overview* Study Report, Canberra, November 2016 accessed 5/12/16 at: http://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/human-services/identifying-reform/report

[12] https://everybodyshome.com.au/heat-maps/

infrastructure and civil society rather than a welfare response is imperative if we are to deliver on the promise of “no one being left behind”.

Shelter Tas continues to advocate for and recommend a target for Tasmania of 10% of dwellings to be social or affordable rental housing, with a yearly aim of delivering at least 1,000 additional social and affordable homes (that being completed liveable dwellings).

Recommendation 1a: *Commit to reaching 10% of dwellings across Tasmania identified as social or affordable housing, with a yearly aim of delivering at least 1,000 additional social and affordable homes (i.e. completed liveable dwellings).*

Recommendation 1b: *Ensure that funding models are adequate and financing options appropriate, and that ethical investment is encouraged to facilitate good quality, well-located and long-term supply options.*

PRIORITY 2: Ensuring ongoing viability of the housing and homelessness services workforce

The sustainability of the sector - including homelessness, housing and support services – is at a crossroads. Our members continue to report inadequacies in funding models, difficulties in attracting staff and an increasingly complex client cohort. Hence the high priority status for this issue – second only to supply.

The importance of a viable housing and homelessness workforce to provide wraparound and specialist supports is something that is acknowledged in the State Government’s *Tasmanian Housing Strategy*.

Adequate funding for existing, new and expanded services and workforce

Clearly the issue of supply is critical to ensuring a sustainable sector, providing exit points, reducing impacts for vulnerable clients and providing stability from which people can recalibrate their lives. Supply must be matched by adequate funding for the essential staff who provide support and tenancy services, ensure successful housing outcomes and navigate the compliance obligations inherent in the sector.

Existing and new homelessness, tenancy and support services need sustainable funding to ensure they can safely and dependably provide the essential accommodation and support that people can rely on. However, this is currently not adequately factored into the state and national strategies and funding models. A salient example of this is the proposed Federal funding for capital infrastructure via Housing Australia (HA). Whilst a great opportunity, recurrent support service funding would need to be secured from the State Government to submit a tender. In reality this will be a lost opportunity.

We are also seeing additional expectations accompanying the expanding demand for and size of the housing and homelessness sector. With an increased emphasis on safeguarding and risk minimisation (as there should be in such a volatile sector) services are seeing the introduction of new regulations, laws and compliance obligations that they are required to implement, manage and report. These include new child safety procedures and obligations, privacy and data security requirements, higher insurance costs, improved building and energy efficiency standards and increased regulatory compliance more generally. All combine to place significant cost burdens on housing providers, emergency and crisis services and workers.

Shelter Tas, on behalf of our members, calls for an update to funding levels for all current and planned services to ensure adequate staffing levels, safety, and operational sustainability, noting that for many organisations at least 70% of program funding is for staffing costs.

Current increased demand for homelessness assistance requires more funding for SHSs. In 2023-24, 7,000 people were assisted by homelessness services in Tasmania, yet on any given day 37 requests for help go unassisted.[13] Due to growing demand and no commensurate increase in funding, our current homelessness service system is oriented towards a crisis response. Ideally, service systems should be designed to prevent homelessness and, where that is not possible, ensure any occurrence of homelessness is brief and non-recurring. To systematically re-orient the support system from crisis to early intervention, there is a need to increase the funding for homelessness services to enable them to intervene early to prevent homelessness and, where necessary, to provide ongoing support once people exit homelessness.

Shelter Tas is calling for a 20% increase in the funding for homelessness services. This essential funding will assist in boosting the supply of crisis housing. It will assist in managing the additional compliance required to ensure good quality, safe and outcomes-focussed services are delivered; enable services to provide intensive case management to intervene early and prevent people from becoming homeless; help keep people housed upon exiting homelessness; and facilitate engagement of specialised teams for target cohorts such as young people, survivors of family violence, people living with a disability, people exiting prison, and older people.

Recommendation 2a: *Ensure that recurrent funding for operations is increased commensurate with the expansion of the housing and homelessness sector as a result of new capital expenditure and service growth.*

Recommendation 2b: *Increase funding for homelessness services by 20%.*

Recommendation 2c: *Ensure that the impacts of new and/or increasing external costs are accounted for in new contracts with Specialist Homelessness Services (SHSs) and Community Housing Providers (CHPs) and, where necessary, top-up payments are made to existing contracts.*

Recommendation 2d: *Ensure that all additional compliance measures for CHPs and SHS, such as those required for child safety procedures and recommendations arising from Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, are costed and that top-up funding required to undertake additional measures is provided to new and existing contracts.*

Extend Shelter Tas' funding for the Workforce Development Program to 2028

Shelter Tas plays a vital role in sector development, delivering outstanding results over the past six years. We have provided 24 tailored online sessions and 25 face-to-face training opportunities to over 1,600 participants. An overwhelming 95% of participants have rated the training as good or excellent.[14]

Shelter Tas has been delivering a customised training and professional development program for Tasmania's housing and homelessness workforce since 2015. The housing and homelessness workforce is vital to achieving many of the goals of the *Tasmanian Housing Strategy,* however, stretching an already tight budget to continue within core funding had become untenable. Shelter Tas' capacity was bolstered by the addition of targeted funding to continue and enhance our workforce development mandate.

Disappointingly, funding for the Workforce Development Program we deliver is due to end in June 2025. Quality training for housing and homelessness practitioners is more important than ever. Increased demand for services, increased difficulty in recruitment and retention of staff, increased complexity of both clients

[13] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2023) Specialist homelessness services annual report 2022-23, https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/homelessness-services/specialist-homelessness-services-annual-report/contents/state-and-territory-summary-data-and-fact-sheets
[14] https://sheltertas.org.au/evaluations/

and program responsibilities and escalating pressures caused by the shortage of affordable housing have intensified the workload across the sector.

The 2023-24 State Budget provided only two years funding for the Workforce Development Program. Given the imperatives faced in the sector together with the importance of building and maintaining the workforce to deliver the *Tasmanian Housing Strategy,* ongoing funding of this proven deliverable is essential.

Shelter Tas asks that the 2025-26 State Budget guarantees the current level of funding (indexed) specific to housing and homelessness sector workforce development through the forward estimates.

Recommendation 2e: *Commit to fund Shelter Tas Workforce Development Program (project funding of $84,000 [ex GST] in 2023-24) to 2028 to align with its advocacy core budget funding period (2023-28) together with appropriate indexation. See attachment 1.*

Planning for a viable housing and homelessness workforce

The ongoing capacity of the housing and homelessness workforce has been identified as a key piece of work within the *Tasmanian Housing Strategy Action Plan 2023-27.* Shelter Tas and our members are keen to progress this piece of work in partnership with Homes Tasmania.

Recommendation 2f: *Review the best way to ensure the ongoing capacity of the housing and homelessness services workforce, including recruitment and retention strategies, professional development, and pathways to support the sustainable delivery of critical services.*

PRIORITY 3: Meeting the housing needs of young people

As the peak body for housing and homelessness Shelter Tas is highly concerned by increasing levels of youth homelessness, the barriers faced by young people who need appropriate, secure and affordable rental housing, and the safety of young people and children.

Young people are the age cohort most affected by homelessness and yet they are often invisible within responses to both emergency housing and homelessness. In Tasmania in 2021, the ABS Census found that 25% of people experiencing homelessness were aged 12-24, and another 14% aged under 12. That is, 39% of Tasmanians experiencing homelessness on Census night 2021 were aged under 24. Evidence shows that experiencing homelessness early in life increases the risk of homelessness in later life. A recent report by Sharon Bessell et al (2024) found that poor quality housing and housing insecurity both contribute to poor physical and mental health for children, which impacts on children's well-being, development, sense of belonging and aspirations.[15]

Young people are disadvantaged in seeking rental accommodation. As Tasmania's rental market has become more competitive and expensive, young people face additional barriers due to lower incomes, discrimination and lack of rental history. This cohort is unlikely to secure housing in the private market at all.

The lack of available and affordable private rentals, and the scarcity of social housing, disproportionately affects young people. The high rates of youth unemployment reflect these housing pressures, as it is so hard to get or maintain a job or to sustain study when you don't have a secure and safe place to live.

[15] Bessell, S., O'Sullivan, C., and Lang, M. 2024. *More for Children Issues Paper: Housing,* Issues paper 2, Canberra: The Children's Policy Centre, The Australian National University. https://childrenspolicycentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Issues-Paper_Housing_Final_102024.pdf

Shelter Tas members have identified an additional and significant gap that is a critical stepping stone for young people transitioning out of crisis or emergency accommodation and into independent living. Medium term accommodation models with outreach support are a model of housing that would provide lasting benefits and with the right approach could be delivered at an appropriate cost point.

Young people with mental health concerns are especially vulnerable to negative housing outcomes and the risk of homelessness. Shelter Tas members report an urgent and escalating need for appropriate mental health pathways for young people in crisis accommodation. Currently, when a client is in extreme distress, self-harming, or displaying behaviour suggesting acute mental ill-health, the only option is to call for police or an ambulance. The expense and disruption of emergency service callouts could in many cases be avoided if early intervention for clients and expert support for workers were in place.

When young people present to SHSs, workers can generally assume a trauma background and provide trauma-informed care and support. However, this is not the professional clinical mental health support that some young people will need and deserve. There needs to be an assessment and referral pathway to access an appropriate level of mental health response for all clients of youth SHSs, especially those who may not have received any previous mental health assessment or care. To ensure safety within services, and provide young clients with appropriate early intervention and support, services need access to support and guidance for staff (including after-hours) before a young person's existing or emergent mental health concern escalates to require an emergency response.

Statewide, there is a new and necessary focus on safety and risk management that imposes additional costs on the SHS sector assisting accompanied and unaccompanied children and young people. The safety of children and young people is the driver of the new Child and Youth Safe Organisations and Framework (CYSOF), and of recommendations in the *Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings.* The Report made several recommendations, including around appropriate staffing levels and staffing qualifications in residential settings, which include youth homelessness services.

To ensure safety, there is an urgent need to implement the requirement for a two-worker model in all youth homelessness services. It is likely to be impossible to maintain a safe environment for clients, workers and organisations under the current system which only funds services for one worker overnight; it certainly increases the risk to both workers and clients. For the youth sector and for individual organisations providing services to children and young people, there will be additional costs arising from the responsibilities and requirements that ensure the safety of children in their care and managing the risk of child abuse from any person associated with the organisation and its activities.

To manage the increased expectations and liabilities means additional reporting, record keeping and administration, changes to staffing and recruitment practices and policies, and a change to one-worker models to eliminate the potential for unobserved one-one interactions between adults and children (e.g. within a youth service funded on the basis of a one-worker model or during transport in a car).

Initial costs will likely include material resources and environmental change, updates to policies and procedures, and changes to recruitment and personnel practices. There will be additional ongoing costs due to higher insurance premiums, the administrative burden to maintain records, ensuring best practice and continuous improvement, and other related obligations.

Recommendation 3a: *Implement and fund a two-worker model in all youth services immediately, in response to the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.*

Recommendation 3b: *Ensure services are appropriately engaged and consulted to ensure best practice and safety for children and young people.*

Recommendation 3c: *Ensure all homelessness services have the resources needed to comply with the* Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework *(CYSOF), recommendations from the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, and any other mandated changes to ensure the safety of young people and children.*

Recommendation 3d: *Develop a rent subsidy model for young people on extremely low incomes living in social housing.*

Recommendation 3e: *Extend transitional housing options, such as the* Northern Youth Accommodation Coalition (NYAC) and Youth Family and Community Connections (YFCC) *models, to other regions in Tasmania (providing at least one year accommodation with support).*

Recommendation 3f: *Maintain a suite of options for young people either experiencing or at risk of homelessness, in addition to Youth to Independence (Y2I) services.*

Recommendation 3g: *Develop a mental health 'in-reach' response for young people in SHSs to ensure timely assessment, early intervention and appropriate clinical care where needed, together with after-hours access for staff to receive support and guidance from qualified mental health professionals.*

PRIORITY 4: Meeting the housing needs of women and children

Tasmania's worsening housing crisis has also had a disproportionate impact on women.

That women are in receipt of lower incomes, have lower levels of financial assets and as older women may have been more reliant on a partner for financial security is a contributing factor. Combined with the higher likelihood of experiencing violence in the home, additional caring responsibilities and higher rates of poor mental health there is a greater risk of homelessness and housing insecurity for women. Shelter Tas recognises housing affordability, family breakdown, family and domestic violence, lower incomes and ageing as particular concerns impacting the housing security of women and girls, including all people from LGBTQI+ communities who identify as being part of this cohort.

In 2023, in partnership with Hobart Women's Shelter, Shelter Tas commissioned a report from Impact Economics and Policy to apply a gendered lens over Tasmania's Housing crisis: *Somewhere to Go: meeting the housing needs of women and children in Tasmania*[16].

Along with publicly available information, the report provides a new analysis by incorporating previously unavailable data from Homes Tasmania, the Hobart Women's Shelter and the No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS) Tasmania to inform this research. The report details the housing needs of women and children across Tasmania, the current state of housing supply and models unmet housing need from women and children.

Through this report, we can better understand the drivers of unmet housing need experienced by Tasmanian women. For example, 63% of female applicants on the Tasmanian Housing Register need multiple-bedroom accommodation compared to 30% of men. It is critical that initiatives under the new twenty-year *Tasmanian Housing Strategy* meet the needs of all Tasmanians, including women and children.

[16] https://sheltertas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Somewhere-to-Go_Housing_FinNov2013.pdf

We know from the *Somewhere to Go Report* that:

- Tasmania had over six times the national rate of women being turned away from crisis accommodation in 2021-22 (this has since increased);
- Only 6% of Tasmanian women with long-term housing needs are having those needs met, compared to 18% of men; and
- 53% of women seeking Specialist Homelessness Services in Tasmania have mental health concerns compared to 33% nationally.[17]

The *Somewhere to Go Report* makes a number of key recommendations, including:

- ensuring that under the commitment to build 10,000 new social and affordable homes by 2032, sufficient three- and four-bedroom units are built or acquired to meet the needs of women and children;
- increased funding for crisis housing services and community mental health; and
- strengthening the Aboriginal-controlled housing sector.

Research from the *Somewhere to Go Report* estimates that 933 Tasmanian women are returning to a violent partner or entering homelessness after experiencing family violence each year due to a lack of housing.[18] It is essential to recognise that many women may have a home, but that home is not a safe place to be.

> *"Domestic and family violence makes a woman's home the least safe place she can be, and getting to safety often means finding somewhere new to live. But a lack of available social and affordable housing drives many women to return to their perpetrators and the risk of violence, or into homelessness".*[19]

Data from Tasmania's Specialist Homelessness Services shows there were 3,698 unassisted requests from men and 8,429 unassisted requests from women.[20] As the *Somewhere to Go Report* details:

> *"From the age of 15 teenage girls are more likely to require support from Specialist Homelessness Services than boys. This is just the start of a gendered pattern of need across the life course, with young women in their 20s and 30s the group most likely to require support from homelessness services and to seek social housing."* [21]

Rapid rehousing for people escaping family violence is a vital resource to keep women and their children safe. It is important to provide housing security for people so that they can stabilise their lives. A Housing First approach is the best way to deliver this. Where appropriate, this may require enabling people to stay additional time in their home, to avoid the disruption of further relocations. In the 2024-25 Tasmanian Budget, additional funding over two years[22] was allocated to deliver up to 100 extra Rapid Rehousing homes. In the absence of significant additional supply, we recommend continuing to fund Tasmania's Rapid Rehousing Program, and reviewing the duration of stay to ensure people have the stability they need.

[17] https://sheltertas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Somewhere-to-Go_Housing_FinNov2013.pdf
[18] https://sheltertas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Somewhere-to-Go_Housing_FinNov2013.pdf
[19] http://everybodyshome.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/EE_Women-Housing_Domestic-Violence_WEB_SINGLES.pdf
[20] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024) Specialist homelessness services 2022-23, Table UNASSISTED.2: Unassisted requests, by age and sex, and by state and territory, 2022–23
[21] https://sheltertas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Somewhere-to-Go_Housing_FinNov2013.pdf
[22] $600,000 in 2024-25 and $900,000 in 2025-26.

Our members who deliver specialist homeless services are sometimes called upon to house people – mainly women and their children – who have no income at all. Often women with zero income are victims/survivors of family violence who are on temporary visas. Shelter Tas calls on the State Government to adopt and promote the recommendations of the *Blueprint for reform - removing barriers to safety for victims/survivors of domestic and family violence who are on temporary visas.* These recommendations have been endorsed by national organisations and organisations in every state, including Warrawee Women's Shelter, Engender Equality and Women's Essential Services Providers (WESP) in Tasmania.[23]

While some *Blueprint* recommendations are outside the State Government's remit, others - such as enabling eligibility to access social and public housing and SHS services - could be implemented in Tasmania (South Australia already allows women on temporary visas to access social and public housing[24]). We note that as services rely on income-based rents, a funding supplement may be needed to manage the financial impact on the shelter. For the full list of recommendations for victims/survivors of domestic and family violence who are on temporary visas, please see the *Blueprint for Reform.*

Recommendation 4a: *Analyse the social housing register through a gendered lens to ensure that women and children are not waiting excessive times for access to social housing.*

Recommendation 4b: *Adopt all recommendations from the* Somewhere to Go Report .

Recommendation 4c: *Evaluate the Tasmanian Housing Strategy's Action Plans through a gendered lens and report on all subgroups listed in the Action Plan with a gender breakdown together with overall results.*

Recommendation 4d: *In the absence of a significant increase in new supply, review the efficacy of the Family Violence Rapid Rehousing program, and if appropriate, allocate funding to expand the number of properties available and to extend the duration of stay.*

Recommendation 4e: *In the absence of a significant increase in new supply, increase the availability of emergency and crisis accommodation to meet the needs of women and children escaping family violence.*

Recommendation 4f: *Where appropriate, endorse and implement all recommendations from the Blueprint for Reform - removing barriers to safety for victim survivors of domestic and family violence who are on temporary visas.*

PRIORITY 5: Rights and protections for renters

Renters' rights and protections have become a prominent national issue, and of concern in Tasmania. Over 50,000 Tasmanian renter households face the challenges of a fiercely competitive private rental market, rents rising much faster than incomes, low vacancy rates, homes of poor standard, insecurity, and the fear that asking for even modest repairs can place them at risk of losing their homes. The national Rental Affordability Index reports that rents in Hobart have increased by over 60% since 2016, far outstripping people's incomes and capacity to pay.[25] Renting is no longer a short-term tenure. Many Tasmanians will be life-long renters. It is timely to refresh the regulatory and cultural framework for private rental to ensure it is better adapted to the contemporary environment. This would include a review of the impact of short-stay accommodation.

[23] Warrawee is a member of Shelter Tas, and Shelter Tas and Warrawee are both members of WESP in Tasmania.
[24] https://iarc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Blueprint-for-reform-2022-v071222.pdf p 7.
[25] SGS Economics and Planning (2024), Rental Affordability Index,

National Cabinet has agreed to *A Better Deal for Renters* to harmonise and strengthen renters' rights across Australia. Shelter Tas wants to see the reforms committed to in this agreement progressed, and updates provided as to their implementation. We would like to see action being taken on the following reforms:

- Reasonable grounds evictions – We request that reasonable grounds are required for all evictions. This would mean not allowing no grounds evictions at the end of fixed-term agreements.
- Retaliatory eviction provisions – We request that Tasmania adopts a similar approach to the ACT, where there are provisions allowing tenants to challenge retaliatory evictions.
- Protections against rent bidding – We request the law address situations where renters offer to pay more than the advertised rent.
- Domestic and family violence protections – We request tenants experiencing DFV being able to end agreements without penalty.
- Fair limits on break lease fees – We request the Government to introduce break lease fee limits.
- Protect renters' privacy – We request the introduction of a prescribed rental application form, time limits on storing applicants' information and limits on questions and evidence that can be asked of tenants.
- Regulation of short-stay residential accommodation – Refer to our response in Priority 6.
- Minimum quality standards – We would like to see energy efficiency standards included.

We welcome Government's commitment under the *Tasmanian Housing Strategy Action Plan 2023-27* to review the *Residential Tenancy Act 1997* (RTA) and strengthen renter's rights. We support a widescale review of the RTA, including sector wide consultation, to modernise the Act, improve security of all Tasmanians in private rental housing, and ensure our legislation is aligned with best national practice on matters such as exemptions from the RTA, pets, privacy, digital rights, energy efficiency and emerging disruptive technologies such as apps for tenants and landlords. We are concerned the Tasmanian Government appears to be taking a fragmented approach to reform of the Act – looking at amending various parts of the legislation such as pets in rentals and toppling furniture – rather than the more wide-ranging review of the entire Act that is needed.

Currently, SHS' providing emergency accommodation are exempt from RTA requirements for three months. This timeframe is no longer adequate due to the lack of exit points limiting access to appropriate and affordable rental homes. This issue of people needing to stay longer in shelters has become more and more pressing throughout Tasmania's housing crisis. We recommend consideration of a 6 to 12-month exemption from the *Residential Tenancy Act* for those providing accommodation for homeless persons and/or persons escaping family or domestic violence, alongside improving rights and protections for all Tasmanian tenants.

Recommendation 5a: *Resolve the long-standing issue of the insufficient three-month exemption to the Residential Tenancy Act 1997 for emergency and crisis accommodation. In the current environment of severe housing shortage, we suggest consulting on a 6 to 12-month exemption, alongside protections as listed below (recommendations 5b to 5k).*

Recommendation 5b: *Commit adequate funding for broad consultation, including consultation with service users and tenants, to support the review of the Residential Tenancy Act.*

Recommendation 5c: *Commit additional resources for the Residential Tenancy Commissioner to ensure effective monitoring and enforcement of the Residential Tenancy Act, and to enable the Commissioner to be proactive in ensuring compliance with minimum standards. We suggest following the model recommended in Victoria, with an independent rental inspector and certification system for rental properties.*

Recommendation 5d: *Audit the funds held by the Residential Deposit Authority to ensure transparency about the holding and use of bond money, and introduce an Annual Report showing how these funds are allocated for the benefit of tenants in the rental market.*

Recommendation 5e: *Require the Residential Tenancy Commissioner to develop an exit survey for Tasmanian renters and landlords when bond money is claimed and returned.*

Recommendation 5f: *Establish a more flexible bond scheme, including portable bonds for renters moving between rental homes, and capacity for renters to contribute via incremental bonds within a limited period.*

Recommendation 5g: *Ensure fair and reasonable limits are applied to rent increases within a tenancy and between successive fixed term rental agreements for the same property. (**NB.** the ACT is the only jurisdiction with some degree of rent stabilisation and is also currently the most affordable jurisdiction. See: https://x.com/SGSEcoandPlan/status/1859760102208831674*

Recommendation 5h: *Commit to adequate funding for the Tenants' Union of Tasmania in the Forward Estimates to ensure a sustainable model for legal representation of tenants across the state. In particular, permanent staffing of an office in the northwest is a requirement for effective tenant representation.*

Recommendation 5i: *Establish ethical certification and best practice standards for real estate agents.*

Recommendation 5j: *Commit to fair and consistent protections for people living in all rental tenures including private rental, community housing and public housing.*

Recommendation 5k: *In the absence of a significant increase in new supply, review the efficacy of the Private Rental Incentives Scheme and, if appropriate, allocate funding to continue said Scheme.*

PRIORITY 6: Managing the impact of short stay accommodation on the long-term rental market

Not only has Hobart been the least affordable capital city for renters in Australia for some time, but it also has the highest density of short-stay accommodation.[26] Tasmania needs to monitor and manage the impacts on the long-term residential private rental market of short-stay accommodation such as Airbnb.[27]

Local Government oversight of the permit system needs to be sufficiently funded to ensure appropriate monitoring of and compliance with permits and exemptions, and that local decision makers are empowered to make place-based decisions to balance short-stay visitor accommodation with the needs of local workers and residents for appropriate rental accommodation.

Information about the impacts of the short-stay accommodation industry is key to successful management. Shelter Tas is producing a series of independent reports that monitor impacts of short-stay accommodation. The Baseline and first three reports related to the project: *Monitoring the Impact of Short-Term Rentals on Tasmanian Housing Markets* are all available on the Shelter Tas Website, with the most recent contribution available at https://sheltertas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/STR-Progress-Report-2024_Fourth-Update-Since-Baseline_final.pdf.

[26] https://sheltertas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/STR-Baseline-Report-June-2022_FINAL-combined-files.pdf
[27] https://sheltertas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/ShelterTasTPP-Submission.pdf

We need to closely monitor short-stay accommodation and its interaction with the long-term rental market. Tasmania led the country with the introduction of the *Short Stay Accommodation Act 2019* but is yet to provide effective housing market monitoring. The Tasmanian Government currently monitors the number of short-stay dwellings at points in time on a quarterly basis which is useful but does not analyse the interaction between short-stay accommodation and the long-term private rental market and the long term implications.

Designing a data matching system that records whether short-stay accommodation was previously rented in the long-term rental market would be reasonably straightforward, given the data is held inside the one government agency (CBOS) and properties could be matched by address. In addition, it is important that the MyBond system starts reporting total bond lodgements by LGA and/or region, so that the size of the long-term rental market can be monitored at regular intervals (e.g. monthly), as is best practice interstate.

During the 2024 election campaign, the Tasmanian Liberals announced a tax on short-stay accommodation which would be set at 5% (compared to a recent tax of 7.5% announced by the Victorian Government). Our concern is that funds collected will be used to pay for the First Home Owners Grant. Given the current data demonstrates the greatest impact of the housing crisis is on those at the low and very low income scale (i.e. never likely to be entering home ownership), Shelter Tas would expect the proceeds of this levy be used to support construction of more social housing rental stock. This is the approach being taken by the Victorian Government. The Victorian Government has also recently announced it will be amending its legislation to permit local councils and owners' corporations to limit or ban short stary accommodation in their area.[28]

Recommendation 6a: *Local councils should be empowered to limit the use of entire homes for short-stay accommodation where there is a shortfall of homes for local people.*

Recommendation 6b: *Commit to a review of the regulation of short-stay accommodation, so that the permit system delivers sufficient funds to ensure monitoring and compliance with permits and exemptions, and that authorities are empowered to make place-based decisions to balance short-stay visitor accommodation against the needs of local workers and residents for appropriate rental accommodation. Review best practice regulation for short-stay accommodation as developed in other jurisdictions, including fees and time limits.*

Recommendation 6c: *CBOS to create a data matching system monitoring the number of dwellings currently available as short-stay accommodation that were previously available in the long-term rental market.*

Recommendation 6d: *MyBond to report monthly on total bond lodgements by LGA and/or region, so the size of the long-term rental market can be monitored.*

Recommendation 6e: *When implemented, the new tax on short stay accommodation should be used to support the building of more social housing rental stock.*

PRIORITY 7: Improving housing outcomes for older Tasmanians

Housing insecurity increased between the 2016 and 2021 Census and affects older people across the entirety of the housing system. Older households were more likely to be paying 50% plus of gross household income in rent than younger households (40% compared to 24.3%).[29] Nearly one in five people seeking assistance from Tasmania's homelessness services are aged over 55. In the 2021 Census older people experiencing homelessness grew both as an absolute number and as a proportion of Tasmanians experiencing

[28] https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-08-27/housing-policy-airbnb-regulations-victoria/104273174
[29] ageing_in_a_housing_crisis_-_full_report.pdf (oldertenants.org.au)

homelessness. Older single women are particularly vulnerable, due to generally having lower incomes and assets.[30] Shelter Tas notes the success of the Wirksworth facility in the south, based on the Wintringham model, which can draw on the aged care funding stream for residents. Shelter Tas encourages Government to deliver similar accommodation for older men and women in the greatest need in the north and northwest regions.

There is no dedicated housing response for those who have experienced elder abuse and do not have a safe home, as this group is not included in the family violence response. Some estimates suggest that 3-5% of the population (3,000 - 4,500 Tasmanians) experience elder abuse each year. There is an urgent need to develop appropriate housing solutions to address this gap. Not all cases would require housing assistance - potentially 5-10% (150-450) places statewide. A response could be modelled on the Rapid Rehousing program for survivors of family violence, noting that the homes would need to be appropriate to the cohort – with age-friendly characteristics such as accessible design for a person with low or changing mobility.

Recommendation 7: *Develop appropriate housing solutions for Tasmanians escaping from elder abuse.*

PRIORITY 8: Introducing minimum energy efficiency standards for rentals and promote digital inclusion

After paying for rental and housing costs, energy bills are the most challenging household cost for people to manage. The PowerHousing Australia *Australian Affordable Housing Report* points out that "Australian social housing stock is often old, less efficient and costly to run with impacts on economic and social wellbeing for those that can afford it least."[31] Tasmania has an opportunity to improve the energy efficiency of new and existing homes, to also contribute to the achievement of net carbon zero by 2050.

The introduction of minimum energy efficiency standards in rental dwellings is a significant reform with the potential to cut emissions, lower cost of living and improve people's health and wellbeing. Further, improving the energy efficiency of rentals will help ensure a more equitable transition to zero emissions as upfront costs of improving energy efficiency, such as purchasing solar panels etc, are a barrier to low-income households.

As an overarching goal, minimum energy efficiency standards for rentals should improve thermal comfort and minimise the energy consumption of rental homes. This will require a mix of measures including:

1. Maximising the thermal efficiency of a building as far as reasonably possible in the first instance;
2. Providing efficient electric appliances (hot water, heating and cooling, fridges, washers and dryers); and
3. Renewable energy production and storage.

There are examples nationally at which Tasmania could look, i.e.:

- In April 2023 the Australian Capital Territory introduced a new minimum energy efficiency standard for social and private rental properties. The new standard targets ceiling insulation upgrades, with dwellings with no or poor ceiling insulation required to be upgraded to meet the minimum energy-efficiency standard of new builds. Disclosure to prospective tenants is required and a valid exemption needed.[32]

[30] See, for example, *The Time of Our Lives Report* https://www.lmcf.org.au/images/2016-Time-of-Our-Lives-Report-LMCF.pdf
[31] http://www.powerhousingaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/PHA-eScan-2021-FINAL.pdf see p 4, 63.
[32] https://www.justice.act.gov.au/renting-and-occupancy-laws/energy-efficiency-standards-for-rental-homes

- The Victorian Government has recently proposed introducing new minimum energy efficiency standards in rental properties.[33] These will prescribe minimum standards for ceiling insultation, draughtproofing, hot water systems and cooling, together with an uplift of current standards for heating and shower roses.

With greater expectations from organisations and service providers that transactions be performed via a digital platform, many vulnerable Tasmanians are increasingly isolated as a result of their inability to access cheap supporting infrastructure. We therefore have an opportunity to consider the costs and needs of people living in newly constructed homes, such as digital inclusion. For example, NBN connection could be included in new housing stock as is the case for other essential infrastructure such as electrical connection and water. This could make a substantial improvement to digital inclusion in Tasmania, with particular education benefits for families with school-aged children.[34]

Recommendation 8a: *Include minimum energy efficiency standards for in the Residential Tenancy Act.*

Recommendation 8b: *Review options to ensure all new builds include infrastructure for connection to NBN, with government grants for social housing to include the necessary funding.*

[33] https://engage.vic.gov.au/new-minimum-standards-for-rental-properties-and-rooming-houses
[34] See, for example, the WA digital inclusion project, and the recent announcement in the Federal Budget.

SECTION 2 – Additional Recommendations

Shelter Tas' consultations with members identified additional and positive opportunities for innovative housing and homelessness projects that will support the *Tasmanian Housing Strategy* and *Action Plan*.

9. Develop a suite of innovative housing models to meet people's needs and improve use of space through density and infill projects

Given Tasmania's ongoing housing crisis, we need to explore genuinely creative ways by which we can address the chronic shortage of affordable rental housing.

The 2019 Report *Towards Infill Housing Development* provided to the Department of State Growth notes the "increased demand for well-located, affordable housing within the State's urban centres."[35] It also notes:

> *"A lack of affordable housing has the greatest impact on vulnerable groups within society, who are least able to access the private housing market. This includes people on low or fixed incomes and long-term renters. These groups form a high proportion of households across Tasmania". (P 20)*

Shelter Tas acknowledges governments' direction in relation to in-fill and higher density housing contained within its Tasmanian Housing Strategy and notes various Council commitments to the same. Considering the Tasmanian projects approved recently (i.e. no in-fill or higher density projects) under the Housing Australia Future Fund the need to focus on this issue is imperative.

To progress innovative housing models in response to the ongoing rental crisis, Shelter Tas recommends immediate investment in demonstration projects across a range of options including new housing construction, redevelopment and urban renewal. Current examples include:

- Replicating the process for the new Bethlehem House in Hobart for men.
- Cluster models for young people – i.e. smaller dwellings with communal areas and "step-in" support.

To further explore alternatives to traditional builds, we recommend establishing and facilitating stakeholder groups to analyse housing options and identify genuinely innovative community-based solutions to housing need. These forums could include, CHP's, Investors, Property Council, UTAS, LGAT, TCCI, HIA and Master Builders Association, and would garner user perspectives, financing options, and planning pathways towards infill, inclusionary zoning and improved density.[36]

It is critical to note that the concept of "innovation" needs to have a mind to a risk sharing approach, together with financial models that recognise the important investment in infrastructure and society that social and affordable housing delivers.

Recommendation 9: *Commission a project to re-imagine and revisit new and innovative models to deliver more affordable and well-located housing options. Project outputs would include regional forums, a comprehensive options report, and recommendations for pilot projects and initiatives.*

[35] https://www.stategrowth.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0019/216172/Toward_Infill_Housing_Development.pdf
[36] For a similar program, see https://www.townsville.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0023/167801/Affordable_Housing_Action_Plan_2022_a4-190922.pdf

10. Measures to enhance investment in community housing

Tasmania's important and national best practice commitment to social housing, including State and Commonwealth-funded initiatives, will be enhanced by ensuring that Tasmanian funding models are commensurate with those of other jurisdictions. Shelter Tas has received feedback from our Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA) members that other states are offering more generous incentives to Community Housing Providers to build new properties and support tenants. For example, Victoria contributes 65% building cost while Tasmania contributes only 40% (noting that there appears to be no further appetite for grant funding in Tasmania). Victoria also offers operational subsidies.

Reviewing interstate benchmarks will ensure that the Tasmanian government contributes appropriately to the increase in social and affordable housing supply delivered by key partners CHPs. This commitment is needed to secure ongoing stability and growth in our community housing sector. The following areas show the greatest potential to improve efficiency and effectiveness:

- Review funding levels provided to CHPs in other jurisdictions to benchmark Tasmania's funding levels and ensure that funding is adjusted to support ongoing delivery of new supply.
- Review the obligations under Ground Lease arrangements noting that without title CHPs are reaching their capacity to leverage future borrowings.
- Review and streamline the timeframes and flow of tenders and approvals for new builds to maximise efficiency in the current government procurement processes.
- Enable Local Government and the State Planning System to develop a permitted use pathway for not-for-profit community housing development that allows appropriate variation for social rental properties, such as fewer required parking spaces, as well as maintaining quality standards.
- Work with CHPs, LGAT, TasWater and TasNetworks to implement a streamlined and cheaper process for affordable housing projects to connect utilities and achieve approvals from local governments.
- Ensure inclusionary zoning is a priority in reforms to Tasmania's planning system, and develop a phased model of inclusionary zoning to expedite and encourage diverse housing options in all developments.[37]

Recommendation 10: *Convene an expert group of stakeholders, including CHPs, to implement the above initiatives and recommend additional ways to expedite social and affordable housing planning and delivery.*

11. Mental health and alcohol and other drug (AOD) support

A greater number of people with increasingly complex needs are presenting at shelters and other emergency accommodation services, and are also entering into lease agreements with generalist housing providers. Members of Shelter Tas are expressing a deepening concern about the growing risk to clients, residents and workers as a result of the challenging behaviours that can and do present when working with some highly vulnerable clients.[38] The situation reflects both a lack of resources and the lack of integration between

[37] Refer to Shelter Tas' submission on Improving residential standards in Tasmania.

[38] Currently, as many shelters have a 'one worker model' if a client is in extreme distress, self-harming, or displaying behaviour suggesting acute mental ill-health, the only option is to call for police or an ambulance. The expense, distress and disruption of emergency service call-outs could in many cases be avoided if early intervention and support were in place, with appropriate referral pathways to timely responses.

mental health, drug and alcohol and housing and homelessness services. A clear response pathway that delivers appropriate and timely support for clients and workers is needed urgently.

Shelter Tas notes the successes already achieved by the Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI) pilot in the south, where people experiencing significant mental health concerns are supported to sustain their tenancies. HASI is a program that provides both short- and long-term accommodation options for people who are not supported via the NDIS. We encourage the State Government to prioritise HASI or a similar response becoming a statewide initiative, expanding to the north and northwest. This service would include support for people who are transitioning from acute care into the community.

This investment not only benefits tenants, who are able to maintain housing security and receive the mental health care and/or drug rehabilitation services they need, but also saves money through the decreased need for acute care and for additional housing and homelessness services required if a tenancy is not sustained.

Recommendation 11: *Expand the Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI) program to all regions of Tasmania.*

12. Boost the Rapid Rehousing program for people existing prison, and establish a Rapid Rehousing program for veterans

Tasmania's Rapid Rehousing program for people exiting prison currently comprises 12 properties. The need is significantly greater, with over 1,500 people exiting prison each year.[39] It has recently been reported that prisoners who have completed their sentence are often unable to be paroled due to a lack of suitable accommodation. The Beyond the Wire program has established a strong track record in supporting people so that they can stabilise their lives, reconnect with family and reduce rates of reoffending.

In the absence of a significant increase in new supply, boosting the program to include a Housing First approach with an increase to at least 50 medium- to long-term properties is a much-needed expansion.

In terms of the need for suitable housing for our Veteran community – often presenting with specific challenges arising from their service – it has become clear that a specific response is needed for this cohort. The most recent supply opportunity provided through Housing Australia under the Housing Australia Future Fund identified that development projects targeting this cohort were seen as a priority.

At present, Tasmania does not have a dedicated Rapid Rehousing program for Veterans. Given the priority associated with this target group, Shelter Tas calls for the establishment of a dedicated program with an initial allocation of 16 properties as a matter of urgency.

Recommendation 12a: *In the absence of a significant increase in new supply, expand the Rapid Rehousing for people exiting prison to 50 properties and implement a Housing First approach.*

Recommendation 12b: *In the absence of a significant increase in new supply, establish a Rapid Rehousing program for veterans of up to 16 properties.*

Recommendation 12c: *In the absence of a significant increase in new supply, establish a Rapid Rehousing program for patients exiting mental health care facilities of up to 10 properties.*

[39] Department of Justice (2023) Right to Information request, Number of person exiting detention 2013 – 2022, https://www.justice.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/724534/Tasmania-Prison-Service-number-of-person-exiting-detention-and-out-of-cell-hours.pdf

13. Improve housing outcomes for Aboriginal Tasmanians through Aboriginal-owned and led services

Aboriginal Tasmanians face significant disadvantage and entrenched inequality. Shelter Tas welcomes the Tasmanian Government's commitment to the *Tasmanian Closing the Gap Implementation Plan* and the commitment in the *Tasmanian Housing Strategy Action Plan 2023-27* to develop and implement culturally respectful and community-led housing solutions.

Recommendation 13: *Improve housing outcomes for Aboriginal Tasmanians through consultation, partnership and pathways to Aboriginal-owned and led housing and homelessness services.*

14. Recurrent funding of Key Development Coaches for Safe Space model

The Safe Space model now operates in all three regions of Tasmania, supporting vulnerable people in Hobart, Burnie and Launceston. It provides a low-barrier option for people needing emergency shelter (focussing on rough sleepers), and has demonstrated successful outcomes with most clients accessing health and medical support, and some finding longer-term secure housing. In the absence of a significant increase in new supply, Safe Spaces have become a valuable and vital part of Tasmania's system of Specialist Homelessness Services.

The 2024-25 Tasmanian Budget allocated $900,000 over two years to provide Key Development Coaches (KDC) at the three Safe Space sites. The role of KDCs was identified during the Housing Connect 2.0 reform as being instrumental in assisting people transition out of homelessness. It is a role that targets those who are most vulnerable with high and complex needs and has demonstrated success in each of the Safe Spaces. Ongoing funding for Safe Space KDCs is recommended by Shelter Tas and should be built into existing five-year funding agreements.

Recommendation 14: *Provide funding for Safe Space Key Development Coaches to each Safe Space Services for the full period of the funding agreements (5 years+5 years) to see the level of positive impact for people experiencing homelessness continue. Indicative cost is $146,000 per role, plus CPI adjustments.*

15. Standards for Specialist Homelessness Services

Some properties in the Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) and Supported Accommodation Facility (SAF) sector are new and purpose-built, others are older buildings, with some repurposed from other dwellings or legacy uses. Many services are not covered by the Residential Tenancy Act minimum standards. There is an opportunity to work towards appropriate standards, utilising trauma informed practice, for both built forms and staffing levels, noting these could apply immediately to new builds and introduced incrementally for existing legacy properties.[40] The costs of compliance need to be included in any new funded construction.

Recommendation 15: *Review the minimum standards for Specialist Homelessness Services and Supported Accommodation Facilities used in other jurisdictions in order to develop appropriate standards for Tasmania.*

[40] https://opus.lib.uts.edu.au/handle/10453/141416

16. Shelters to include options for accommodating pets

For many people, pets form an essential part of family and play a vital role in their health and wellbeing. It is well known that threats from perpetrators to harm family pets are a barrier to families leaving violent and abusive situations. The lack of an option to care for a pet is also a barrier to people seeking emergency accommodation placing people at higher risk, imposing additional stress, and preventing people finding assistance. Pets can help people manage the effects of trauma, and need to be included in trauma-informed responses. Shelter Tas welcomes the inclusion of pet accommodation at the new Bethlehem House redevelopment and believes that pet-friendly options should be developed and funded for all shelters.

Recommendation 16: *Pet-friendly options should be developed and funded for all shelters, and pet accommodation be included in any new purpose-built shelters.*

17. Consumer participation

Consumer participation is a vital in ensuring the quality of outcomes across all service delivery arms. It was critical in the development of the *Tasmanian Housing Strategy* and to the Housing Connect reform that are now bedding down or still underway. Consumers and service users are the primary stakeholders for all work of the housing and homelessness sector. The incorporation of lived experience and expert voices in the implementation of the *Tasmanian Housing Strategy* and *Action Plans* and Tasmania's ongoing housing and homelessness service system will result in better quality and more appropriate policies, programs and practices being designed and implemented. Ultimately, consumer participation by service users and people who have experience across the housing and homelessness system leads to better outcomes and a more robust sector.

While many housing and homelessness services already have systems in place to incorporate consumer participation and voice, the situation across organisations in the state is not uniform. There is an opportunity to develop best practice statewide, drawing on the work undertaken previously by Shelter Tas in developing consumer engagement guides.[41] We are well placed to assist services to develop and implement a consumer participation program, and to establish and host an advisory group to ensure the work is well-aligned with, and able to contribute to, the implementation of the *Strategy* and the Housing Connect reforms.

Recommendation 17: *Commit sufficient funding to plan for and implement an effective statewide Primary Stakeholder/Consumer Participation program for the housing and homelessness sector.*

Cost: *A business plan can be provided on request. Indicative cost is approximately $300,000 over two years.*

[41] https://sheltertas.org.au/training/guides/

Conclusion

Shelter Tas' submission to the 2025-26 State Budget Process offers positive, strategic proposals and core recommendations covering the entwined platforms of supply, demand and support.

A positive response to our submission will assist the government to enhance the delivery of secure, affordable and appropriate housing and effective support for all Tasmanians who are homeless, at risk, or in housing hardship. We recommend a systemic and strategic approach to implementing initiatives ensuring Tasmanians in all regions, regardless of their income or circumstance, can access the housing and support they need, when they need it.

Our proposals will ensure Tasmanians experiencing homelessness and housing stress can access the assistance they need. Keeping Tasmanians securely and affordably housed ensures their ability to participate effectively and equitably in economic and social life, enjoy their rights as citizens, make positive contributions in their communities and build a foundation from which they have an opportunity to thrive.

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ATTACHMENT 1: Extension of Training and Workforce Development Funding

About Shelter Tas and our Members

Shelter Tas is the peak body for housing and homelessness services in Tasmania. Shelter Tas represents the interests of low to moderate income housing consumers, not-for-profit Community Housing Providers (CHP's) and Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS's) - comprising crisis and emergency shelters - across Tasmania. The membership of Shelter Tas includes all funded homelessness services and all National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH) registered and larger scale CHP's in Tasmania.

Additionally, Shelter Tas is an active member of national housing and homelessness peaks, including the Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA). Shelter Tas is the CHIA representative and a member of National Shelter.

The housing and homelessness sector directly employs more than 1,200 people across Tasmania.[42] The workforce has seen some small expansion with the increased number of community housing properties, new and expanded emergency and crisis accommodation, increased need for Specialist Homelessness Services and increased need for support and tenancy workers. Notably, this limited expansion is proving insufficient in responding to the current housing environment.

Shelter Tas' vision is for affordable, appropriate, safe and secure housing for all and an end to homelessness.

Context for Continuing Specialised Training and Workforce Development for Tasmania's Housing and Homelessness Workforce (2025 – 2028): Priority 2, Recommendation 2e.

Despite good intentions and aspirational targets, Tasmania continues to face an ongoing, statewide housing crisis. The full extent of this crisis is covered in the main body of this Submission.

As noted previously, funding for SHS's and CHP's is declining in real terms. Indexation has lagged behind both inflation and rising operational costs over several years. The sector has now become unsustainable, as services simply do not have the operational funds needed to undertake their essential work effectively and safely. With this as the backdrop (and notwithstanding Shelter Tas' submission in relation to a significant increase in operational funding for the sector) it is more urgent than ever that the sector can rely on the coordinated provision of good quality, contemporary and timely access to learning and development opportunities. Shelter Tas has a proven history of success in this regard and is perfectly placed to provide this for the sector in addition to its core functions.

Following the ongoing and successful delivery of our Workforce Development Program (WDP) which first commenced in 2015, Shelter Tas is seeking recurrent funding to continue this critical contribution to the sustainability and growth of the housing and homelessness sector in Tasmania.

Priority 2: Extend Shelter Tas' funding for the Workforce Development Program to 2028

The housing and homelessness workforce is vital to achieving many of the goals of the *Tasmanian Housing Strategy*. Critical to the delivery of high quality, safe and professional services within this strategic framework is a workforce that is sustainable and supported, with learning and development opportunities in line with the changing needs and expectations of governments and service users.

Shelter Tas has provided customised professional learning and development opportunities to the Tasmanian housing and homelessness sector, through the WFD since 2015. The project has been highly successful, so much so that in 2018 a further five year funding agreement was supported by (then) Housing Tasmania and the state government. In 2023 at the expiration of that agreement, government again, and supported by Homes Tasmania, committed to a further two years of funding for the continuation of the WDP.

Over the past six years feedback indicates that Shelter Tas has delivered outstanding results. We have provided 24 tailored online sessions and 25 face-to-face training opportunities to over 1,600 participants. An overwhelming 95% of participants have rated the training as good or excellent.[43]

Our proposal to continue the WDP will draw on the elements which have proven successful for the past several years covering multiple events, as well as revitalising the content and structure of the WDS for the future. Shelter Tas proposes four tiers of professional development opportunities across the requested funding years:

- Conference/forum/multiple days training (budget for 1 per year)
- Standard 1 day training, north and south (budget for up to 2 per year)
- Short 3-5 hour sessions (budget for up to 3 per year)
- Ad-hoc, short 1-2 hour on-line sessions (budget for up to 4 per year)

Conference style allows for networking outside sector with a broader audience, multiple speakers and 'big picture' discussions. This combines with an opportunity to invite other groups outside of the homelessness sector, expanding discussion and knowledge.

Standard 1 day training is a proven success with positive feedback from attendees. This allows in-depth, structured learning and discussion on specific topics. It also enables us to secure highly regarded interstate trainers to facilitate on topics identified by sector representatives as pertinent.

Shorter, targeted sessions allow timely responses to newly arising topics with more informal discussion and key learnings delivered by local experts.

We will invest time building on what we have learned and ensuring that training will be responsive to changed context and emerging issues, and needs that the sector has identified. Indicative areas of ongoing need will include:

- Specialised training on self-care and peer support for staff
- Portion of free places to allow tenants/consumers to attend
- Supporting clients with complex needs and high vulnerability
- Co-design and person-centred approaches.

Delivering quality training requires an appropriate financial investment. Whilst our proposal includes partial cost recovery, we will continue to provide some training free of charge to participants, consumers and tenants. We are confident that this is a worthwhile investment that will deliver strong outcomes for the Tasmanian Housing and Homelessness workforce, and will meet training needs in the North and Northwest, as well as in the South.

Schedule of Training

Training will be scheduled to fit in with staff availability and, for example, avoid clashes with technical compliance training, and any periods of intense consultation or workload. The program is indicative, as we are committed to being adaptable to circumstances and emerging issues. An evolving model where the schedule and budget can be adjusted responsively with input from sector and stakeholders is crucial to maintaining the high quality, exceptional outcomes and excellent evaluations we have already demonstrated.

Co-Design and Partnership

We will continue to work closely with Homes Tasmania and other stakeholders to co-design the program collaboratively, ensuring that it supports the Tasmanian Housing Strategy and other critical changes in the housing and homelessness landscape (e.g. new legislation, programs or compliance related) and is responsive to sector needs.

Evaluation and Reporting

The program of training will regularly be peer-reviewed and evaluated. Participants will evaluate and provide feedback on each course. We will use initial planning and an interim formative report mid-way through the period to embed lessons learned, ensure alignment with the broader community sector workforce development plans, and to ensure the approach and direction remain aligned with sector-specific needs and priorities. We will produce a final report to accompany financial acquittal at the conclusion of the funding period. The budget and overall progress will be subject to ongoing oversight and review by the Shelter Executive, CEO and Workforce Development Reference Group.

Budget

- The project 2015-18 delivered its outcomes on time and on budget.
- The project 2019-25 delivered its outcomes on time and on budget.
- It is clear that Shelter Tas' WFD is underpinned by a sustainable business model that uses annual funding together with some cost recovery to facilitate three years of workforce development activities.

Our budget incorporates additional costs including ERO, indexation and annual wage increases that compound over the funding period thereby mitigating the need for additional asks. The base figure of $84,000 for the first year of additional funding has been indexed at 3.5%.

A conservative estimate of partial recovery of costs from participants has been factored noting that if fees from participant contributions are higher than anticipated, they will be reinvested into the training program.

Shelter Tas will align expected participant numbers with previous years, noting that some sessions were provided free of charge and some participants received discounts. Tenants, people who have experienced homelessness and low income stakeholders will not be charged a fee, and we will continue with this approach.

Conclusion

Shelter Tas's successful facilitation of workforce development is grounded in continuous consultation with the homelessness and community housing workforce in Tasmania. Shelter Tas draws on long-standing relationships with member organisations, and regular meetings with Specialist Homelessness Services, Community Housing providers, and the Shelter Tas Policy Committee. Shelter Tas ensures consistent high quality training that meets the needs of the sector.

Outcomes achieved: 2015-2024

Increased expertise in the housing and homelessness workforce across areas including but not limited to:

- Dealing with crystal methamphetamine-affected clients
- Anti-Discrimination and gender awareness, including transgender clients
- Culturally responsive work within the community
- Clients with complex needs and self-care for SHS workers
- Reforms in the Residential Tenancy Act
- Trauma Informed Practice
- Consumer engagement
- Interviewing techniques and case note writing skills for workforce
- Mental health, suicide prevention and co-morbidity
- Housing First Models and Principles
- Personal Wellbeing
- Improving client outcomes.

The 2023-24 State Budget provided only two years funding for the Workforce Development Program. Given the imperatives faced in the sector together with the importance of building and maintaining the workforce to deliver the *Tasmanian Housing Strategy,* ongoing funding of this proven deliverable is essential.

Disappointingly, funding for the WFD delivered by Shelter Tas is due to end in June 2025. Ongoing and quality training for housing and homelessness practitioners is increasingly important. Growth in demand for services, increased challenges in the recruitment and retention of staff, increased complexity of both clients and program responsibilities and escalating pressures caused by the shortage of affordable housing have intensified both the workload and the need for best practice methodologies across the sector.

Shelter Tas asks that the 2025-26 State Budget guarantees the current level of funding (indexed) specific to housing and homelessness sector workforce development through the forward estimates in order to continue and enhance our workforce development mandate.

Recommendation 2e: *Commit to fund Shelter Tas Workforce Development Program (project funding of $84,000 [ex GST] in 2023-24) to 2028 to align with its advocacy core budget funding period (2023-28) together with appropriate indexation.*

APPENDIX 1: Glossary of Terms

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) The AIHW is an independent statutory Australian Government agency that provides data and statistics on a range of health and welfare topics. https://www.aihw.gov.au/

Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework (CYSOF) The Framework outlines what Tasmanian organisations need to do to be child-centred and safe for children and young people. The Framework aims to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people from all forms of harm in institutional settings. Specific organisations need to follow the Framework by law.

Consumer, Building and Occupational Services (CBOS) CBOS is Tasmania's building and consumer regulator. They are a business unit of the Department of Justice in the Tasmanian Government.

Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA) CHIA is the national peak body that represents Community Housing Providers. Shelter Tas is the CHIA representative in lutruwita/Tasmania. https://www.communityhousing.com.au/

Community Housing Providers (CHPs) are not-for-profit organisations which provide housing at below market rents usually to low-income earners and other specific target groups.

Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI) HASI is a program delivered by Colony 47 that has the primary goal of helping individuals dealing with mental health challenges in keeping stable housing situations. Participants supported through HASI are provided approximately 4-5 hours of support per week.

Local Government Areas (LGA) LGAs cover legally designated parts of a state or territory for which incorporated local governing bodies have responsibility. In Tasmania, there are 29 LGAs.

Local Government Association Tasmania (LGAT) LGAT is the peak body for Tasmania's 29 councils.

No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) NILS Tasmania aims to support Tasmanian's living on a low income by providing access to safe and affordable loans for essential goods and services, small business development, and access to financial literacy support and information. https://nilstasmania.org.au/Website/AboutUs

Northern Youth Accommodation Coalition (NYAC) The Northern Youth Accommodation Coalition is an accommodation option for homeless young people aged 16-21 years in Launceston.

Private Rental Incentives Scheme (PRIS) Designed for specific at risk target groups having difficulty accessing private rentals. Property owners are incentivised to make properties available for affordable rent to eligible households with low or no support needs on a two-year lease located near services and transport.

Specialist Homelessness Service (SHS) Specialist homelessness services are a form of assistance provided by a specialist homelessness agency to a client aimed at responding to or preventing homelessness. Services provided may include accommodation provision, assistance to sustain housing, domestic and family violence services, mental health services, family and relationship assistance, disability services, drug and alcohol counselling, legal and financial services, immigration and cultural services, other specialist services and general assistance, support and referrals.

Youth, Family and Community Connections (YFCC) is a not-for-profit community organisation that provides a range of services to young people, families and individuals in communities across the North West Coast and West Coast of Tasmania. One of the services offered by YFCC is Transitional Accommodation Support Service

(TASS). Through this service, young people (aged 15-20 years) who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homelessness, can access medium term/transitional accommodation. In addition to supporting their housing, TASS staff also support young people through holistic case management.

Youth2Independence (Y2I) The Youth2Independence (Y2I) facilities support young people between the ages of 16-24 who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. They provide accommodation and support for young people to become independent by participating in education and training and are based on the international Education First Youth Foyer model. Rent is fixed at 25% of the young person's income. Homes Tasmania's Y2I facilities are managed and implemented by Anglicare Tasmania across four locations: Thyne House (50 beds) in Launceston, Eveline House (25 beds) in Devonport, and Trinity Hill (46 beds) and Campbell Street (26 beds) in Hobart. A fifth Y2I site is under construction in Burnie, with the 25 bed facility on schedule for completion in the last quarter of 2024. More information is available here: https://www.homestasmania.com.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0028/253486/Y2I-supportedaccommodation-policy.pdf

APPENDIX 2: National Rental Context

In August 2023 National Cabinet agreed to A Better Deal for Renters to harmonise and strengthen renters' rights across Australia. The nine provisions of the Deal are:

1. Develop a nationally consistent policy to implement a requirement for genuine reasonable grounds for eviction, having consideration to the current actions of some jurisdictions.
2. Ensure provisions to allow appeals against retaliatory eviction notices are fit for purpose (e.g. evictions motivated by tenants taking reasonable action to secure or enforce legal rights, complain or disclose information about their tenancy).
3. Move towards a national standard of no more than one rent increase per year for a tenant in the same property across fixed and ongoing agreements.
4. Implement a ban on soliciting rent bidding.
5. Allow tenants experiencing domestic or family violence to:
    i. End agreements without penalty and with a streamlined process and evidence e.g. a declaration by a prescribed professional such as a doctor or support service worker;
    ii. Change the locks and make security improvements without the landlord's permission;
    iii. Have their name removed from databases due to property damage caused by family or domestic violence; and
    iv. Jurisdictions to consider further action to protect tenants who are victim survivors of domestic or family violence e.g. the ability to apply to have the perpetrator removed from the tenancy.
6. Limit break lease fees for fixed term agreements to a maximum prescribed amount which declines according to how much of the lease has expired (e.g. a maximum of four weeks' rent if less than 25 per cent of the fixed term has expired).
7. Make rental applications easier and protect renters' personal information:
    i. Prescribe a rental application form in each jurisdiction, with required documents limited to two in each of the following categories: identity, financial ability to pay rent; suitability;
    ii. Require the destruction of renters' personal information three years after a tenancy ends and three months after tenancy begins for an unsuccessful applicant;
    iii. Require tenants' personal information to be provided and corrected within 30 days of a request by a tenant or prospective tenant; and
    iv. Specify information not allowed to be collected from a tenant or more generally (e.g. disputes with landlords).
8. Consider options for better regulation of short-stay residential accommodation.
9. Phase in minimum quality standards for rental properties (e.g. stovetop in good working order, not and cold running water).

To assess the progress jurisdictions are making in implementing the Deal, National Shelter and the National Association of Renters' Organisations released a joint report, The Rental Report, in August 2024. The report finds inconsistent progress and that some jurisdictions (particularly the Northern Territory, Western Australia, Queensland and Tasmania) are failing to meet their obligations in certain areas. The report also recommends areas requiring attention including the need to limit the amount a rent can be increased, adequately funding tenancy advice and advocacy services, and better data to inform policy

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