

Anglicare Tasmania submission to the Tasmanian State Budget 2023-24



WORKING FOR
A JUST TASMANIA



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About Anglicare Tasmania

Anglicare Tasmania is a large community service organisation in Tasmania with offices in Hobart, Glenorchy, Launceston, St Helens, Devonport, Burnie, Sorell and Zeehan and a range of programs in rural areas. Anglicare Tasmania's services include: crisis, short-term and long-term accommodation support; NDIS disability and mental health support services; support services following a motor vehicle accident; aged and home care services; alcohol and other drug services; financial and gambling counselling; and family support. In addition, Anglicare Tasmania's Social Action and Research Centre conducts research, policy and advocacy work with a focus on issues affecting Tasmanians on low incomes.

Anglicare Tasmania is committed to achieving social justice for all Tasmanians. It is our mission to speak out against poverty and injustice and offer decision-makers alternative solutions to help build a more just society. We provide opportunities for people in need to reach their full potential through our services, research and advocacy.

Anglicare Tasmania's work is guided by a set of values which includes these beliefs:

- that each person is valuable and deserves to be treated with respect and dignity;
- that each person has the capacity to make and to bear the responsibility for choices and decisions about their life;
- that support should be available to all who need it; and
- that every person can live life abundantly

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Our recommendations

Anglicare Tasmania welcomes the opportunity to participate in the community consultation for the 2023-24 State Budget.

Anglicare Tasmania's budget priorities come from recent research, consultation with disadvantaged and vulnerable Tasmanians, and the Anglicare frontline team members who work with them.

Anglicare encourages the State Government to invest in resources, systems and services that will support Tasmanians to participate fully in shaping their own futures.

These priorities have also been guided by the Treasurer's request that submissions to the 2023-24 State Budget focus on the following areas:

- supporting Tasmanians with the rising cost of living;
- improvements that could be made to existing Government services or processes, including grant application and/or management processes
- opportunities to improve services that are directed towards vulnerable people.

Recommendation 1: Increase funding to meet costs of maintaining service delivery to vulnerable people and supporting them with the rising cost of living.

Recommendation 2: Provide funding to pilot an improved service delivery model to support Tasmanians living with hoarding and challenges maintaining a healthy home.

Recommendation 3: Increase funding for social housing and supported housing for vulnerable people.

Recommendation 4: Allocate funding to address teen domestic violence and abuse.

Recommendation 5: Invest in better assessment of gambling-related harm.

Recommendation 1: Increase funding to meets costs of maintaining service delivery

Anglicare Tasmania highlights the sector-wide need to develop adequate indexation of funding for community services. In order to maintain community support service delivery, including supported housing, Anglicare Tasmania recommends:

- increasing grant funding across all community services contracts by a minimum of 5.1% in 2023-24 to reflect increased costs, 80% of which are labour costs
- providing targeted subsidies to service providers to meet additional increases in energy, food and insurance costs above increases in CPI

This recommendation contributes to:

- Supporting Tasmanians with the rising cost of living
- Improving the existing government processes of funding service delivery by NGOs
- Improving services directed toward the most vulnerable

Why this is a priority

Many Tasmanians, including the most vulnerable in our community, rely on Anglicare Tasmania services, such as supported housing and in-home care. To support these people with the rising cost of living, increased funding needs to be provided to meet the rising cost of delivering these services.

Anglicare experienced a funding shortfall in 2022-23 of \$1.3 million, which is the equivalent of almost 12 full-time jobs.

Grant funding has been indexed at 2.25% in recent years with an additional 0.25% in 2022-23. Under stable macroeconomic conditions with inflation within the target range, indexation has provided reasonable funding required to maintain service delivery. However, we are currently operating in an unstable and challenging environment, characterised by high inflation, structural adjustment (particularly in our energy markets), a tight labour market, and unstable equity markets.

Key issues

- Labour costs

Labour costs account for 80% of the cost of Anglicare's service provision. In 2022-23, Anglicare experienced a 5.1% increase in labour costs across its service contracts due to minimum wage growth of 4.6% and an increase of 0.5% in the superannuation contribution guarantee.

- Non-labour costs

In 2022-23, Australia's CPI grew by 5.1% and Hobart CPI grew by 5.8%. CPI is expected to reach 7.75% and slowly moderate over the following two years.

- Key costs expected to rise by more than CPI

Residents of Anglicare's residential facilities pay a fixed proportion of their income toward the running costs and the balance is met from grant funding. Residents' income has not kept pace with rising costs and so the additional funding required to cover costs has increased at a greater rate than CPI, a trend which is expected to continue.

In addition to the increase in labour costs and rising CPI, three major costs for these facilities are forecast to rise by more than CPI:

- **Electricity and energy costs** are forecast to rise significantly (up to 50%) over the next two years partly due to global supply limitations and the transition to renewables.
- **Food prices** are expected to rise as a result of reduced supply in the wake of floods, other supply chain disruptions and labour shortages.
- **Insurance premiums** are forecast to rise faster than CPI, partly due to increased frequency of extreme weather events.

- Supported housing has minimum costs

The provision of safe supported housing to vulnerable Tasmanians that meets the basic needs of residents and complies with legislation involves a number of fixed, non-scalable costs. The result is that if funding is insufficient to cover these costs, a point will be reached where the service cannot be provided.

- Developing adequate indexation of funding for community services

Anglicare Tasmania has partnered with TasCOSS and other peak bodies to commission work looking at the actual costs incurred by CSOs — costs not properly captured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or the Wage Price Index (WPI) — to determine a cost index specific for CSOs. The index will provide a formula for determining the appropriate indexation level for funding agreements in the future to ensure sustainable services.

Additional supporting information in relation to this recommendation is available on request.

Recommendation 2: Support Tasmanians living with hoarding and challenges maintaining a healthy home

Anglicare Tasmania recommends allocation of \$482,800 to develop and pilot of a service delivery model to more effectively support Tasmanians living with hoarding and challenges maintaining a healthy home in the longer term.

This recommendation contributes to:

- improving existing government services
- improving services directed toward the most vulnerable

Why this is a priority

Currently, there is little support available for vulnerable Tasmanians living with hoarding and experiencing challenges maintaining a healthy home. When available, support is usually limited to short-term, intensive supports to declutter and remove rubbish, which does not support the client to make sustainable changes to maintain a healthy home.

This results in repeated cycles of intensive cleanup which exposes the client to unsafe and/or unhealthy living conditions for significant periods of time, places the client at risk of homelessness, may be traumatising to the client and provides limited benefits for the costs incurred.

The *Treasured Lives* research project recommends a coordinated, person-centred care model that commences with client assessment and, based on client need, provides a combination of:

- intensive practical supports to undertake initial decluttering and rubbish removal
- clinical and psychosocial supports, including cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) if necessary to address underlying conditions and facilitate long-term change
- practical domestic supports for ongoing home maintenance
- personal care including teaching activities of daily living
- assistance to facilitate effective, ongoing support from peers and family.

In the first half of 2022, Anglicare Tasmania and Hobart City Council convened four workshops statewide which attracted over 150 attendees, mostly frontline workers. Workshop attendance and feedback provided strong evidence of a critical need for additional services and care coordination for people living with hoarding and challenges maintaining a healthy home. Attendees also identified a lack of specialist training and service providers within Tasmania.

Proposal

Anglicare Tasmania proposes developing a program to provide specialised care to people living with hoarding with a service delivery model based on the findings of the *Treasured Lives* research. Funding is sought for year one of a three-year pilot, during which the service delivery model will be developed, associated package costs determined and the evaluation framework established.

Anglicare Tasmania proposes working with the Department of Health in year one of this proposal to identify appropriate outcomes and outputs for years 2 and 3 of pilot program. It is proposed that program evaluation is developed by the Aged Care Services Management Team in consultation with the Department of Health.

At the core of the service delivery proposal, case management and coordination is provided by specialist social workers who build relationships with the clients, set goals, coordinate supports, support individuals to practice behavioural change, engage family and enhance social inclusion.

Anglicare Tasmania would provide referrals to specialist services, including cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) and broker intensive services to restore a healthy home environment (forensic cleaning).

Funding request for year one of pilot

For year one of the pilot the following funding is sought:

- \$280,000 salaries and on-costs for 2 FTE social worker specialists
- \$165,000 flexible fund to engage intensive services to restore a healthy home environment
- \$37,800 flexible fund to provide clients with specialist cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT)

The flexible fund request is based on the estimated costs of services for up to 30 clients. The actual amount expended may be more or less.

Anglicare Tasmania will fund:

- training, development and capacity building, including specialised training for the social worker specialists, CBT therapists and other staff working with these clients (including staff providing domestic and personal care). This training is not available in Tasmania and external training providers would be engaged.
- clinical supervision of specialist social workers estimated.
- modifications to IT system configuration to support data management.
- administrative costs, additional pay for upskilled existing staff, management of the social workers.

A key benefit of this program is the provision of specialist training within Tasmania to build the State's capacity to provide specialist services in the area of hoarding.

Additional detail about the program proposal is available on request.

Table 1. Indicative Government investment if program funded over 3 years

Investment item	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Total government expenditure per item over 3 years
Social worker specialists (2FTE)	\$280,000	\$280,000	\$280,000	\$840,000
Intensive practical cleanup services - flexible fund*	\$165,000	\$165,000	\$165,000	\$495,000
Cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) – flexible fund*	\$37,800	\$37,800	\$37,800	\$113,400
Tasmanian Government expenditure per FY	\$482,800	\$482,800	\$482,800	\$1,448,400

*indicative estimate

Recommendation 3: Funding social housing and supported housing

Anglicare Tasmania recommends additional funding to increase the supply of social housing such that Tasmanians, including the most vulnerable, have secure housing they can afford with reasonable access to services, education, and employment. This includes increasing funding to providers of supported housing to enable them to provide the support services that residents need.

This recommendation contributes to:

- supporting Tasmanians with the rising cost of living
- improving services directed toward the most vulnerable

Why this is a priority

Housing stress and homelessness have increased to a critical level over the past decade. Anglicare Tasmania's 2022 Rental Affordability Snapshot found that the total number of properties available for long-term private rental has fallen by over 70% since 2013.

The Government's proposed investment to correct the imbalance between housing supply and demand is acknowledged and the measures aimed at addressing the shortfall in supply are supported and should continue.

However, other measures are required (in addition to expanding supply) to meet the needs of many vulnerable Tasmanians who require supported accommodation that is not otherwise provided. These people include those who are:

- homeless or at risk of homelessness
- unaccompanied children who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- unable to maintain a tenancy in their own right
- in need of high level personal or living support not provided in social housing or private accommodation.

Anglicare Tasmania provides a range of supported accommodation, with the type and level of support varying across our facilities, depending on the needs of the people who are accommodated.

Importantly, providing safe and appropriate accommodation for these vulnerable Tasmanians requires significant, tailored support services on top of the cost of providing a 'roof over their heads'.

Funding to provide these services needs to be increased significantly in order to provide appropriate housing for the most vulnerable.

Additional information supporting this recommendation is available on request.

Recommendation 4: Allocate funding to address teen domestic violence and abuse

On 22 November 2022, Anglicare Tasmania will launch new research into teen domestic violence and abuse, *Young, in love and in danger*. Following the launch, Anglicare will recommend that the Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan is updated to include actions addressing teen domestic violence and abuse based on the research findings and funding is allocated to implement them.

This recommendation contributes to:

- improving existing government services
- improving services directed toward the most vulnerable

Why this is a priority

In Australia, a large body of evidence informs our understanding of and responses to domestic violence and abuse (DVA) amongst adults. There is also increasing awareness of adolescent violence in the home (AVITH) and the impacts of family violence on children as victims in their own right. Yet there remains a significant gap in acknowledging, understanding and responding to domestic violence and abuse experienced by young people under 18 within their own partner relationships.

Whilst State and Federal governments have increased their commitment to ending relationship violence and abuse, there is little if any recognition that this happens in teen relationships. Legislation does not clearly recognise children as victims of teen domestic violence and abuse in most jurisdictions in Australia. The focus of most policy and research related to teens and abuse is on witnessing parental/family violence or abuse toward a parent or other family member (AVITH).

This research project was initiated in response to consultation with service providers across Tasmania who identified teen domestic violence and abuse as a prevalent and culturally embedded problem for young people aged under 18 years, and observed significant gaps in support services and legal responses in this state.

Young, in love and in danger is the first Tasmanian study of teen domestic violence and abuse, and one of few studies nationally. The report will include recommendations to address the need for young Tasmanians to have access to educational materials that specifically highlight teen domestic violence and abuse, and tailored, trauma-informed supports and services.

The findings and recommendations are expected to be relevant to:

- Department for Education, Children and Young People
- Department of Premier and Cabinet (Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, Family Safety Secretariat)
- Department of Health (Family Violence Counselling Service)
- Tasmania Police
- Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People.

Additional information supporting this recommendation is available on request.

Recommendation 5: Invest in better assessment of gambling harm

Anglicare Tasmania recommends funding and implementing actions to enable more comprehensive assessment of gambling-related harm, including:

- additional actions under the Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Strategy designed to strengthen understanding of the prevalence of gambling-related suicide and suicidal behaviour in Tasmania.
- actions (in cooperation with the Federal Government) to monitor the prevalence of online gambling and measure online and sports gambling-related harm.

This recommendation contributes to:

- improving existing government services
- improving services directed toward the most vulnerable

Why this is a priority

Anglicare Tasmania has identified two key information gaps that prevent accurate assessment of gambling harm to Tasmanians:

- the prevalence and impact of online sports betting
- gambling related suicide.

Online gambling

Counsellors from Anglicare's gambling support services have seen an increase in the number and proportion of people seeking help as a result of sports betting and other online gambling in recent years. Compared to other gambling activities, people who gamble online are younger, more likely to be working and married or living with a partner. Over 90% of Tasmanian online gamblers who sought assistance were under 45 and almost half were under 25. This trend is expected to continue.

Anglicare Tasmania calls on State and Australian Governments to work cooperatively to minimise harm from sports gambling and other online gambling, including restricting advertising of sports and online gambling, and investing in effective measurement of online and sports gambling-related harm.

Suicide

Gambling is causally linked to financial distress, unemployment and relationship breakdown, all of which are significant risk factors for suicide. Suicide and suicidal behaviour are linked to gambling (Suomi and Dowling 2020). However, there is a significant gap in data on gambling-related suicides, including data for Tasmania. With an absence of data about links between gambling harm and suicide, it is not possible to provide an estimate of the cost of gambling-related suicides and suicidal behaviour in Tasmania.

Suicide Prevention Australia and Financial Counsellors Australia identify gambling as a significant risk factor for suicide and have published a 'roadmap' for change to reduce gambling-related suicide. This includes systemic changes to ensure active investigation of gambling activities in cases of possible suicide and consideration of gambling by Coroner's Courts (Suicide Prevention Australia and Financial Counselling Australia 2022).

Additional information supporting this recommendation is available on request.

References

Suicide Prevention Australia & Financial Counselling Australia 2022, Gambling and suicide prevention: A roadmap for change, viewed September 2022, <https://www.financialcounsellingaustralia.org.au/docs/gambling-and-suicide-prevention-a-roadmap-for-change/>.

Suomi, A & Dowling, N 2020, Lived experiences of help-seeking in the presence of gambling related harms and coexisting mental health conditions, Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, Melbourne.