

State Budget Consultation Submission 2024-25



WORKING FOR
A JUST TASMANIA



SOCIAL
ACTION &
RESEARCH
CENTRE

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Anglicare Tasmania acknowledges the Tasmanian Aboriginal community as the traditional and original owners and continuing custodians of this land lutruwita. We pay respect to Elders past and present.

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; 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 2024-25 State Budget.

Anglicare Tasmania's budget priorities come from recent research and consultation with disadvantaged 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.

This year's priorities are focused on three areas:

- indexation of funding of community and housing services grants to maintain delivery of services supporting Tasmanians
- successful implementation of the Housing First approach
- addressing selected recommendations from the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings.

Recommendation 1: Indexation

Indexation of Community Services Grants matches rising costs and is determined by an agreed formula based on 70% WPI and 30% CPI plus any increase in the superannuation guarantee.

Recommendation 2: Supported accommodation

Funding for supported accommodation is increased and is based on the difference between actual costs of service delivery and the income from residents.

Recommendation 3: A two-worker model for YouthCare crisis accommodation

Fund a two-worker staffing model for the YouthCare program, which provides crisis accommodation to males at risk of homelessness aged 13-20 years who have complex needs.

Recommendation 4: Respectful Relationships Education to prevent abuse

Fully funding and mandating delivery of trauma-informed, evidence-based Respectful Relationships Education (RRE) that is co-designed with young people and delivered K-12 in all schools.

Recommendation 5: Supporting Tasmanians living with hoarding to maintain tenancies

\$1.585 million over 3 years to pilot a service delivery model providing more effective support for Tasmanians living with hoarding.

1. Indexation

Recommendation 1: Indexation of Community Services Grants matches rising costs and is determined by an agreed formula based on 70% Wage Price Index and 30% Consumer Price Index plus any increase in the superannuation guarantee.

Why this is a priority

Increased funding is needed to meet the rising cost of delivering Anglicare Tasmania services that many Tasmanians rely on. Anglicare Tasmania acknowledges and welcomes the review underway to develop fair and adequate indexation of funding for community services.

In 2023-24, Anglicare experienced a funding shortfall of \$1.7 million, which is the equivalent of almost 15 full-time jobs. Based on current forecasts, Anglicare estimates that indexation of 6.4% will be required in 2024-25 to meet operating costs.

Grant funding has been indexed at 2.25% in recent years with an additional 1.75% provided to Anglicare in 2023-24. Under stable economic conditions with inflation in the target range, this indexation rate is reasonable. However, we are currently in an unstable and challenging environment, characterised by high inflation, structural adjustment (particularly in the energy market), a tight labour market, and unstable equity markets. An indexation formula that is responsive to macroeconomic fluctuations and aligned with community sector costs would provide certainty for community service providers, the State Government, and the Tasmanians they serve.

Key issues

- *Labour costs*

Labour costs account for 77% of the cost of Anglicare's service provision. In 2023-24, Anglicare experienced a 6.25% increase in labour costs across its service contracts due to wage growth of 5.75% and an increase of 0.5% in the superannuation contribution guarantee.

- *Non-labour costs*

In 2022-23, inflation was at 6-7% pa for much of the year with annual growth in CPI reaching a peak of 7.9% in the December quarter of 2022. Although inflation is now sitting between 5-6%, it is still well above the 2-3% target range.

- *Key costs are rising by more than CPI*

Three major costs for Anglicare are rising by more than CPI. These costs disproportionately impact Anglicare's supported accommodation facilities (see Recommendation 2):

Electricity and energy costs are rising (tariffs will rise by 43% from December 2023) partly due to global supply limitations and the transition to renewables.

Food prices and the cost of catering supplies have risen by 7-8%.

Insurance premiums rose by 14.2% in 2023-24 (June Quarter, ABS) and have continued to rise in 2023-24.

- *Unstable equity markets*

Concurrent instability in investment markets due to factors such as geopolitical unrest and climate change reduces Anglicare Tasmania's capacity to meet funding shortfalls from sources other than grant funding.

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

2. Supported accommodation

Recommendation 2: Funding for supported accommodation is increased and is based on the difference between actual costs of service delivery and the income from residents.

Why this is a priority

Supported accommodation for vulnerable Tasmanians is an important component of the state's housing system and key to successful implementation of a Housing First approach.

Anglicare operates a range of supported accommodation facilities state-wide to meet the needs of many vulnerable Tasmanians, including 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 low to moderate level personal or living support not provided in social housing or private accommodation.

In 2023-24, Anglicare's supported accommodation is projected to have a funding shortfall due to rising costs.

Key issues

- In past years, the increase in real wages has exceeded indexation.
- Catering costs at our four lodges that support clients with moderate needs have increased by 7.6%, electricity costs and insurance have increased in excess of CPI (see recommendation 1), and energy efficiency is variable across different sites due to age of the facilities.
- Residents of Anglicare's residential facilities pay a fixed proportion of their income toward the running costs, which is the primary source of income for facilities (70-80%). The balance of income comes from State Government grant funding.

There has been a small increase in the contribution of residents due to indexing of income support payments in September 2023. However, State Government funding does not cover the remaining costs and a simple indexation model does not efficiently or effectively match the grant funding to the actual costs.

To place supported accommodation services on a sustainable footing, it is proposed that State Government funding is determined annually based on the difference between the actual cost of service delivery and the income paid by residents.

Detailed information has been provided to Homes Tasmania and is available on request.

3. A two-worker model for YouthCare crisis accommodation

Recommendation 3: Providing funding for a two-worker staffing model for the YouthCare program, which provides crisis accommodation to young males at risk of homelessness aged 13-20 years who have complex needs.

Why this is a priority

Anglicare Tasmania is funded by the Tasmanian Government to provide youth crisis accommodation (YouthCare) that must be safe, affordable and appropriate to the identified needs of the client and for the duration of a client's period of crisis. Anglicare recommends that the staffing model under the agreement and associated funding is increased from one worker to two workers, 24/7, to provide effective support to clients and a safe environment for clients and workers.

YouthCare provides six permanent beds and one emergency bed for males aged 13 to 20 years who often have complex needs involving offending behaviours, mental health, substance abuse and/or drug addictions. Current funding provides for YouthCare to be staffed with one worker 24/7. Considering the complex needs of the clients and their age range, providing for two workers 24/7 is essential in order to manage risk, provide support within the Advantaged Thinking framework and achieve the agreed goals and aspirations of the young person.

The Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Response to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings Report made a number of recommendations for the care of young people and support staff, which included appropriate staffing and qualifications along with having appropriate structures in place.

Anglicare Tasmania prioritises and maintains a safe environment for YouthCare clients, many of whom are under 18 years of age, and for Anglicare staff. A single worker model limits the scope of the individual youth crisis support services that the facility is intended to provide, namely providing the support necessary to stabilise the client's crisis, supporting the client to rebuild relationships where appropriate, and planning their exit out of crisis. A two-worker model is recommended in order to achieve the objectives of YouthCare.

Additional detail has been provided to Homes Tasmania and is available on request.

4. Funding expansion of Respectful Relationships Education

Recommendation 4: Fully fund and mandate the delivery of trauma-informed, evidence-based Respectful Relationships Education (RRE) that is co-designed with young people and delivered K-12 in all Tasmanian schools.

Why this is a priority

This is a key recommendation from Anglicare’s ground-breaking research [*Young, in love and in danger*](#) into teen intimate partner violence and abuse, which is more prevalent in Tasmania than in Australia as a whole. The Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government’s Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings directly referenced this research in identifying the need to address perceptions and gender norms with consistent and evidence-based education programs to prevent abuse (Volume 3, p.103). As a result, it made the following recommendation:

Recommendation 6.1

- *The Department for Education, Children and Young People should introduce and fund a mandatory child sexual abuse prevention curriculum as part of the mandatory respectful behaviours curriculum from early learning programs to Year 12, across all types of government schools (including specialist schools).*
- *This mandatory prevention curriculum should draw on expert evidence of best practice and successful approaches adopted in other states and territories, including South Australia’s mandatory curriculum.*
- *The Department should develop a plan for sustained implementation of the mandatory prevention curriculum. The plan should:*
 - *set out the goals and objectives of implementing the mandatory prevention curriculum*
 - *define the roles and responsibilities of key participants*
 - *include criteria for evaluating the curriculum.*
- *The Department should evaluate the effectiveness of the mandatory prevention curriculum five years after its implementation. (Volume 1, p.79)*

Anglicare strongly supports the fully funded implementation of this recommendation.

Anglicare’s research recommends that Respectful Relationships Education:

- is mandated in all schools (government and independent schools)
- is trauma-informed
- is co-designed with young people
- recognises the role of intimate partner relationships in the lives of adolescents
- is focused on building strengths
- includes education in conflict management skills in relationships.

5. Supporting Tasmanians living with hoarding to maintain tenancies

Recommendation 5: Allocating \$1.54 million over three years to develop and pilot a service delivery model to provide more effective support to Tasmanians living with hoarding and challenges maintaining a healthy home.

Why this is a priority

Tasmanians living with hoarding and experiencing challenges maintaining a healthy home are at risk of homelessness. Providing support that enables them to maintain a tenancy is critical to a successful Housing First approach.

Anglicare Tasmania continues to receive requests for practical, on-ground assistance for Tasmanians living with hoarding, such as this request from a family member received by our Social Action and Research Centre (SARC) in October 2023:

We are struggling to find services in Tasmania that can help with my mother in law's hoarding... it prevents us from visiting and also the grandchildren from seeing their [grandparents] ... Every surface to the house and shed is full and has spilled over to the yard. There is also animal hoarding ... there are many other paid storage facilities being utilised outside the property causing financial stress. Obviously it is a condition difficult to treat ... We feel we have lost our mother. Please advise if there is any support in Hobart available.

In September 2023, a (non-Anglicare) case worker in northern Tasmania contacted SARC seeking information about the availability of assistance for a client whose hoarding was preventing delivery of other services that he needs:

[Name withheld] is a 75 year old man with severe hoarding both inside and outside ... he was provided with referral codes in the past for hoarding, but no one has availability ... He cannot shower at his property or cook and relies on doing this at other people's houses within the community. I was reaching out to see if you knew of anything in the North that could help out, as this is impacting the way he lives and can receive services.

Currently there is very limited practical assistance available in Tasmania that is accessible to those on low incomes and most at risk of homelessness, and none that provides the coordinated care and clinical and psychosocial supports needed to facilitate long-term change. Assistance, if available, is generally limited to intensive clean-up and rubbish removal, which provides little benefit to the client, the landlord and the community relative to the cost incurred.

Proposal

Anglicare Tasmania proposes piloting a specialised care program based on the findings of the [Treasured Lives](#) research, which recommended coordinated, person-centred care. Funding is sought for year one of a three-year pilot, during which the service delivery model will be developed, 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 year 2 and 3 of pilot program.

Case management and care coordination would be provided by specialist social workers. Anglicare Tasmania would provide referrals to specialist services; clinical and psychosocial supports, including cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) if necessary, to address underlying conditions and facilitate long-term change; and broker forensic cleaning to restore a healthy home environment:

Funding request for year one of the three-year pilot

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

- \$297,900 salaries and on-costs for 2 FTE social worker specialists
- \$175,600 flexible fund to engage intensive services to restore a healthy home environment
- \$40,200 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.

Anglicare Tasmania will fund:

- training and capacity building, including specialised training for social worker specialists, CBT therapists and other staff working with these clients. This training is not available in Tasmania and external training providers would be engaged
- clinical supervision of specialist social workers
- modifications to IT system configuration to support data management
- administrative costs, additional pay for upskilled existing staff and 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 2. Indicative Government investment if program funded over 3 years

Investment item	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total government expenditure per item over 3 years
Social worker specialists (2FTE)	\$297,900	\$312,800	\$326,900	\$937,600
Intensive practical clean-up services – flexible fund*	\$175,600	\$175,600	\$175,600	\$526,800
Cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) – flexible fund*	\$40,200	\$40,200	\$40,200	\$120,600
Tasmanian Government expenditure per FY	\$513,700	\$528,600	\$542,700	\$1,585,000

*indicative estimate based on provision of services to up to 30 clients per year