MISSION AUSTRALIA | together we stand

Submission on Housing Affordability, Tasmania

July 2019



Mission Australia

Submission to House of Assembly Select Committee on Housing Affordability, Parliament of Tasmania, July 2019

About Us

Mission Australia (MA) is a national non-denominational Christian organisation, with more than 155 years' experience in delivering community services. We stand together with people in need on their journey to independence. Our evidence-based, client-centred community services are focused on reducing homelessness and strengthening communities across Australia.

In the 2017-18 financial year we supported nearly 120,000 people through 461 programs and services across Australia. During the same period, we supported nearly 15,000 Tasmanians through 44 services. We work with families and children, young people and people experiencing homelessness and also provide specialist services for mental health, disability and alcohol and drug issues.

In 2009 Mission Australia established Mission Australia Housing (MAH), a Tier 1 Community Housing Provider. In 2013 we took over the management of a portfolio of 500 social homes for Housing Tasmania in Clarendon Vale and Rokeby.

We know that great communities thrive where there are connections, opportunities and engagement across the economic spectrum. We know that individual service responses are not sufficient to address the challenges of deep and persistent disadvantage. That's why we use a place-based model which manages tenancies; co-ordinates support services; and targets intergenerational disadvantage through education and employment. We use a research and evidence based approach to our work and services, so we can measure our impact and demonstrate program outcomes.

Submission

Mission Australia's submission focuses on the need for significant progress on homelessness and affordable housing and the need for adequate funding for evidence-based programs that have a positive impact on people's lives and support them on their journey to independence.

Homelessness and Housing

Key recommendations

- The Tasmanian government should provide increased funding for homelessness services, to address the growing need for supports across our communities.
- Targets for social housing growth should be set and worked towards to meet the demand demonstrated by the waiting list and the projected demographic changes.
- More affordable private rental housing is also necessary, given rising rents and level of rental stress.
- Better protections for renters is required through legislation which prevents discrimination and unfair evictions.
- Housing First responses should be made available to people who have experienced homelessness and this relies on an adequate supply of social and affordable housing.
- Increased support should be provided to young people at risk of homelessness, including support to families, mental health supports, alcohol and drug supports and supported accommodation options.
- Increased and flexible accommodation needs to be provided for older people including construction of at least one homeless aged care facility per year for the growing number of older people at risk of and experiencing homelessness.
- Affordable housing should be integrated into the planning system, including through inclusionary zoning and value capture mechanisms.
- The current Tasmanian Affordable Housing Strategy should be expanded to include the use of well-located State and locally controlled land in a way which materially increases the supply of social and affordable housing.
- Collaboration efforts across industries should be pursued – for instance – The Constellation Project has been created to end homelessness in a generation. As a founding member, Mission Australia has committed to work with PWC, Australian Red Cross and The Centre for Social Impact on lasting and structural change.

Issues to be addressed

Homelessness rates are unacceptable

- Census data from 2016 shows that over 1,600 Tasmanians were homeless on any given night.[1]
- The State homelessness rate of 32 persons per 10,000 persons enumerated was similar to 2011 census data[2] showing no reduction in homelessness rates.
- During 2016-17, specialist homelessness services (SHS) assisted 7,789 clients in Tasmania.[3] This equated to one in 66 people in Tasmania receiving homelessness assistance, higher than the national rate (1 in 84).
- Of the 7,789 people assisted 49% were homeless on presentation, higher than the national rate (44%).
- On average, 25 requests for assistance went unmet each day in Tasmania.

There is a chronic shortage of housing for people on low and moderate incomes

- According to the ACOSS *Poverty in Australia 2018* report, 1 in 8 people live below the poverty line ($433 a week) in Australia. In Tasmania, 7.2% live below the poverty line before housing costs and this proportion goes up to 11.5% after housing costs.[4]
- The latest national *Rental Affordability Index* found that Greater Hobart continues to be the least affordable capital city in Australia.[5] On average rents in Hobart are unaffordable even to the median rental household. It means that the average income household is on the verge of housing stress.[6]
- On the weekend of Anglicare Rental Affordability Snapshot (23-24 March 2019) there were 1,050 properties listed for rent across Tasmania. This is a 60% reduction in listings since 2013. Of this year's listings, just 212 properties (22%) would have been affordable and appropriate for households that rely on income support payments and less than half (465) would have been affordable and appropriate for our households on the minimum wage. No

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[1] Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census reveals a rise in the rate of homelessness in Australia, 2049.0 - Census of Population and Housing: Estimating homelessness, 2016, accessible at: http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/2049.02016?OpenDocument

[2] Ibid

[3] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Specialist homelessness services 2016–17: Tasmania, accessible at: https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/c58999e7-db14-42ad-937e-d7880359e9ea/shs-2016-17-tas-factsheet.pdf.aspx

[4] ACOSS and UNSW, Poverty in Australia 2018, p. 65, accessible at: https://www.acoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/ACOSS_Poverty-in-Australia-Report_Web-Final.pdf

[5] Anglicare Australia, Rental Affordability Snapshot, November 2018, p.46, accessible at: https://www.sgsep.com.au/application/files/8015/4336/9561/RAI_Nov_2018_-_high_quality.pdf

[6] Ibid

properties anywhere in Tasmania were affordable for a person on youth allowance, only 1% were affordable for a single mother with a child on Newstart; and only 3% were affordable for a person on the disability support pension. 7

- Homelessness can be ended by providing access to appropriate, affordable and secure housing, along with the support needed to help people stay housed.

Housing underpins economic growth

- Housing is vital infrastructure and a well operating housing market is a pre-requisite for productivity and social cohesion.
- A workforce that is stably and affordably housed is a pool of people able to save for retirement and invest in the future, including education for their children.
- For people unable to work, their use of government-funded services - such as in the health and justice systems - decreases when they are stably and affordably housed.
- Housing construction and maintenance also boosts productivity through more jobs.

MA and MAH at Ivanhoe (NSW) – A model for urban renewal

As part of the NSW Government's Communities Plus program, Mission Australia Housing will create at least 950 social housing dwellings and 128 affordable homes among the 3000 new dwellings in partnership with developers at Ivanhoe estate, 15 kilometres northwest of the Sydney CBD.

The development will provide residents with easy access to transport, services, jobs, quality amenities and open green spaces to support a vibrant and sustainable community. The development will include a high school, residential aged care, childcare centres, a supermarket, cafes and retail shops.

Mission Australia Housing will provide tenancy and asset management for the social housing residents and will also deliver community development utilising the Mission Australia Strengthening Communities model. Additionally, Mission Australia will coordinate support service for residents to increase their independence.

This model of urban renewal has potential to be adapted for developments in Hobart and throughout Tasmania.

[7] Anglicare Australia, Rental Affordability Snapshot, Tasmania 2019, p.2, accessible at: https://anglicareras.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/tasmania.pdf

Strengthening Communities

Key recommendations

- There should be a commitment to address entrenched and locational disadvantage at the community level, over the long term.
- Solutions need to be based on strong local participation, be flexible in adapting to changes and lessons learnt and be community owned and driven. They should be based on an understanding of the multiple and complex needs within these communities and provide an integrated service response through community partnerships.
- Housing renewal programs in communities experiencing disadvantage should include a strengthening communities focus, driven by the community, facilitated by community housing providers working alongside community services providers and adopt a strengths-based approach.

Issues to be addressed

Persistent and entrenched disadvantage must be addressed

- The Dropping Off the Edge Report (DOTE2015) identified the 3% of communities across Australia that bear the greatest burden of disadvantage and require immediate and sustained commitment from all levels of government. [8]
- In Tasmania just six local government areas accounted for approximately 80% of the highest rank positions across the 21 indicators. These locations show high rates of criminal convictions; long-term unemployment; juvenile offending; young adults not participating in full time work, education or training disability; and low family income.[9]
- Locational disadvantage is a complex problem requiring systems change and a coordinated place-based collective impact approach. Interventions are required at the community level in addition to macro reforms and individual service responses.
- A place-based model that co-ordinates services and targets intergenerational disadvantage requires long term funding. A minimum of ten years' commitment plus upfront funding is required to plan and engage in programs and make adjustments as necessary.
- An assets-based approach to community development uses methods such as capacity building, community building, neighbourhood renewal and asset mapping to fortify social capital.

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[8] Jesuit Social Services and Catholic Social Services Australia (2015) *Dropping Off the Edge2015*, accessible at: www.dote.org.au

[9] Ibid

MA and MAH at Clarendon Vale and Rokeby

In 2013 Mission Australia Housing (MAH), under an agreement with Housing Tasmania, took over management of a portfolio of about 500 aged social homes in the neighbourhood of Clarendon Vale and Rokeby in Tasmania.

These suburbs, on the outskirts of Hobart contain a high percentage of social homes, had a history of low service provision and a lack of opportunity for residents.

Alongside the provision of tenancy and property management, MAH embarked on an integrated program of community development. Listening to local residents and supporting them to create their preferred future for their community.

What has emerged is a vibrant and renewed community, taking action and making tangible improvements.

Mission Australia and Mission Australia Housing in Tasmania

Chigwell House: Provides events, services, information and support for the community from birth to 80 years. Parents Staying Connected, Youth Connections, Integrated Family Support Service, Child and Family Health Nurse, Playgroup, Targeted Youth Support Service and Youth Beat programs all run out of this location and deliver services to families and young people. From Chigwell House we address homelessness and mental health issues. 14 community housing units which are managed by Mission Australia Housing are also at this address.

NDIS Local Area Coordination (ECEI) South East and North West TAS: The Local Area Coordinator (LAC) is a core function in the NDIS roll out. The LAC works with people with disability, their family, carers and the community to increase access and inclusion. Participants are supported to connect with mainstream and specialist supports and works collaboratively to create a detailed 'Plan', including specific goals, and aspirations and relevant supports.

NDIS Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) South East and North West TAS: Aims to provide all children aged 0-6 years with developmental delay or disability the best start in life. ECEI focuses on **the individual needs of each child and working with families to link them with mainstream supports.**

Hope and Recovery Transitional Service (HARTS): National Psychosocial Transition Service, funded through Primary Health Tas. This service is for existing Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMs) clients

only, to support their transition/eligibility testing for NDIA services, or to support their transition to Continuity of Support programs.

Strong Families, Safe Kids Advice and Referral Line: The Family Support Gateway will cease from 3rd December 2018 when the Strong Families Safe Kids Advice and Referral Line commences. The Strong Families, Safe Kids Advice and Referral Line is a contact point for people seeking information, advice and assistance if they have concerns about a child and their family. The service provides information and advice about service options and other approaches for responding to the needs of children and families. When a child and their family need assistance the service may provide this through referral to another service, or in some circumstances if a child is considered to be at risk, the service may refer the matter to the Child Safety Service for assessment.

Integrated Family Support Service (IFSS) Rosny Park, Berriedale, Launceston and Devonport: Provides early intervention for children and families at risk. The aim of the service is to support families to identify/resolve/address issues in order to prevent any further involvement with Child Safety or the family having a notification to Child Safety.

Mission Australia Housing – Clarendon Vale and Rokeby: Tenancy and asset management of social housing and whole of community renewal through community development.

Clarence Plains Community Chaplain: Non-denominational Community Chaplain service provided to community members across Clarence Plains. The Chaplain provides assistance to individuals from targeted communities (geographical or program-based) to take hold of a positive future by providing a unique resource who brings compassion, help and hope to communities where MA has an active presence.

National Disability Coordination Officer (NDCO): The NDCO assists people with disability to access post-school education and training, and then subsequent employment. They offer information, coordination and referral and work with stakeholders to remove barriers to employment.

Parents Staying Connected (PSC): A mentor and peer support program encouraging parents and significant others to become part of a group who engage in training, group work, health and nutrition and play activities with children to enhance parenting confidence.

Targeted Youth Support Service: A holistic intervention service offering intensive case management and therapeutic interventions for young people aged between 10 and 18 years, who are identified as having significant and/or multiple risk factors and whom without intensive support are likely to enter the child safety and/or youth justice systems.

Youth Beat: Youth Beat operates in Derwent Valley, Clarendon Vale and Rokeby and reaches out to vulnerable young people across Southern Tasmania. We offer a wide range of services and support to young people, including identifying and addressing anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol misuse, referral and intervention for young people in crisis and assistance with accessing additional services and social support networks. We foster strong relationships with police, community groups and local support services. Youth Beat offers interactive activities based on young people's needs and interests.

Trinity Hill Learning Co-ordinator: This is a service for young people aged 16-25 who are on a low income and have been homeless or at risk of homelessness, are eligible for social housing and able to live in independent accommodation at the Trinity Hill affordable housing development in Southern Tasmania. The service focuses on maximising tenant engagement in employment, education and training by supporting tenants with vocational and/or employment goals. The role of the Learning Co-ordinator create links with a wide network of services to address barriers to employment and education.

Family Support for Grandparents and Relatives Raising Children South East and North West: This service provides support for grandparents and relatives who have recently (within 12 months) taken on the primary care of a relative child or children. We provide assistance with Centrelink, CSS, support groups and brokerage**.**

Disability Employment Services (DES) Burnie, Devonport, Queenstown, Smithton and Launceston: Assists employers to hire staff with an injury, disability or health condition. DES provides employers with ongoing assistance, training and support and access to a range of other support services including wage subsidies and financial assistance to help cover costs such as modifying the workplace or purchasing adaptive technologies or interpreting services. For the job seeker, DES provides Disability Management Services (DMS) for job seekers with disability, an injury or a health condition who need assistance to find a job and occasional support to keep a job; and Employment Support Services, providing assistance to those with permanent disability who need regular, ongoing support to keep a job.

Communities for Children (C4C) Helping Young Families: in partnership with CatholicCare, strengthening the whole-of-family approach, focussing on parenting skills by working alongside parent(s) and their family to achieve what they want. Services include emotional support, information and advice, identifying and addressing needs, advocacy and service coordination.

FAST (C4C) North West Tasmania: in partnership with CatholicCare, this service offers support to families in the Burnie area with children aged 5-12 years that may be finding it challenging to reach their full potential at school. The service aims for families, schools and services to work as a team to provide the best possible future for children.

Parenting Together: in partnership with CatholicCare, providing evidence based parenting workshops to families to help strengthen positive family relationships.

Lead Support Coordination Service: Supporting individuals, youth and families with multiple and complex needs, providing coordinated services and support in the SE and NW of Tasmania.

Family Day Care Tasmania (Mission Australia Children's Services): Childcare service including Kentish Childcare, working in a child care centre setting, and Educators homes providing childcare for families. Also MACS Place-community playgroups and therapeutic workshops.

For any further information please contact

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