



Housing Services

Budget Initiatives and Priorities for 2016-17

The Tasmanian Government is providing an additional \$60 million over three years in this year's budget to support *Tasmania's Affordable Housing Strategy 2015-2025* and its commitments under the *Affordable Housing Action Plan 2015-2019*.

A total investment of \$178.6 million in 2016-17 will improve housing affordability and help those most vulnerable to housing stress and homelessness. In 2016-17, 624 new houses are expected to be delivered.

Key commitments in 2016-17 for housing services include:

- \$20 million in new funds towards supply and reform initiatives under the *Affordable Housing Action Plan*
- \$12.7 million in existing capital funds towards housing projects that support the *Affordable Housing Action Plan*
- \$102.5 million to deliver public housing services
- \$24.3 million (plus indexation and Equal Remuneration Order) to deliver Specialist Homelessness Services and Housing Connect services
- \$3.3 million from the Housing Fund to increase supply of affordable housing under NRAS.

I. Continued investment in Tasmania's Affordable Housing Strategy

The *Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan* provides a comprehensive approach to prevent, intervene early and respond to housing stress and homelessness. The development of the 10 year strategy was an election commitment delivered in September 2015.

There will be an additional 1 600 households provided with housing and homelessness assistance across the four years of the *Action Plan*. This will include new supply of over 900 affordable homes.

The \$32.7 million in 2016-17 to support the *Action Plan*, is in addition to:

- \$22.8 million already allocated in 2015-16 to support the *Affordable Housing Action Plan*

Key supply initiatives for 2016-17 include:

- **Continuation of initiatives commenced in 15-16** including the Private Developer Shovel Ready Housing, HomeShare, Youth at Risk Response Centre, the Dads & Kids Accommodation Facility and the Community Housing Stock Leverage Program.
- **Affordable Housing Site Supply** for affordable housing at Somerset and to progress land for release at Devonport and Huntingfield.
- **New Social Housing Supply – Elderly Units** for older people at Newstead, commencement at Somerset, and to acquire a site in Hobart.
- **Public Housing Reinvestment** by redeveloping sites and delivering new properties to ensure the public housing portfolio is better aligned to the needs of current and future tenants, including residents with poor health and mobility.
- **Launceston Supported Youth Accommodation** with expansion of Thyne House in Launceston started.
- **Devonport Supported Youth Accommodation** with 25 independent units to be built.
- **Supported Disability Accommodation** to be built in Devonport for NDIS participants.
- **Supported Elderly Accommodation** by partnering with an aged care provider to begin delivery of a residential care facility for older people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

2. Social housing for people most in need

The Tasmanian Government is investing almost \$102.5 million in 2016-17 to continue to deliver public housing services for Tasmanians in need.

2.1. Demand and performance

The Housing Register of social housing applicants is projected to be 2 950 applicants by June 2017. While demand has been increasing over recent years, the initiatives to be delivered under the *Affordable Housing Action Plan* are expected to relieve housing stress in the private rental market.

Tasmania is performing the best in social housing supply compared with other states.

Despite having the nation's highest proportion of low income households, with a third of households receiving their main source of income from government pensions and allowances, Tasmania has the lowest proportion of social housing applicants compared with the size of its portfolio.

The number of social housing applicants represents 20.2 per cent of the social housing portfolio in Tasmania, which is 31 percentage points below the national average.

2.2. New information management system

Housing Tasmania is developing a new Housing Management System to replace its numerous outdated and disparate information systems. The new system will go live in 2016-17.

Clients will experience improved responsiveness, service integration and less duplication.

Tasmanian company Geometry Pty Ltd is contracted to develop the new information system. The contract was executed in August 2014 at the value of \$1.2 million.

3. Accessing housing assistance and Homelessness services

The Tasmanian Government is investing \$24.3 million (plus indexation and Equal Remuneration Order) in 2016-17 to provide Specialist Homelessness Services and Housing Connect across Tasmania.

This includes support for short term crisis accommodation and medium term supported accommodation facilities, as well as the front door intake and assessment role and housing-related

support provided statewide by Housing Connect. It includes financial help into private rentals and brokered accommodation.

Housing Connect was implemented in July 2013 as the one-stop shop for people in need of housing assistance. It now provides support and advice to thousands of Tasmanians each year.

In 2015-16, a new method of prioritising assistance was implemented to support the Housing Connect model. The new Housing Assessment Prioritisation System (HAPS) considers factors that impact on housing need including affordability, homelessness, safety, health and mobility issues.

Applicants are assessed as having either a Priority or General housing need. Applicants exiting from crisis accommodation or who are escaping family violence receive Priority access.

Reform initiatives to commence in 2016-17 include:

- **Private Landlord Incentives** to improve access for low income households into affordable rentals.
- **Youth Head Leases** to quickly help homeless youth out of crisis and into secure homes.
- **Housing Connect Awareness Campaign** to raise awareness and encourage early referrals for housing support.
- **Triage training and SHIP Enhancements** to make further improvements to the IT system that supports Housing Connect to deliver a streamlined triage response for clients.
- **Investment in more Crisis Housing Beds.**

The Tasmanian Government's *Safe Homes, Safe Families: Family Violence Action Plan 2015-2020* initiatives also have a focus on responding to homelessness including:

- **Redevelopment of the Hobart Women's Shelter**, with a new site and more crisis beds for women and their children to be completed in 2016-17.
- **Rapid Rehousing from Family Violence**, with a pool of 50 homes expected to be achieved statewide in 2016-17.

4. Home ownership

As part of the Government's continued investment in the Affordable Housing Strategy, funding of \$2.8 million in 2016-17 is provided to increase home ownership opportunities under the HomeShare scheme and the Streets Ahead Incentive Program. This assistance is in addition to the \$1.8 million in 2016-17 in existing funding allocated to the HomeShare scheme.

HomeShare is a shared equity program where the purchaser will own at least 70 per cent of the home and the Director of Housing owns up to 30 per cent.

The Streets Ahead Incentive Program provides help with a deposit for eligible people who buy a home from Housing Tasmania.

Both programs have been improved to make it easier for more low and middle income Tasmanians to buy their own home.

HomeShare has been improved by increasing the asset, income and financial help levels, while Streets Ahead has been increased from \$6 000 to \$12 000, which has encouraged more people on low to moderate incomes to buy a home that is no longer appropriate to retain as social housing.

5. Housing for young people

The Tasmanian Government is committed to reducing youth homelessness and establishing safe and affordable homes for young people. Reform initiatives to start in 2016-17 include:

- **Youth Head Leases**
- **Devonport Supported Youth Accommodation**

- **Launceston Supported Youth Accommodation - Expansion**

This is in addition to the new supply initiatives started or completed in 2015-16:

- **Trinity Hill Supported Youth Accommodation Facility** in North Hobart for 46 young people including 16 units for people living with disability.
- **Youth at Risk Response Centre** to provide a drop-in centre and short term supported accommodation for young people who have come to the attention of Children and Youth Services and the Justice System. A site has been selected in the greater Hobart area and the project will be completed in 2016-17.
- **Youth Castles** – a pilot program designed to test ‘micro-housing’ as an immediate, short term option for young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Up to five castles will be provided in 2016-17 with the first one likely to be delivered by June 2016.

6. Housing for people with disability

Under the NDIS, some participants will continue to live or need specialist supported disability accommodation. The accommodation costs for these participants will be met by the scheme.

Other people living with disability may receive individualised packages of care and support to enable them to live more independently.

To meet the increase in demand for private and social housing that meets the needs of people living with disability, in particular, adaptable and accessible housing for people with mobility issues, a pricing framework is being designed by the Australian Government and is due to be finalised by June 2016.

An Affordable Housing Working Group has also been established by the Australian Government to consider innovative financing models that will inform the direction of national reform to increase the supply of affordable homes.

A final report, including recommendations for possible trials and next steps, is expected to be released by 30 June 2016.

New Tasmanian Government supply initiatives that target people living with disability to start in 2016-17 include:

- **Devonport Group Home**
- **Minimum Standards for all New Supply** where any new residential properties commissioned by Housing Tasmania will meet the liveability and universal design policy requirements of Housing Tasmania’s *Minimum Standards for Social Housing*.

7. Housing for older people

Tasmania will also experience the growth of an ageing population in the future who will need suitable housing including units with fewer bedrooms and accessibility for people with mobility issues.

New supply initiatives that target older people to start in 2016-17 include:

- **Elderly units** for older residents to age at home, in Somerset and Newstead to be completed in 2016-17. A further 30 Inner City Elderly Units will start with the acquisition of a Hobart site in 2016-17.
- **Supported Elderly Accommodation** with a site to be acquired in 2016-17 for 50 elderly residents who would otherwise be at risk of homelessness.