

Tasmanian Women's Strategy

Progress Report
2019-2020



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Introduction

The ‘Tasmanian Women’s Strategy 2018-2021’ (the Women’s Strategy) was launched by the Tasmanian Government in May 2018.

The Women’s Strategy aims to establish opportunities for Tasmanian women to participate fully in Tasmania’s social, political, economic and cultural life.

The Women’s Strategy identifies four priority areas for the government, private and community sectors and the wider community to improve gender equality in Tasmania:

1. Financial security;
2. Safety;
3. Leadership and participation; and
4. Health and wellbeing.

This Report details the progress against the priority areas over the second year of the Women’s Strategy. It outlines the policies, programs and initiatives undertaken by the Tasmanian Government in partnership with community organisations and the private sector



to improve the lives of women and girls in Tasmania.

Priority One: Financial Security

In September 2018, the Tasmanian Government released the first action plan under the Women's Strategy, the 'Financial Security for Women Action Plan 2018-2021' (the Financial Security Action Plan). The Financial Security Action Plan outlines detailed actions across government to tackle the underlying causes of financial insecurity experienced by many Tasmanian women, including pay equity and employment opportunities in non-traditional areas of employment for women. It also addresses the cost of living impacts on women.

Since the Financial Security Action Plan was released, a number of actions have been achieved, including:

- reducing rising energy costs by capping electricity prices rises at CPI for three years under the 'Electricity Supply Industry Amendment (Price Cap) Act 2018';
- increasing Emergency Food Relief funding to support vulnerable Tasmanians by allocating \$156 000 to Loaves and Fishes, \$100 000 to Foodbank Tasmania and \$144 000 to Hamlet through the Government's COVID-19 stimulus package;
- supporting mothers in paid employment by providing lactation breaks and breastfeeding facilities for all Tasmanian State Service employees with parental responsibilities;
- funding Tasmanian Women in Agriculture to build the capacity of more rural women to take leadership roles in Tasmanian primary industries, with \$120 000 provided over four years until 2021-22; and
- investing \$2 million in dedicated crisis accommodation for women and women

with children affected by family violence and opening a new Hobart Women's Shelter.

In 2020, the Department of Communities Tasmania (Communities Tasmania) assisted organisations to start and grow social enterprises to support migrant women who face barriers to entering the labour market through the Multicultural Grants Program. CatholicCare Tasmania's Safe Haven Hub received \$9 000 in funding to provide small business training and mentoring to a group of people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds as part of the new Moonah Bazaar Project. Upon completing their training at the end of September 2020, participants will run their own microbusinesses in a market environment alongside stallholders from the broader Glenorchy community.

Other actions under the Financial Security Action Plan are being progressed on an ongoing basis, including providing small business support services and mentoring through Enterprise Centres Tasmania to support women to establish and grow their business; assisting women who have lost their job due to redundancy or business closure to transition into a new career through the Rapid Response Skills Initiative; encouraging more women into Tasmania's ICT industry through the 'Tasmanian ICT Workforce Action Plan 2020-2023'; and supporting four Training and Work Pathways Program projects to address barriers to the engagement of women and girls in education and training.

In 2019-20, Communities Tasmania continued to provide accommodation support to women and children affected by family violence. The Family Violence Rapid Rehousing Initiative provides a pool of 50 houses to help people affected by family violence quickly access safe and affordable rental homes, which assisted 63 households during the financial year. In addition, the program received \$260 000 to increase the pool by an additional 20 properties for transitional housing

for up to 12 months through the Tasmanian Government's COVID-19 Support Package.

Priority Two: Safety

The Women's Strategy sets out a number of actions that reflect the implementation of the Government's response to family and sexual violence. In 2021, a dedicated action plan relating to women's safety under the Women's Strategy will be released.

'Safe Homes, Families, Communities: Tasmania's action plan for family and sexual violence 2019-2022' (Safe Homes, Families, Communities) was launched on 1 July 2019 and invests \$26 million over three years for 40 actions to prevent and respond to family and sexual violence in Tasmania.

Under Safe Homes, Families, Communities, the Tasmanian Government has increased its investment in primary prevention, implementing actions that aim to stop violence before it occurs by addressing the attitudes and behaviours that lead to violence. Actions include:

- ongoing membership of Our Watch, the national primary prevention organisation;
- establishing a national first partnership with Our Watch to create a new Our Watch Primary Prevention Officer in Tasmania, who commenced in the role in March 2020;
- embedding Respectful Relationship education in Tasmanian Government schools;
- supporting the successful National Campaign, Stop It At the Start;
- supporting development of a new national campaign addressing sexual violence; and
- continuing to ensure that gender equality and respect are the centre of all Tasmanian State Service workplaces.

'Responding and Reporting: Safe Homes, Families, Communities 2019-20 Annual Progress Report' is due for release in November 2020. It will provide an overview of key achievements in the first year

of implementation of Safe Homes, Families, Communities.

On 26 March 2020, the Tasmanian Government was the first in Australia to announce dedicated funding to respond to family and sexual violence during the COVID-19 pandemic, allocating \$2.7 million across the family violence service system, including government and non-government services.

This package included funding to:

- provide more on the ground workers across the State through Safe at Home;
- increase the Rapid Rehousing pool;
- increase the operational capacity to deliver support of community-based specialist family violence support services;
- develop a communications project to promote services and key messages to help those impacted by family and sexual violence during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- establish one-off Flexible Support Packages to support victim survivors leaving abusive relationships access essential items and emergency accommodation; and
- allow several crisis accommodation services to purchase materials for children's entertainment and educational purposes during isolation.

In relation to the safety of public places, the policing of public places is a core focus of the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management. In 2019-20, an additional 30 police officers were added to the Tasmania Police establishment, boosting numbers to continue to keep our communities safe. As well as general duties officers, Tasmania Police has a dedicated Road and Public Order Services team whose strategic focus is working in public spaces to contribute to community safety.

Tasmania Police also leads the Safe Families Coordination Unit (SFCU), which co-locates employees from multiple government agencies to



review incidences of family violence and provide advice and support to frontline officers regarding high risk family violence offenders. Tasmania Police has continued a nation-leading trial program to use GPS technology to monitor the movement of high-risk family violence perpetrators, to improve safety of victims and their children. Between the inception of the trial in November 2018 and April 2020, 73 perpetrators were monitored, with 52 offenders subject to electronic monitoring for at least six months. Preliminary data shows significant decreases in offending of those monitored, when compared to the 12 months prior, including reductions in assaults, threats and high-risk incidents.

Priority Three: Leadership and Participation

The third action plan under the Women's Strategy, the 'Leadership and Participation for Women Action Plan 2021-2023' is currently being developed by Communities Tasmania, with a scheduled release date of January 2021. The Action Plan will focus on addressing barriers that women face to leadership, and building the capability of women and girls to actively participate in the workforce and community life.

The Women's Strategy contains several actions relating to women on Government and private sector boards and committees. Information relating to the Tasmanian Government's progress on these actions can be found in the 'Women on Boards Strategy 2015-2020 Annual Progress Report 2020'.

Following the conclusion of the 'Women on Boards Strategy 2015-2020', the Tasmanian Government launched the 'Women on Boards Strategy 2020-2025'. The new Strategy builds and expands upon the successes of the first Strategy

with a refreshed set of actions to increase women's participation on Government boards and committees. The new Strategy also includes actions to support the private sector to improve gender equality on their boards.

In 2019-20, the Department of State Growth (State Growth) continued to work with industry to address barriers for women to participate in under-represented occupations. This included working with Master Builders Australia on its 'Women Building Australia National Mentoring' program, which provides mentoring support and promotion of career opportunities for women in the building and construction sector. State Growth also identified barriers in industry-specific workforce development plans and made funding available through workforce development grants.

The Tasmanian Government supports a number of awards that recognise female leaders in male dominated industries, including the Tasmanian Training Awards, the Women in Export Award and the Tasmanian STEM Excellence Awards. In 2019, the VET in Schools Student of the Year was Georgia Elias (who inspires to influence women in agriculture), the Women in Export Award was won by Karin Luttmmer (owner of Hill Farm Preserves), the Young STEM Researcher of the Year was awarded to Dr Carlie Cullen (Menzies Institute for Medical Research) and the STEM Communicator of the Year was awarded to Dr Lila Landowski.

Priority Four: Health and Wellbeing

The 'Health and Wellbeing for Women Action Plan 2020-2023' (the Health and Wellbeing Action Plan) was released in June 2020.

The Health and Wellbeing Action Plan presents a range of Government initiatives to address

women's health and wellbeing across five priority areas:

- improving women's maternal, sexual and reproductive health;
- improving health literacy and targeting preventive health services to address women's health needs;
- enhancing women's mental health through prevention, early intervention and responsive service delivery;
- addressing impacts on women's health, such as violence against women and girls, homelessness and other related factors; and
- facilitating health and wellbeing across the life course.

Actions under the Health and Wellbeing priority area of the Women's Strategy are currently being progressed across government, including actions relating to preventative health, affordable housing, access to health services and participation in sport and recreation.

In relation to affordable housing, 'Tasmania's Affordable Housing Strategy 2015-2025' has two key outcomes that address the housing needs of Tasmanians including women, who are acknowledged to be over-represented among those most in need:

- a decrease in the proportion of low-income Tasmanians experiencing housing stress; and
- a decrease in the proportion of Tasmanians experiencing homelessness.

The Tasmanian Government is on track to assist an additional 3 600 households under the Strategy's Action Plan 1 (2015-2019) and Action Plan 2 (2019-2023) by 30 June 2023, including the supply of 1 051 new social housing dwellings. At the end of June 2020, more than 2 200 households have been assisted through both Action Plans.

The Tasmanian Government has also recognised the significant ongoing demand for affordable housing within the current housing market and

impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional unprecedented investment has been provided towards affordable housing over the next three years including:

- \$58.4 million in Commonwealth State Housing Agreement Debt Waiver funding to assist around 400 households;
- \$2.26 million under COVID-19 recovery stimulus to assist 20 households escaping family violence into Rapid Rehousing and 75 households into affordable private rentals; and
- \$100 million in capital grants under our COVID 19 recovery stimulus to provide up to 1 000 new dwellings as part of the Community Housing Growth Program.

The majority of projects funded by the Healthy Tasmania Community Innovations grants were completed in 2019-2020. Many of these projects had a focus on addressing barriers to physical inactivity. For example, Mara House (run by Colony 47) completed the 'Fit for the Future' project aimed at developing positive lifestyle choices for at-risk young women.

The first round of the Healthy Tasmania Fund provided funding to 26 organisations totalling nearly \$2.2 million. Projects commenced in January 2020 and are due to be completed by December 2021. Womensport and Recreation Tasmania were successful recipients of a grant from the first round of the Healthy Tasmania Fund to deliver the Get Active Program in the Mary Hutchinson Women's Prison, which aims to increase women's physical activity and health and wellbeing. Jireh House in Hobart was also funded for their Time I Got Active program which aims to reduce smoking, improve healthy eating and physical activity for women and girls in crisis accommodation.

Population Screening and Cancer Prevention in the Tasmanian Health Service (THS) continually promotes and encourages participation for



Tasmanian women in the national breast, bowel and cervical cancer screening programs through social marketing campaigns; workplace education sessions; collaborative interventions with stakeholder organisations, clinicians and other health care providers; and creating innovative strategies to encourage participation in a COVID safe manner. In the 2019-2020 financial year, 29 521 women were screened for breast cancer by BreastScreen Tasmania's Hobart and Launceston clinics and Mobile Screening Units state-wide.

Conclusion

This Progress Report demonstrates that progress has been made across a range of initiatives in all four priority areas.

In the final year of the Women's Strategy, the Women's Strategy Interdepartmental Committee will monitor and promote progress against the Strategy and associated action plans to ensure that actions continue to be delivered to provide tangible outcomes for Tasmanian women and girls.



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