

TASMANIAN PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION 2019/2020

Who we are

We are the leading aged-care peak body supporting over 700 church, charitable and community-based not-for-profit organisations that provide accommodation and care to about one million older Australians.

What we do

We represent, lead and support our members to achieve excellence in providing quality affordable housing, and community and residential care services for older Australians. ASCA is passionate about the quality and value of the services our members provide, regardless of their size, service mix, or location.

Importance to Tasmania

Our members are invaluable to the community and the people they serve, and make a significant contribution to Tasmania's economy.

Aged care is a key future growth sector for Tasmania, and one of the largest employers and economic contributors to our many small communities.

Submission purpose

Our submission addresses key areas relating to aged care and the Tasmanian Government:

1. **Strengthening the interface with health**
2. **Housing affordability**
3. **Health and aged care project**

Darren Mathewson, Executive Director, ACSA

19 Brisbane Street, Hobart TAS 7000
0447 376 519
Darren.Mathewson@acsa.asn.au
www.acsa.asn.au

Christopher Hampton, State Government Relations Manager, ACSA

Level 6, 24 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000
0409 511 037
Christopher.Hampton@acsa.asn.au
www.acsa.asn.au



1. Strengthening the Interface with Health

Mental Health

People with clinically diagnosed mental disorders are eligible for Medicare rebates for up to ten individual and ten group services per year. This rebate is not available to older Australians living in aged care facilities.

ACSA recommends

Older Australians in residential care be entitled to access mental health support at the same level as the general population.



Oral health

Creating an effective interface between oral health and aged care is crucial. There are clear links between poor oral and poor general health. Oral health funding should be specifically allocated for older people living in residential aged care, and a stronger focus is needed on prevention prior to older people entering care to keep them well and independent for longer. Strengthening the interface with the home support and care systems is critical.

ACSA recommends

The Government funds a study to provide the Tasmanian Government and RACFs with the information they need to implement an effective oral health program for aged-care residents. This could enhance the care and quality of life for older Tasmanians, and save the State health system significant costs.



Palliative Care

Older Australians are increasingly living with chronic degenerative diseases including cancer and dementia. Between 60% and 70% of people at the end of life prefer to be cared for and to die comfortably at home, regardless of whether home is in the community or residential care.

Current residential care funding does not allow for specialist services and best practice that is often available in the community. By building and supporting the delivery of palliative care within aged care, the Government will reduce the high cost of acute health care to the State sector.

ACSA requests the Tasmanian Government consult with our organisation and members in implementing this initiative to ensure aged-care residents benefit directly.

ACSA recommends

Increased palliative care funding applied specifically to the expansion and development of community nursing services. A portion of this funding would be applied to specific workforce development strategies for those in critical front-line community nursing roles.



2. Affordable Housing

The provision of housing with appropriate levels of support is needed to tackle the growing issue of homelessness amongst our elderly, particularly older single women. A national housing strategy for older Australians is the responsibility of all levels of government.

Our not-for-profit members in Tasmania play a key role in supporting older people through the provision of housing, accommodation and care, particularly in rural areas and for those at risk of homelessness.

ACSA recommends

The urgent creation of a specific grants pool to support the rehabilitation of affordable housing for older people. This would include independent living units, existing public housing for older people, and home maintenance/modification programs for existing aged-care providers.



3. Health and Aged Care Project

Older people staying healthy and independent longer is good for the individual and for the state. Governments need to collaborate and resource the aged-care sector as key partners to control the future costs of acute health. Reducing avoidable hospital admissions would make a positive impact on reducing State Government health costs.

ACSA recommends

Provision of \$500,000 from the Government over the next 3 years for a "Health & Aged Care Project – strengthening the interface and building collaboration" with a key measure being reducing avoidable hospital admissions from residential and home-based aged care.

