Stepping up & stepping out

Moving beyond the comfort zone

This document provides a platform for change and a code of conduct for leadership, innovation, cooperation and service re-design.

The aged services sector is ready to step out from the pack, lead the Tasmanian community, expand our services, collaborate and bring about real change.

There is an urgent need for action!

Setting the scene – the context

Tasmania has the fastest ageing population in structural terms (proportion of people aged 65+) of any Australian state.

- In 2011, one in six Tasmanians were aged 65+; in 2020 there will be one in five aged 65+ years, and in 2030 it is projected that one in four Tasmanians will be aged 65 or more.
- Difficulty in accessing service providers in the community was experienced by 28% of those aged 65-74 years and 23% of those aged 75+ years.
- Approximately 36% of people aged 65+ years received an aged care service in 2011 – 2012 increasing to 80% of Tasmanians aged 80+ years.
- LGAs along the east coast have the oldest 65+structural ageing population in the state – the Glamorgan Spring Bay projection for percentage over 65 years in 2030 is 44.8%.

Source: Facing the Future: a baseline profile of older Tasmanians Council of the Ageing - Tasmania, 2013

In the Delivering Safe and Sustainable Clinical Services (The Green Paper) 2014 the State Government set the following aim:

The Government’s vision is for Tasmania to have the healthiest population in Australia by 2025, and a world-class health care system where people get treatment and support when they need it.
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However, it appears that the outcome of the Government's process will be little more than changes to the current geographic distribution of services. Tasmanians needs much more than changes to service locations.

Our current hospital funding model appears to be unsustainable. Our health system is designed around costly acute care rather than early intervention and prevention. We witness siloing, poor integration, cost- and blame-shifting.

We need to reframe the discussion. We need to agree to measurable health outcomes for our State and use our existing assets, creativity and innovation to develop a health and aged services system that focuses on preventative health and wellness targets rather than a narrow hospital-centric approach. We must build an aged friendly community.

The first *Tasmanian Plan for Positive Ageing* contained 85 positive ageing initiatives. The second plan was released in 2007 and provided a broad policy framework for actions by the Tasmanian Government, Local Government and individuals to support positive ageing. The second plan aimed to:

- provide support for individuals to take a lifelong approach to their ageing;
- facilitate links and initiatives across Tasmanian Government agencies to meet the needs of older Tasmanians; and
- encourage the community, including Local Government, business and community organisations, to provide opportunities for older Tasmanians to continue to participate in their community.

This review outlines the achievements of the Tasmanian Government agencies against 103 initiatives contained in the second plan. The initiatives aim to be age-friendly, supportive, and to enable older people to develop and maintain strong community ties and to participate at their level of choosing.

*Source - The Tasmanian Plan for Positive ageing July 2012*
1. Purpose

Stepping up and Stepping Out – Moving beyond the Comfort Zone charts a way forward for the Tasmanian community. The product of consultation, discussions and meetings of the Tasmanian aged services sector through the Transformations process and contributions from other leaders and researchers is a platform for change and a code of conduct for leadership, innovation, cooperation and service re-design.

Tasmania enjoys discussing the “big” questions – how we want to live, the changes needed and our shared values. The aged services sector is ready to step up, lead the Tasmanian community, expand our services, collaborate and bring about real change. We too can talk with the best of them but it’s now time to act.

2. Who we are

The aged service sector in Tasmania includes community, charitable and church not-for-profit organisations, a small number of for-profit organisations and the State Government. We provide 5,037 residential care places and 1,926 home care places. We have 38 organisations delivering residential care in 78 sites spread across the State. In addition, many of these organisations offer services including respite, day and therapy centres and home care/support. We have more than 20 home care specific organisations. We support up to 20,000 older Tasmanians annually to remain independent at home through the Commonwealth Home Support system. We also provide retirement living and affordable housing options for older Tasmanians in urban, rural and regional locations.

Our contribution to the Tasmanian economy is substantial – approximately $500M a year in government subsides, consumer contributions and capital expenditure – and growing. We employ nearly 10,000 people and in so doing contribute over $300m in wages every year. We have upwards of $3 billion of value in assets and land with assisted/independent/retirement living infrastructure a focus of current development. We are a key growth sector.
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Our services and infrastructure are growing and are everywhere. We are a major employer, particularly in rural communities. We therefore must have a strong voice in business, education, economic, regional and social planning.

The aged services sector has a right to be represented on key bodies like the Health Council of Tasmania and have a dedicated liaison/contact point at each level of Government. Currently this is not the case. This should be addressed immediately.

Our sector is creating change from within and experiencing system reform. Organisations are coming together, exploring and implementing new ways of sharing resources and providing better services at lower cost to the community. We are also creating stand-alone niche organisations. Larger national organisations are entering the Tasmanian market and bringing new ways of doing things. We welcome the challenge of reform and encourage reflection and thinking that drives exploration, creates opportunity and achieves excellence.

Research shows the reputation of our sector is largely determined by the quality of the personal relationships consumers and stakeholders have with our staff. We recognise that investment in our workforce is critical to enhancing and maintaining the quality of our services.

The Tasmanian aged services sector:

- is positive and optimistic
- is lead by risk takers
- is independent of government
- is adaptable
- is ready to act, engage and collaborate now
- believes in working together
- will lead debates and will participate in discussions whether invited or not
- works across and exposes boundaries that might slow others down or restrict them
- thinks more broadly than existing services and structures and what has been tried in the past.
3. How Tasmania should be

The aged services sector believes Tasmania should have:

- a community focus on wellness and health
- agreed community goals for our health outcomes and our systems
- an integrated health and aged services system where people transfer seamlessly between services, no matter who provides or funds these
- a skilled, well-rewarded workforce valued by our community
- access to health and aged services based on need, not by rationing
- services designed by, and responsive to, local communities
- a focus on innovating to meet community need
- technological solutions that assist us to meet our goals
- a variety of provider organisations, with a range of organisational structures, owners and philosophies, which collaborate and compete when appropriate, to deliver outcomes
- rational and sustainable service delivery arrangements based on efficacy rather than the level of government which ultimately funds the service
- local community hubs that provide a range of services, including child and family services, home care, residential care, sub-acute, health and wellness, palliative and dementia care, disability and other services that support people throughout their lives.

Demand for aged services currently outstrips funding. Tasmanians who need services often find they are assigned to a waiting list as a result of service rationing. This increases pressure on families and carers. We should pioneer an “entitlement” model of access to aged services in Tasmania. This would be based on the principle that where a person is deemed to require services, these will be funded and provided. Short-term interventions to support people in their own homes are significantly cheaper than multiple admissions to hospital arising from falls/accidents.

With an ageing population it is time to extend the concept of universal access from health to the aged services system.
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“When you need services, you should be entitled to receive them.”

4. Designing a better Tasmania

The Tasmanian community can design better health services and better ways of delivering services to meet community needs. We can incubate, innovate and test-run new service models on a local, regional or small-state basis. Current models and arrangements do not necessarily deliver the best outcomes. The State Government’s Health Reform process promised much but has so far delivered little.

Tasmania can do it differently! As a relatively small island community we have some unique opportunities: with easy access to leaders and communities because we share this small living space it is simpler to bring people together and, where the will exists, to develop new solutions and systems. This also helps us to overcome divisions, reduce silo mentality and develop cooperation between sectors, the community and all levels of Government.

Each sector has a responsibility to overcome the siloes that restrict practical and better outcomes and effective use of resources. The aged services sector will do this to provide an example to the rest of the Tasmanian community. We must all take responsibility for forging strong links and effectively managing relationships.

Source - Tasmanian Medicare Local – information from streamlined care pathways project that drew out the consistent themes from engagement about changes needed in the system
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Tasmania has long running and deep community divides over political and economic issues like forestry and energy policy, and petty parochial jealousies. We will ignore these and call on others to join us in doing so. ‘Leftovers’ from the past hamper innovation, service delivery and change and prevent life in Tasmania from being better.

“We talk about breaking down siloes, but we all have a responsibility to actually do that.”

5. Who is the health system for?

Our health system exists to meet the needs of our community and its members - not to benefit clinicians, administrators, provider organisations or staff. Consumers have the right to question, choose, decide and comment on service quality, design, effectiveness and delivery.

The aged services sector will use new ways of engaging with consumers and encouraging their involvement to identify service need, design and review services and assess service quality and effectiveness. We will lead the way in developing positions and practices to embed this approach.

6. The role of Government

Competition between levels of government and an unwillingness to cooperate are impediments to the sensible use of shared and community-owned resources. For example, aged service organisations can provide sub-acute care at a lower cost to the community than is currently paid for hospital beds. However, because the Federal Government funds aged care and the State Government funds hospitals, this does not happen outside some limited regional examples. We intend to explore, publically and loudly “call out” and subvert these impediments where possible.

It is time for the State Government to hand over service delivery to community organisations where it cannot provide sustainable services. To make transfer processes effective though, Government agencies need to work in a coordinated way, to provide information in a timely
manner and to aim for community solutions rather than commercial returns. The key to this is political will and consistency. We intend to lobby state, local and federal government and those who aspire to office for sensible and community designed (and driven) change. We intend to cultivate and support champions for innovative aged services at all levels of government.

“We can provide sub-acute services at lower cost than hospitals – we need to make this happen.”

“If we are fair dinkum about preventative health and well-being then we should be closing hospital beds.”

“It’s time for all levels of government to work together and get serious about better service delivery and not stand in the way.”

We believe local government can and must play a leadership role with the aged services sector in developing new regional approaches, new organisational structures and services and maximize the use of existing infrastructure. We will investigate new venture models where local government meets community service obligations or facilitates other arrangements to ensure service viability. We will also encourage the adoption and adaptation of existing successful service models in regional areas.

We need to explore and test new community governance models. Rural hospitals and health centres should be considered for community control through partnerships with aged service providers.

Tasmania will be a better place for those who live here and for those people who visit our community and share our place. Our visitors provide a resource that will help us deliver services and bring about change. We will identify ways in which we can leverage the “flow” population to make Tasmania better for all.

Our dispersed population gives us scope to develop innovative models that will be taken up by other regions in Australia. We have already exported models of inter-organisation cooperation to other States. We also need seamless consumer systems where there is no need to explain things again and again to different providers.
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7. The role we will play in bringing change

We will lead or assist community discussions, develop new coalitions and consensus, and implement new service models that respond to community needs. We will not wait to be asked: we will engage with the community and all levels of government and with other organisations in proposing new models and services. Where discussions are already underway we will assist to bring shared visions to fruition.

Health is about much more than hospitals, patients, acute care, sickness and doctors. The current Tasmanian Health Reform process started with grand aims but shrank to changes in hospital services, as this is the State Government’s sphere of control. The aged services sector will propose new ways to improve how our community operates, lives, makes decisions and allocates resources.

Our community frequently displays ageism. An example of this is the underestimation of the aged services sector. We will vigorously and openly identify, confront and discourage ageism in our community.

8. Services and communities of the future

Too often thinking about and planning services for the future is based only on what exists now. The aged services sector will propose new service models and solutions. These will include

- cradle-to-grave services (including child, youth, older person and palliative care services) to support the lives Tasmanians wish to live and “navigation services” to help people understand and coordinate their own care and support where multiple agencies or levels of government provide services and where people become baffled or are required to retell the same case history
- new housing models that suit the Tasmanian community
- new and broader scope services based at existing aged service providers
- services delivered in conjunction with acute care providers
- services that are Government funded, client funded and those funded from a mix of sources
- services that compete with acute service providers
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We will embrace members of the community, service providers and people with ideas who put proposals to us, regardless of the origin of these ideas. We will test models designed to improve Tasmania’s community and individual health.

Through an ongoing commitment to community engagement, the aged services sector will call on local people to share their ideas about the services needed in their community, how those services could be organised or re-organised and what must be done to bring this about. We will ask what is the best model for the life of their community not just a narrow discussion about acute health services. We believe that consumers, not clinicians or service managers, know what is best for them. Where we believe community voices are not truly heard we will establish processes to ensure people have ways of bringing ideas forward and monitoring their progress.

The development of “aged friendly communities” needs to be a key focus of this future work. Previous work in north-west Tasmania and now in other parts of Australia, has seen the development of the integrated “Community life” service model. This model is underpinned by creating an aged friendly community characterised by the “Four Planks” (see below). Critical to the development/success of this model is the commitment of all health and aged services working collaboratively and focused on building a strong aged friendly community.

![Diagram showing the Four Planks](image)

Source: Doug Faircloth, VERSO Consulting - the Four Planks
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9. Our workforce – how we value and support our people

Our workforce, including our volunteers, is essential to provide services that meet the community’s needs. Our people make the difference between basic and exceptional services. We currently provide some of the most innovative workforce development programs in the state. Our Graduate Nurse Program (the second largest in the state) and our attraction, retention and recruitment strategies are models for other industry sectors. We have also brought the Teaching Aged Care Facility concept to life in partnership with the University of Tasmania and the Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre with sites at Queen Victoria Home in Hobart, Peace Haven in Launceston and Mt St Vincent in Ulverstone. When you add the Centre of Excellence facility at the Glenview site in Glenorchy we are now well on the way to embedding learning infrastructure in our sector across the state.

We will further develop our skilled and professional workforce:

• by providing opportunities to improve their skills and qualifications
• by strategic workforce planning
• by recognising that people enter, leave and re-enter the aged services workforce at a number of points throughout their working career, and by encouraging the employment of older workers
• by facilitating programs that assist organisations to recruit staff
• by drawing our workforce from both our permanent and itinerant populations
• by supporting new workers in structured programs so they choose to make aged services an ongoing career choice;
• by offering real career pathways
• by developing employment packages, new roles, and new practices that will make our sector competitive in the labour market of the future
• by rewarding our people well for their work and reducing turnover
• by being prepared to have a shared workforce, skills and expertise across the health and aged services sector

“Investment in our workforce is critical to enhancing and maintaining the quality of our services.”
10. Innovation

We will pursue innovation based on the following principles:

- the way we have done things does not restrict how we do things in future
- the future is today, not far away
- we have permission to innovate
- we will encourage entrepreneurship in service design/delivery and review
- we will always ask what we can do better, more effectively or more efficiently
- we do not just accept the norm
- we will create an environment in our organisations that encourages and unlocks innovation and creativity
- we can innovate by adapting models from outside our sector
- we will explore, encourage and implement technological solutions and lead community discussions on these solutions
- we can innovate by forming partnerships with other organisations, sectors, peak bodies and consumers
- we will encourage organisations to develop, protect and export the products of their intellectual property
- innovation could push us outside our comfort zone

11. Principles for collaboration (across and between sectors and organisations)

Without collaboration Tasmania will not change. We will collaborate to bring about positive change with people, communities and organisations of good will.

We propose the following principles for collaboration:

- the identity and autonomy of bodies that are prepared to collaborate will be respected
- participants can identify the level at which they are prepared to cooperate before cooperation begins
- all participants have a right to enter, withdraw or re-enter
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collaboration, until binding agreements are reached
• collaboration will be based on mutual respect
• organisations will be up-front about their objectives with each other rather than work on hidden agendas
• confidentiality will be scrupulously observed, where this is identified as a requirement for collaboration
• we will collaborate across factional, party, organisational, departmental and State boundaries
• we will respect the right of all organisations to pursue their goals whether or not we agree with these

12. Priority Projects

As a sector we will

1. Bring our leaders together quarterly to identify better ways forward, to encourage innovation and to foster collaboration

2. Assist with conversations in communities about their visions and plans for services that people require; explore ways to deliver these services; and establish community governing and monitoring arrangements

3. Expose the inefficiency of current models of sub-acute care delivery and propose new models that will be of lower cost but high quality

4. Encourage universities and other research bodies to partner with us to bring about real change that benefits our community

5. Position Tasmania to be a leader in the development of aged services both nationally and internationally.

“We have national and international opportunities awaiting us – it’s time to move beyond our comfort zone.”
13. Conclusion

Our sector is ready to step up, step out and move beyond our comfort zone. We encourage other individuals, sectors and organisations to join us in developing plans for our community. Get in touch. We will work with you. Send your ideas to ideas@agedcaretas.org.au

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