MEMBER SUMMARY

Tasmanian State Budget 2025-26



2025–26 Budget Priorities for Children, Young People, Families, Carers and the Organisations that Support Them

Budget Overview

Tasmania's peak body for children and families, the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, welcomes a State Budget that increases investment in out-of-home care and maintains support across the continuum of family services. This includes programs that help keep children safe and connected to their families, like the Intensive Family Engagement Service and Bringing Baby Home. Additional funding for Enhanced Case Management is also welcomed, recognising the role of good case management in supporting reunification and providing long-term stability for children in care.

Following its leadership in the Home Stretch campaign, the Centre welcomes investment in the Transition to Independence program, which will support young people leaving care as they move into adulthood.

This investment is a step forward in providing greater certainty to Tasmanian child and family services that work with children and families facing hardship, disadvantage, and complex challenges.

Education is a clear priority in this year's budget, with significant investment in both infrastructure and literacy initiatives.

The Centre also welcomes the Government's commitment to improving mental health support for children and adolescents. This includes funding for the development of the St John's Park Child and Adolescent Mental Health Inpatient Unit and Day Facility, a 12-bed standalone facility, delivered in response to Recommendation 12.20 of the Commission of Inquiry.

Funding for the Office of the Implementation Monitor is an encouraging indication of progress toward implementing the Commission of Inquiry recommendations, with the best interests of Tasmanian children and families kept front and centre. This remains a top priority for the Centre and our members.

In line with recent Government announcements, the budget includes a shift away from formal treaty processes and towards truth-telling and healing, with funding allocated for

independent commissioners to lead this work in partnership with Aboriginal communities.

The Centre has prepared an overview of key budget measures relevant to child and family services, and to the children, young people, and families supported by our member organisations.

What's in the budget for children, young people, carers, and families?

Out-of-home care

$15 million over two years has been allocated to address cost pressures and rising demand in out-of-home care. The funding will support Child Safety Services in maintaining the delivery of quality care.

$6.9 million over five years for Enhanced Case Management for Children and Young People in Detention and Out-of-Home Care to improve child safety and youth justice systems, monitoring and transparency and responsiveness around care for young people in detention.

$6.2 million over two years to extend the Transition to Independence program, supporting up to 120 young people with financial allowances to family-based carers and learning incentives, helping foster families continue support and easing the transition to independent living.

Family services

$8 million over two years for Intensive Family Engagement Services, supporting families to keep their children safe and at home.

$10.3 million over four years for Bringing Baby Home, which supports families in crisis to keep parents and babies together at home while improving parenting skills and family functioning. Funding for this initiative has been transferred from the Department of Premier and Cabinet's 2021-22 budget allocation for the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy.

$2.58 million over four years for the Child and Family Learning Centre Community Outreach Program, where Family Engagement Workers help families with children aged 0-5 access services and early learning in their community.

Commission of Inquiry Implementation

$9.89 million over four years to establish a Commission for Children and Young People. Funding begins with the Department of Premier and Cabinet in 2024–25 and transfers

to the Department of Justice in 2025–26. The Commission will oversee and promote the rights of children and young people, including in youth justice and out-of-home care. A Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People will also be appointed.

$5.89 million over four years to establish the Office of the Implementation Monitor. The office will oversee, evaluate, monitor, and report on the implementation of the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations and other related reforms.

Youth Justice

$151.2 million over three years from 2025-26 to progress the delivery of new fit-for-purpose youth justice facilities.

Justice

$203.8 million over four years for claims related to child sexual abuse in state care.

$1 million over two years to support sentencing and parole reforms, expand electronic monitoring, and extend the Court Mandated Diversion program to offenders with alcohol-related offences.

$500,000 over two years to provide additional resources for the Tasmania Prison Service to provide rehabilitation and reintegration opportunities and services to prisoners through education, rehabilitation and support services.

$500,000 one-off funding to continue Family Violence Intervention Programs across Corrections and Rehabilitation.

$500,000 over two years to continue drug and alcohol therapeutic support in Tasmania's correctional facilities.

$496,000 one-off funding for the Reduce Re-offending Program, supporting Men's Resources Tasmania, Speech Pathology Tasmania, and Dress for Success Hobart.

Education

$9.9 billion over four years for education, children, and young people, around 24% of Government expenditure, focused on lifting literacy rates and upgrading facilities as key priorities in the 2025-26 Budget. This includes:

$297 million over four years for education facility upgrades benefiting 25 schools across Tasmania.

$300,000 to build on previous investment to upgrade school kitchens and canteens in support of the Healthy School Lunches program.

Early Years

$5.6 million over four years to operate four new Child and Family Learning Centres in Huonville, Scottsdale, Smithton, and Longford, including Community Engagement

Workers to support local outreach as centres open.

$918,000 to build on previous investment in six fully operational Child and Family Learning Centres in Sorell, Kingborough, East Tamar, West Ulverstone, Waratah-Wynyard, and Glenorchy, with remaining funds for project finalisation costs.

Aboriginal Children and Families

4.4 million over four years for Closing the Gap and 'other Aboriginal Projects'. The Tasmanian government recently announced that they will establish truth-telling and healing commissioners, instead of pursuing a treaty process.

$880,000 of the $4.4 million will be invested in Aboriginal truth-telling and healing commissioners, over two years.

Addressing Harms to Children and Families

$9.62 million over three years for therapeutic services for victim-survivors of sexual violence, supporting specialist services through the Sexual Assault Support Service and Laurel House.

Youth Participation

$35,000 one-off funding for a Youth Participation Framework to support a coordinated and evidence-informed approach to child and youth participation across government, community and private sectors in Tasmania.

Housing and Homelessness

$674 million over four years for the Hobart Women's Shelter – Safe Place, providing additional funding to operate five new units.

$2.82 million over four years for operational funding of the new Bethlehem House, which began services in December 2023, providing 74 beds and critical support for men experiencing homelessness.

$1.95 million over four years for the Social Housing Maintenance Fund, providing additional funding for responsive and planned maintenance to protect and improve existing social housing properties.

Cost of Living Relief

$6.7 million over four years to continue food relief programs and support initiatives that build food resilience in local communities across Tasmania.

$300,000 over two years to pilot making Working with Vulnerable People Cards free for the 332,100 volunteers in Tasmania.

$28.73 million over two years for the Renewable Energy Dividend (RED) scheme which means that Tasmanian households will be paid a one-off voucher of $60 to help cover the cost of living, if Hydro Tasmania returns dividends over $90 million.

$600,000 over four years to provide funding for the Energy Hardship Fund which directly supports Tasmanians with their energy bills.

Disability

$10 million one-off funding for the Educational Adjustments Disability Funding Model to support education delivery for the growing number of students with disability in Tasmanian Government schools.

Health

$14.5 billion over 4 years will be invested in the health system – an increase of $1.6 billion from last year's figures. This includes funding for community health services such as child health centres.

Mental Health

$34 million over five years has been committed to St Johns Park Child and Adolescent Mental Health Inpatient Unit and Day Facility, a 12-bed stand-alone facility in response to recommendation 12.20 of the Commission of Inquiry.

Multicultural Children and Families

$200,000 one-off funding to support the implementation of Embracing Diversity, Fostering Belonging: Tasmania's Multicultural Action Plan 2025 - 2029.

Sector Sustainability

$150,000 one-off funding to support sustainability, efficiency and governance activities for the Community Services sector.

Appendix 1

The Centre's Recommendations for the 2025-2026 Tasmanian State Budget

Recommendation 1: Support the Centre to strengthen services for children and families across Tasmania.

Recommendation 2: Expand investment in family service provision which prevents escalation into statutory services and changes life trajectories.

Recommendation 3: Support organisations to sustainably deliver services to children, young people, families, and carers – wherever in Tasmania they may live.

Recommendation 4: Invest in Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) to design and deliver a suite of child and family services to meet the needs of communities across Tasmania Recommendation.

Recommendation 5: Strengthen the child and family workforce capability to support children, young people, and families with complex needs.

Recommendation 7: Create a child and family services system underpinned by robust evidence to improve practice and leadership.

Recommendation 8: Collaborate with the Commonwealth to explore ways of improving the financial and other supports available to carers.