



The Need for Further Housing Reforms in Tasmania

February 2022

Ruby, 20 years old, from Devonport, works part-time at a bottle shop and studies at TAFE – she was thrust into homelessness in early 2021.

She said there were no affordable rental properties on offer and young people had very few options.

“It’s nearly impossible to get a house, and I always see people asking for rooms on Facebook because real-estate agents won’t give them a go”, she said.

She was forced to couch surf due to a difficult home life.

“You have so much anxiety while couch-surfing, like, will I get kicked out, will I have a place to stay next week, or whatever.”

She was lucky and was given a room at a supported accommodation facility in Devonport called Eveline House, managed by Anglicare.

“I was getting so depressed, but I’ve just been a different person since living here. There’s endless support, and it’s stress-free.”

From Annah Fromberg, ‘Tasmania’s housing crisis is forcing young people like Brayden and Ruby into homelessness’, ABC News, 17 March 2021.

Housing impacts the ability of people to participate in their community. Access to jobs, education, and health care services are all affected by whether a person has affordable, appropriate, safe and secure housing.

We support the Tasmanian Government’s current initiatives to address homelessness and affordable housing, but believe that they can be stronger through more urgent and targeted support.

The Problem

The last Census for which the results are available was in 2016. At that time, it was found that more than 120,000 Tasmanians were living in poverty. There were 1,622 Tasmanians experiencing homelessness on Census night in 2016. Of those, 38% were less than 25 years old, and half of those were couch surfing or in severely overcrowded housing. Nearly one in five people seeking assistance from Tasmania’s homelessness services are over 55. Older single women are particularly vulnerable due to having lower income and assets.

There were also 943 Tasmanians at risk of homelessness on Census night in 2016.

The Australian Institute for Health and Welfare found that every day in Tasmania, an average of 36 requests to specialist homelessness services go unassisted. One-third of requests for assistance is a result of family violence.

There are over 4,000 people on the waiting list for social housing provided by the Tasmanian Government. It has grown from 2,183 in 2014. The average time to find accommodation for a person assessed as being a priority on the list is 64 weeks.

The Rental Affordability Index released in November 2021 found that Hobart was Australia’s least affordable capital city for the fifth year in a row. The Index is based on the ratio of income to the rental cost.



If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

1 John 3:17 -18

Current Tasmanian Government Response

There are currently 1,063 long-term homes and units to address homelessness in the process of being acquired or built. Last year, the Tasmanian Government had built an additional 279 new homes by October to address the needs of those who are homeless or in a housing crisis.

The Tasmanian Government announced almost \$4.3 million for additional housing and homelessness support for vulnerable Tasmanians in April 2020. That was followed by an announcement of \$100 million for social housing made in June 2020.

In the August 2021 budget, the Tasmanian Government announced:

- \$615 million for social and affordable housing and homelessness initiatives, including building 3,500 new homes by 2027 and developing a Tasmanian Housing Strategy. Of the 3,500 new homes, an additional 1,500 new dwellings will be made available by June 2023. The funding included \$15.3 million for innovative new youth housing and homelessness initiatives.
- The Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI) would become permanent, with an additional \$2.1 million in funding over four years. HASI supports people with mental health needs to move towards independent living and stable housing.

The Government estimates the measures they have announced will assist around 5,000 Tasmanian households out of housing stress or homelessness.

What You Can Do

Write polite and respectful letters to:

The Hon Peter Gutwein
Premier
11th Floor, Executive Building
15 Murray Street
Hobart, Tasmania, 7000

Salutation: Dear Premier

The Hon Michael Ferguson
Minister for State Development,
Construction and Housing
Level 5, Salamanca Building,
4 Salamanca Place,
Hobart, Tasmania, 7000

Salutation: Dear Minister

Points to make in your letters:

- Welcome the budget announcements the Tasmanian Government made to address homelessness and affordable housing, including committing to build 1,500 homes by June 2023.
- Ask that the Tasmanian Government involve people who have experienced homelessness and family violence in designing the Tasmanian Housing Strategy and services for people experiencing homelessness or housing crisis.
- Ask that the Tasmanian Government build on those existing commitments by providing 1,000 homes per year for the next ten years.