A Social Inclusion Strategy for Tasmania

Professor David Adams
Social Inclusion Commissioner

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Acknowledgements

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The work of the Stronger Communities Task Force and my conversations with Tom O’Meara and Task Force members provided invaluable background information and insights.

Finally I would like to thank the many Tasmanians who have taken the time to canvass with me their hopes for a more inclusive Tasmania. Whilst I have been able over the past eight months (on a very part time basis) to visit and engage with many Tasmanians on the issue of social inclusion there are still many people and places with whom I have yet to make contact.

David Adams
**Introduction**

At the heart of social inclusion – the idea that everyone should have access to the resources and relations that make life healthy, happy and productive – is the importance of strong families and communities, in all their traditional and new forms. When families and communities are working well they are places and spaces that generate healthy lifestyles, safety, creativity, innovation, trust and belonging. Families and communities that are caring, confident and resilient are the best buffer against exclusion.

In this report I have attempted to summarise from the plethora of complex evidence what is relevant to Tasmania and show how Tasmania can be at the forefront of social inclusion. To this end, the bulk of the evidence is in the Appendices in order to keep the main report to a readable length.

Chapter 1 canvasses the importance of social inclusion for Tasmania. Chapter 2 outlines a framework for organising a response to social inclusion. Chapter 3 outlines the specific strategies and actions where, based on our capabilities, we can make a significant difference to the wellbeing and prosperity of all Tasmanians at risk of social exclusion and put Tasmania at the forefront of social inclusion. I have focussed on those opportunities where Tasmania has the capacity to act now and can construct advantage by building on our strengths. Chapter 4 canvasses the next steps.

The evidence base comes from the many ideas that Tasmanians have suggested through their responses to the Social Inclusion Consultation Paper and input to the forums held state-wide; from the research of the Stronger Communities Taskforce; of the Social Inclusion Unit here and the national Social Inclusion Unit in Canberra; from the wealth of international evidence now available and from my own observations in meeting with many individuals and groups over the past 8 months.

Appendix 1 provides a more detailed analysis of the quantitative data on the distribution of social exclusion risk in Tasmania. Appendix 2 provides a summary of the responses to the Social Inclusion Consultation Paper and forums. Appendix 3 canvasses issues of outcomes measurement and evaluation. Appendix 4 is the Terms of Reference for the Stronger Communities Task Force and the Australian Social Inclusion Board. Appendix 5 is a discussion of collaborative federalism possibilities for social inclusion.

Social inclusion is everybody’s responsibility. Only where governments, communities and businesses work together can social inclusion be achieved. Governments can enable but not create social inclusion. Ultimately it is individual families and communities that make the difference. Many of the drivers of social exclusion fall outside the direct control of the government – such as the economy, and many fall out of the direct control of the State Government – most obviously the income/tax transfer system. Governments generally have a patchy record when they attempt to meddle directly in complex social problems (viz the recent Northern Territory Intervention). On the other hand parliaments and governments often take the lead in putting important new policy ideas on the agenda – as is the case with social inclusion here in Tasmania.

The report is written primarily for people with a policy interest in social inclusion. In preparing the report I have attempted to identify what will work for Tasmania irrespective of the colour of the government of the day. Internationally political parties of all persuasions are embracing the idea and core principles, albeit with quite different emphasis on the ‘how to do it’ question.
I have been impressed in my many visits to community groups, businesses, and government agencies at the level of innovation, commitment and generally good work already in place. The past decade of economic growth has benefited most Tasmanians. **Across Tasmania there is considerable social innovation already underway and considerable optimism in most communities about the future.** But the overwhelming image that comes through is that of a patchwork quilt of strategies and actions that just aren’t quite to scale, to scope, sustainable or connected as well as they could be. **My Report charts a way forward to address this.**

The 10 strategies for which I propose action are a compromise between the ideal and what is possible. The bar is set high but hopefully not a pie in the sky. The history of social inclusion is littered with visions and plans that have come to nought because they have been too distant from the capabilities of the time, not engaged the public and failed to tackle the critical issue of how to organise solutions.

The 10 strategies are designed to leverage and complement the existing mainstream service systems around health, housing, education and justice. They are not a substitute for these mainstream systems.

**At the core of the new approach suggested in this report is the importance of shifting from a deficit to an assets model for people and places; promoting enterprise solutions to build capacity and sustainability for individuals, groups and places; devolving responsibility locally as much as possible through a focus on place management; supporting families in communities to have greater choice and responsibility over their futures and changing the way government works.**

Each of the 10 strategies has a set of proposed actions attached. These are not all essential nor exhaustive but rather are designed to illustrate the types of actions that will work and enable choices to be made about where to put effort and emphasis. The key point is that over time all 10 strategies need to be developed up even though the full range of actions under each can vary.

The logic of the strategies and actions is provided in the framework chapter of the report. Traditional approaches to social inclusion include one or more of the following:

- A focus on specific ‘at risk’ populations – such as people with a disability;
- Tackling ‘wicked issues’, e.g. teenage pregnancy in the UK approach or stigma in South Australia;
- Boosting mainstream service systems such as health and housing; and
- Human rights reforms.

This report supports all these approaches but takes a different tack. I have deliberately not attempted to frame this report around the specific population groups, issues and places that constitute the usual discourse on social inclusion. Indeed the compartmentalisation of social inclusion into specific groups and issues often masks the broader common structural causes of exclusion, fragments effort and leads to overlap and duplication.

I have instead focussed on those areas of common cause and common strategies that can be leveraged to benefit all groups, tackle a broad range of barriers and spark a range of innovations.
Since the field of social inclusion is beset with emotive debates and contests over priorities, I am sure not everyone will be satisfied.

Notwithstanding the inevitable inability to please all individuals, groups and places at risk of exclusion in Tasmania, it is important to embrace new ideas and approaches for what these can add to our understanding of a way forward. The data on the extent of this exclusion is provided in Appendix 1 and the very real stories of how this is played out in the everyday lives of Tasmanians facing barriers to inclusion is detailed in the result of the Social Inclusion Unit’s consultations in Appendix 2. If entrenched disadvantage and intergenerational exclusion could have been solved by now, it would have been. Approaches come and go. Attempting to make a positive difference is a difficult task, but that doesn’t mean we shouldn’t try. Social inclusion is a new discourse to understand both old problems (such as poverty) and seemingly new problems such as growing mental illness and ageing population ‘time bombs’. The approach in this Report is a series of signposts rather than a detailed road map. If the new approach is applied with scale, scope, connectivity and sustainability at top of mind, it offers the promise of a fairer Tasmania where all Tasmanians have access to the personal, social, economic and civic resources and relationships that make life healthy, productive and happy.
Chapter 1: The Case for Social Inclusion in Tasmania

Social inclusion means a fair go at having a decent education, skills, meaningful work, access to services, good relationships and a say on what matters to us. It’s about the relationships in life that make us healthy, happy and productive.

Whilst all of us experience some setbacks in life, for about 13 per cent of Tasmanians there are complex and enduring barriers that exclude them from having a fair go. These barriers include personal factors (such as health or homelessness), access factors (such as to transport and health services), and structural factors (such intergenerational poverty and locational disadvantage). Those groups most at risk include children in low income households; older persons living alone; people with a mental illness; Aboriginal people; gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex people; people with a disability; refugees from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, women subject to domestic violence and people experiencing addiction. Those places most at risk include the outer fringes of cities and towns that once were rural areas, rural towns in decline and older industrial areas. Whilst some people choose to live in these ‘disadvantaged’ areas many are pushed there, driven by access to the only housing they can afford.

Personally social exclusion plays out as lives unfulfilled, unhappiness and stigma. Socially it is playing out as higher levels of violence, substance abuse and mental illness. Economically it plays out as talent wasted and productivity lowered.

There are four reasons that social inclusion is on the policy agenda.

1. There is a growing acceptance that the strategies of the past 50 years designed to simultaneously generate wealth and wellbeing have not worked for all.

   For some groups and places social exclusion remains entrenched and seemingly intractable. Whilst overall levels of wellbeing have improved, the rising tide has not lifted all ships and despite a raft of well intentioned government, business and community strategies there are people and places that face unacceptable levels of exclusion.

2. There is increasing evidence of new forms of exclusion arising – most prominently associated with ageing, mental illness, Information Communication Technology (ICT), security of supply (food/water/energy), and violence.

   These new forms of exclusion have raised broader concerns about the trajectory of societies and whether we have the balance right between our key social, economic and environmental settings. The claimed ‘loss of community’ or ‘the young having no respect for their elders’ is an example of how this concern is being expressed.

3. It is now widely accepted that social inclusion is not just a personal and social issue. It is also an important civic, economic and environmental issue.

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Social inclusion is a civic issue because excluded people and places often don’t have their voices heard in the mainstream of politics and policy. High levels of social inclusion are correlated with high levels of productivity, economic growth and sustainability at the level of nations and places generally (such as cities and regions). Just how important social inclusion is to innovation, productivity and the economy is still being debated.

4. Finally and more positively, we now know a lot more about what works (and what fails) when it comes to social inclusion. There is an overwhelming growth of research and new practice around social inclusion on which to draw. The website of the Australian Social Inclusion Board provides an extensive summary of the research and portals to international experiences.

Since we now know a lot more about the barriers than we used to we can tackle them more confidently.

This Report outlines how Tasmania can tackle those barriers.

Behind the growing international interest in social inclusion is a more fundamental concern that the social fabric of our society is not as stable and cohesive as we thought. In particular, shocks associated with climate change (such as bushfires and floods), rapid industrial change (such as the uncertainty facing sunset manufacturing), demographic change (such as the loss of our younger people ‘across the ditch’ – Gen X and Gen Y – just when we need them most to support the ageing population), security from terrorism, security of supply around water and energy, pandemic risks, economic crisis and, growing social risks (e.g. mental health, violence and substance abuse) have all taken their toll.

These factors have combined to create a sense of uncertainty about the future and an increasing urgency to take stock of our social settings, revisit what a civilised society should look like and check for any serious social fissures developing. It has also led to increased risks of more people facing inclusion barriers, pushing the at-risk number up from 13 per cent to around 25 per cent of the population in Tasmania. Whilst Appendix 1 charts an array of indicators of disadvantage and exclusion, some of the headline indicators include:

- The proportion of Tasmanian households dependent on government pensions and allowances has risen from 31.5 per cent in 2005-06 to 34.1 per cent in 2007-08, and remains the highest proportion of all states and territories;

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2 More information is available on the Board’s website at: [http://www.socialinclusion.gov.au/AusGov/Board/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.socialinclusion.gov.au/AusGov/Board/Pages/default.aspx)

3 While no single figure is available on the proportion of the Tasmanian population at risk of social exclusion, data on the prevalence of risk factors among the population provides a broad indication. In 2005-06, 13 per cent of the Tasmanian population were living below the ’50 per cent median’ poverty line. No data is available on the proportion of Tasmanian children living below the poverty line, but if the Australian rate of 10.7 per cent of children living in poverty in 2005-06 is applied to the Tasmanian population of children aged under 15 at 30 June 2006 (96 000), the result is an estimate of approximately 10 000 Tasmanian children who were potentially living in poverty in 2005-06. In 2007 approximately 26 per cent of young Australians had a mental illness; in 2007-08 one-third of Tasmanian employees were employed part-time (an indicator of potentially precarious employment); and in 2007-08, 34 per cent of Tasmanian households were dependent on Commonwealth income support payments. For more information including data sources, see Appendix 1.

4 2007-08 data is sourced from Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009 Household Income and Income Distribution, Australia, 2007-08, Cat No 6523.0; earlier years data sourced from Australian Social Trends, 2008, ABS Cat. No. 4102.0, Data Cube - Economic Resources Indicators.
• Over 64,000 Tasmanians or 13 per cent of the population live on or below the poverty line;  

• The proportion of Tasmanian children (aged under 15) living in jobless families (where no parent is employed) has risen from 16.3 per cent in 1997 to 21.6 per cent in 2006;  

• By 2010 it is projected that the number of people nearing retirement age (55-64 years) in Tasmania will exceed the number of young people starting out in the labour market (15-24 years) for the first time;  

• 2 per cent of young Australians 16-24 years have a mental disorder;  

• The number of people accessing emergency relief services has increased by 29 per cent from 12,300 in 2006-07 to 15,900 in 2007-08 in Tasmania;  

• In 2006, 38,600 people, or 8 per cent of the population, were living in highly disadvantaged areas, the second highest proportion of all states and territories after the Northern Territory.  

• Around one in five Australians aged 85-89 are likely to experience dementia – it could be your partner, your parents or you.  

Table 1 at the end of this chapter provides a broader range of risk indicators for social exclusion.  

Although national comparisons tell us that Tasmania has high need relative to other jurisdictions, a Social Inclusion Strategy will play an important role to maintain the community focus on trying to turn this data around. These are not trends that are the ‘fault’ of any particular government, community or group of individuals. They are the result of a range of complex factors which require a more fundamental rethink of how we manage our social, economic, civic and environmental settings in society. If these trends are the price of our modern society then the price is too high.  

The evidence outlined in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 tells us that:

• Social exclusion is growing for some groups and places, in particular for those who experience multiple and complex problems;

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6 Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009 Australian Social Trends, Family and Community Data Cube, Cat No 4102.0, ABS, Canberra.  


8 In 2007, just over a quarter (26 per cent) of people aged 16-24 years in Australia had a mental health disorder and had experienced symptoms of this disorder in the 12 months prior to being surveyed. Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008 National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing: Summary of Results, 2007, Cat No 4326.0  

9 Calculated from Emergency Relief Program Data Reports for 2003-04 to 2007-08 provided by the Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) Tasmanian Office.  

10 Calculated by the Australian Social Inclusion Unit from data in: Census of Population and Housing: Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), Australia - Data only, 2006, ABS Cat. No. 2033.0.55.001, data cube ‘SEIFA, Census Collection Districts, Data Cube only, 2006’ using the SEIFA Index of Relative Disadvantage (IRSD).  

• Social exclusion clusters at certain points across the lifecycle, when people experience a change in their role or status, in expectations and responsibilities (critical transition points);

• Social inclusion supports social innovation and is integrally linked to economic growth and productivity;

• Governance makes a difference. People experience social exclusion when there are no effective mechanisms through which they can have a say on issues that matter to them; and

• Social inclusion is everyone’s responsibility. Individuals and groups can bring local knowledge, passion, energy and vision for change. Governments, businesses and service organisations can bring expertise and much needed resources.

Without leadership to tackle the headline indicators previously highlighted, it is unlikely that the prospects for social inclusion in Tasmania will increase significantly. That leadership is most likely to come from the Tasmanian Government and the Parliament. Whilst I have been impressed by the commitment and focus on social inclusion of most state and local government agencies, it is apparent that Tasmania has a patchwork quilt of public, private and community services. Although these services do a pretty good job at covering off many aspects of social exclusion risk, they are being stretched to the limit and yet are expected to cover ever more exclusion risks, such as those associated with mental illness and, the ageing of the population.

A patchwork quilt is not a system, and for every new pilot or grant program there is an existing service fraying at the edges and struggling to survive. Overall, the evidence from Appendix 2 demonstrates that the existing responses are not always to scale, scope, sustainable or connected.

• In terms of scale, the resources and services exist, but are insufficient to deal with the challenge. This occurs, for example, in many areas of food security where Tasmanians continue to go hungry.

• In terms of scope, there are gaps in the resources and services required. This particularly applies to areas of regional Tasmania where, for example, the transport options are less than those in urban and city areas.

• In terms of sustainability, the resources and services have precarious capacity to guarantee ongoing viability. Many services ‘run on the smell of an oily rag’ and spend inordinate amounts of time chasing the next government grant.

• In terms of connectivity, opportunities to maximise value and efficiencies may be missed because of agencies and sectors sometimes working in ‘silos’. The growth of community based infrastructure in the last two years has the opportunity to boost local social inclusion capability. However, to achieve this, Tasmania needs to ensure there are clear mechanisms for ensuring a coordinated local effort, including with existing facilities such as Community (Neighbourhood) Houses.

An example here is the growth of community based infrastructure such as the Integrated Care Centres; Learning and Information Network Centres; and the Child and Family Centres – all within the past two years. There are others on the drawing board of Commonwealth and
State agencies. In principle these all have the opportunity to boost local social inclusion capability, but to achieve this we need to ensure there are clear mechanisms for ensuring a co-ordinated local effort including with existing facilities such as Community Houses.

**Tasmania’s advantages**

Tasmania has a history of strong networks. Feeling supported and being able to support in return – both emotional and practical support – is important to Tasmanians. Time and again, Tasmanians pull together to help individuals and communities get the care and support when it is needed. Relationships with friends and family help sustain them through the good times and bad times. People value the opportunity to give something in return and make a contribution to their communities.¹²

The work of the Stronger Communities Task Force¹³ and the Tasmania Together Progress Board¹⁴ highlight the very strong commitment Tasmanians have to community. Tasmania has over 5,000 community groups and a volunteer participation rate that is higher than the national average. The percentage of people participating in cultural activities has increased, and the number of multicultural events in Tasmania doubled between 2000 and 2007. Nearly 80 per cent of Councils have a youth advisory committee. Generally, the feeling of safety at home and in public places is greater in Tasmania than for Australia as a whole. Migrant groups are well established in Tasmania and Tasmania’s communities welcome a number of new arrivals every year including humanitarian entrants, family sponsored, skilled and business migrants. Tasmanian Aborigines have a strong and well-connected community.¹⁵

The Tasmania Together Community Consultation found that lifestyle, community connections and the need for fairness and assistance for those who are disadvantaged are very important to Tasmanians. People have made it clear they value community involvement and connectedness. They recognise the importance of Local Government as a facilitator in communities. They acknowledge the possibilities for a creative and innovative culture across all sectors of the community and business, science and technology. They want to see more entrepreneurship and innovation, and see this as coming from small business design based, knowledge based, niche and arts based micro enterprise. Pride in place is strong, and Tasmanians stress the importance of vibrant communities, natural assets, cultural assets and entertainment and sports facilities.¹⁶

Although our communities are dispersed, they are also ‘close’ and well connected. This is an opportunity to harness the energy and ideas of local communities, and build the capacity for local decision-making and effective partnerships.

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¹² TasCOSS, 2009 *Just Scrapping By? Conversations with Tasmanians on Low Incomes*, TasCOSS, Sandy Bay.
¹⁴ The Tasmania Together Progress Board monitors progress toward the achievement of goals and benchmarks for Tasmania. These are available at [http://www.tasmaniatogether.tas.gov.au/](http://www.tasmaniatogether.tas.gov.au/)
“Tasmania has an opportunity to develop a unique ‘brand’ – nationally and internationally – as a jurisdiction where community still exists. A place where citizens of all ages and backgrounds can form rich, diverse, supportive networks within which they can develop and express their talents and interests”.

Volunteering Tasmania Submission to the Social Inclusion Consultation

Being a small state, Tasmania has a smaller number of government departments – and smaller departments than other jurisdictions. Like our communities, our relationships across departments (Federal, State and Local Government) are strong and our size provides greater opportunities for close collaboration. Because of our strong networks and existing relationships, it is easy to navigate across sectors. Tasmania has developed partnership mechanisms that can be the foundation from which to be socially innovative. Consequently, we are well placed to design new collaborative models of service delivery and ways of working together in Tasmania that will break down barriers to social exclusion.

Through Tasmania Together, there are many partnerships being developed in which community groups and businesses are working together to help make Tasmania a community where people can “enjoy a prosperous lifestyle based on quality, creativity, and opportunity”. Tasmania’s Social Inclusion Strategy can build on this.

The Local Government Partnership Agreements Program has been in place for just over ten years. Launched with the aim of better serving Tasmanian communities through a cooperative approach between the State and Local Governments, the program has created strong working relationships between the two spheres of government and brought opportunities for locally based economic and social development. A recent review of the Partnership Agreement Program shows that it has benefited Tasmanian communities, and is now at a point where it is being renewed and reinvigorated so that it can continue to deliver “valuable outcomes while providing a foundation for a productive, increasingly confident relationship”\(^\text{17}\).

Conclusion

Social inclusion matters to the future of Tasmania. More than any other State our relatively high dependence on Commonwealth income support payments, lower skills and educational engagement and poorer health status all heighten the risks of exclusion.

On the other hand, as outlined in Appendix 1 and 2, there is now enough international and local evidence to show what works and in Tasmania we are well positioned to take advantage of this new knowledge. The next chapter on the framework pulls together these learnings and applies them to Tasmania.

It is important to acknowledge that social inclusion is still a broad church and that one of the big risks is that it becomes all things to all people and therefore unmanageable. The causes of social exclusion are complex as are the solutions but they are within reach.

Lambasting the government of the day or sweeping judgements about causes from the left of politics (blaming rampant capitalism) or the right of politics (blaming the nanny state running amok) really doesn’t help our understanding much.

Of all the knowledge about causes and solutions, three themes stand out. Firstly, we can no longer put economy in one box, society in another, the environment in another and government in another. The big issues facing Tasmania – population change, future competitive capacity and sustainable communities – cross all these boundaries and are everyone’s business.

Secondly, we need to simultaneously mitigate the risk factors associated with social exclusion (such as precarious employment, ill health and poverty) as well as boost the ‘protective’ factors (such skills, jobs, confidence and local leadership).

Finally we need to tackle structural causes linked to community attitudes, intergenerational disadvantage, locational disadvantage and access barriers.

“Social exclusion is about more than poverty. It is about having the personal capacity, self confidence and aspiration to make the most of the opportunities, choices and options in life that the majority of people take for granted”.

Social Exclusion Taskforce UK
Reaching Out: Progress on Social Exclusion
Table 1 - Estimated social exclusion risk factors in Tasmania

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Risk behaviours</th>
<th>Number (rounded)</th>
<th>Reference year</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People consuming alcohol at risky levels (aged 14 and over)</td>
<td>39 000</td>
<td>2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>People who used illicit drugs (aged 14 and over)</td>
<td>60 000</td>
<td>2007</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population groups at-risk</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People with a disability</td>
<td>24 000</td>
<td>2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tasmanian Aborigines</td>
<td>17 000</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older Tasmanians (65+) living alone</td>
<td>20 000</td>
<td>2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lone parent families with children aged under 15</td>
<td>12 000</td>
<td>2007</td>
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<tr>
<th>Poverty and financial hardship</th>
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<tr>
<td>People living below the poverty line</td>
<td>64 000</td>
<td>2005-06</td>
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<tr>
<td>Households dependent on government pensions and allowances</td>
<td>69 000</td>
<td>2007-08</td>
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<tr>
<td>People worried about food security</td>
<td>18 000</td>
<td>2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>People accessing emergency relief services</td>
<td>16 000</td>
<td>2007-08</td>
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<tr>
<th>Exclusion from housing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People who are homeless</td>
<td>2 500</td>
<td>2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>People waiting for public housing</td>
<td>3 000</td>
<td>2009</td>
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<th>Exclusion from jobs and skills</th>
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<tr>
<td>Adults with poor literacy skills (aged 15-74)</td>
<td>174 000</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults (aged 25-64) with no qualifications</td>
<td>116 000</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long term unemployed (aged 15 and over)</td>
<td>2 200</td>
<td>2008-09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People employed part-time</td>
<td>75 000</td>
<td>2008-09</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children living in jobless families</td>
<td>21 000</td>
<td>2006</td>
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<tr>
<th>Locational disadvantage, service and transport exclusion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People living in rural areas (with population &lt; 1000 people)</td>
<td>130 000</td>
<td>2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>People living in disadvantaged areas (as identified by ABS Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage)</td>
<td>39 000</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who cannot easily access transport</td>
<td>9 400</td>
<td>2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>People who have difficulties in accessing services they need</td>
<td>81 000</td>
<td>2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Households who do not have access to the internet (digital exclusion)</td>
<td>79 000</td>
<td>2006</td>
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<td>12 000</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sources for Table 1

1. Figures have been rounded to nearest 1,000 (for numbers >10,000) or nearest 100 (for numbers <10,000).
2. In 2005–06, 13 per cent of Tasmanians, or 64,000 people, were living below the poverty line - that is, living on after-tax incomes less than $281 per week. Source: Povery in Australia: Sensitivty Analysis and Recent Trends, by Peter Saunders, Trish Hill and Bruce Bradbury, report commissioned by Jobs Australia on Behalf of the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS), SPRC Report 4/08, Social Policy Research Centre, March 2008, Table 23 p.44.


4. The 2005 Tasmanian Community Survey by Anglicare Tasmania found that 5 per cent of Tasmanian adults reported that they mostly or always worried about whether the amount of food they could afford would be enough for their household. Source: Madden, Kelly and Law, Margie, 2005. The Tasmanian Community Survey: Financial Hardship, Anglicare Tasmania Social Action Research Centre, December 2005.

5. Analysis of Tasmanian Emergency Relief Data Report for 2007-08 by the Tasmanian Social Inclusion Unit. Data reports provided by the Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA).


7. The number of applicants on the public housing waiting list for the 12 months to June 2009 was 3,039. Source: Department of Health and Human Services, Tasmania, Your Health and Human Services Progress Chart, August 2009, available from www.dhhs.tas.gov.au

8. In 2006, 1,740 Tasmanian adults aged between 15 and 74 (49% of Tasmanians of that age) were assessed as having inadequate prose literacy skills to manage in everyday life. Prose literacy refers to the knowledge and skills needed to understand and use various kinds of information from text including editorials, news stories, brochures and instructions manuals. Less than 50% of the Tasmanian population aged 15-74 were found to have adequate document literacy (the knowledge and skills required to locate and use information contained in various formats including job applications, payroll forms, transportation schedules, maps, tables and charts) and numeracy skills. Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008 Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, Summary Results, Australia, 2006 (Ressure), Cat No 4228.0.

9. In 2008, 44.7% of Tasmanians of working age (25-64 years) had no non-school qualifications. This equates to approximately 11,640 when applied to the Estimated Resident Population of Tasmanian adults aged 25-64 years in 2008 of 260,409. Source: Australian Social Trends 2008, Data Cube, ABS Cat. No. 4102.0, 'Education and Training' indicators; ABS Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia; Cat No 3235.0.


12. Australian Social Trends, Family and Community Data Cube, Cat No 4102.0. Number calculated by applying the proportion of children aged under 15 in Tasmania who were living in families where no resident parent was employed in 2005–06 (21.6%) to the Estimated Resident Population of Tasmanian children aged under 15 at 30 June 2006 of approximately 96,000 (sourced from Tasmanian State and Regional Indicators, June 2009, Cat No 1307.6).

13. ABS Census 2006 population data by ‘Section of State’ - sum of population living in areas classified as ‘Bounded Locality’ (population >200 - <999 people) and those living in areas classified as ‘Rural Balance’ (population <200 people).

14. People living in Census Collection Districts (CDs) in Tasmania ranked in the most disadvantaged 5 per cent of all CDs in Australia on the ABS SEIFA Index of Relative Disadvantage (IRSD). Calculated by the Australian Social Inclusion Unit from data in: Census of Population and Housing Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), Australia - Data only, 2006, ABS Cat.No. 2033.0.55.001, data cube SEIFA, Census Collection Districts, Data Cube only, 2006.

15. In 2006, 2.6 per cent of the 363,000 persons aged 18 and over in Tasmania reported that they cannot, or often have difficulty, in getting to the places they need to go to. Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2007 General Social Survey, Tasmania, 2006, Cat No 4159.6.55.001.

16. In 2006, 22.2 per cent of the 363,000 persons aged 18 and over in Tasmania reported that they have difficulty in accessing service providers. These difficulties may have been due to transport/distance, cost, lack of services or inadequate services in area, or other difficulties.

17. Refers to the number of occupied private dwellings that reported having no internet access in the 2006 Census. Source: ABS, Census Basic Community Profile, Tasmania, 2006, Cat No 2001.0

18. In 2007, 9.7 per cent of Tasmanians aged 14 and over (=approximately 39,200 people) reported that they had drunk alcohol at levels considered ‘risky’ or ‘high risk’ of incurring short-term harm, at least once a week during 2007. Risky or high risk consumption levels are: for males, consumption of 7 or more standard drinks on one occasion; for females, consumption of 5 or more standard drinks on one occasion. Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2007, State and Territory Supplement, Drug Statistics Series, No 21.

19. In 2007, 14.8 per cent of Tasmanians aged 14 and over (=approximately 59,800 people) reported that they had used an illicit drug (or used a licit drug illicitly) sometime during 2007. This included cannabis, misuse of painkillers, analgesics/transquilisers/sleeping pills, heroin, cocaine, ecstasy, among others. Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2007, State and Territory Supplement, Drug Statistics Series, No 21. See also Tasmania Together Benchmark 4.3.2 Proportion of Tasmanians who use illicit drugs (same source).

20. ABS Census, 2006, persons who reported that they required daily assistance with self-care, mobility or communication because of a long-term health condition, disability or old age.

21. The total number of Tasmanian Aborigines who were usual residents in Tasmania in the 2006 ABS Census was 16,767 persons, or 3.5 per cent of the Tasmanian population. Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census QuickStats: Tasmania, accessible from www.abs.gov.au

22. Australian Social Trends, Family and Community Data Cube, Cat No 4102.0. Number calculated by applying the proportion of persons aged over 65 who were living alone in Tasmania in 2007 (26.9%) to the Estimated Resident Population of Tasmanians aged 65 and over at 30 June 2007 of approximately 73,000 (sourced from Tasmanian State and Regional Indicators, June 2009, Cat No 1307.6).

23. Australian Social Trends, Family and Community Data Cube, Cat No 4102.0.
Chapter 2: The Framework

The purpose of the framework proposed here is to give focus and momentum to a Tasmanian specific approach for social inclusion, illustrate how to organise the approach and demonstrate what the outcomes could be. The framework is based on the evidence of what works elsewhere filtered through the lens of what could work or is already working and could be scaled up here in Tasmania.

The history of social inclusion is littered with frameworks that gather dust on shelves usually because they are:

- Too dense and turgid to understand;
- Have no actions that can be implemented;
- Have lots of actions and no logic as to what all the actions mean;
- Privilege particular groups, issues, places – and therefore are criticised by those not privileged; and/or
- Have no evidence base.

I have attempted here to steer a path through these risks by putting the focus on the strategies and the actions, so people can see what a framework looks like on the ground but also understand the logic of why we might want to do this.

The strategies and actions are designed to benefit all groups and places that are excluded, or at risk of exclusion. As has been constantly pointed out to me, one size does not fit all. However, the fragmentation of the social inclusion field into disparate competing groups (and often ‘factions’ within groups), issues and places – all with legitimate claims to priority attention – contributes to the lack of coherence in the public policy responses and the tendency to ‘oil the squeaky wheel’. In the following strategies I have focussed on actions in those areas (such as diversity training) where there is modicum of agreement on the way forward.

Tasmania already has a number of ‘framework’ documents underway or developed at a State level which provide some guidance in this area, such as Tasmania Together, the Tasmanian Skills Strategy, Tasmania’s Health Plan, Tasmania Tomorrow, an innovation strategy and the various national agreements endorsed through the COAG process. Thinking about these issues is not the preserve of any one political party – for example, the Liberal Party has ‘A Fairer Tasmania’ and the Tasmanian Greens a Democracy and Participation policy platform. The Australian Social Inclusion Board is developing a social inclusion framework and in all likelihood there will be efforts over the next few years to agree a national framework.

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The framework I propose here is relatively simple, consisting of:

- A goal statement (where we want to get to);
- Principles (what we think is important to guide us);
- Strategies (how we are going to organise our efforts); and
- Actions (the actions on the ground).

Many of the key elements of a framework are already in place in Tasmania but not in any systematic fashion. Table 2 on page 23 summarises the framework presented here.

**Goal**

The overall goal of the strategy is a fairer Tasmania where all Tasmanians have access to the personal, social, economic and civic resources and relationships that make life healthy, productive and happy.

**Principles**

There are many principles that help shine a light on why social inclusion matters and what to do about it. In general, principles fall into one or more of three categories.

- Principles that are primarily about **people and relations** between people, for example principles around respect, dignity and human rights.
- Principles that are **aspirational** and are generally about clarifying goals, for example principles around everyone having a ‘fair go’.
- Principles around how to **organise** social inclusion, for example principles about the importance of ‘partnerships’.

The Commonwealth Government has identified a set of principles to guide Australia. These are at Appendix 1.

In addition to the Commonwealth principles, and based on the common themes arising from the social inclusion consultation on page 28 of Appendix 2, I suggest five related principles which stand out as ‘organising principles’ for Tasmania’s Social inclusion Strategy.

1. **Community driven solutions – social inclusion is everyone’s responsibility**
   
   Too often social inclusion is portrayed as someone else’s problem to fix. The evidence is that only a joint concerted effort by governments, businesses and communities will make the difference. In particular those communities (be they communities of place, identity or issue) are often best able to identify and manage solutions. Social exclusion is so often played out very locally, and very locally is where social inclusion begins – not in Canberra or Hobart.

2. **Enterprise not welfare - a hand up not a hand out**

   This principle starts off by viewing individual, families and communities through the lens of potential or strengths rather than deficits. The focus is on assets - what they are, who owns them, how to grow and protect them, and how to ensure sustainability through enterprise that creates wealth in and for families and communities.
3. Family centred communities - think family

Families (in their many forms) are still the core of our social structure. Family centred approaches view the world through the lens of families and how to strengthen the capacity of families to function effectively, be together, increase protective factors, be culturally appropriate, recognise diversity and build resilience to life’s many new challenges.

4. Addressing the basics as well as tackling structural causes

Social exclusion is shaped by complex and intertwined factors some of which are very basic and visible (e.g. lack of food and shelter) and some more structural and less obvious (e.g. planning laws). Action across the spectrum is required if long term change is to be achieved. The 10 strategies start off with the basics (around food security) and move through to more structural reforms such as building up the community sector and the role of local government.

5. Prevention and early intervention - start early

The evidence for prevention and early intervention has been known for many years and sometimes practiced in public policy (most obviously in some areas of health). The more effort we can put into positive experiences in the early years of life and supportive, enterprising networks and pathways the more prepared individuals, families and communities will be to avoid or manage the potholes of life.

These principles – in part or in full – already exist in various community practices across Tasmania but as yet are not widely embedded in policies and our culture.

10 Strategies

The strategies proposed in this report have been identified because they:

- Target a particular risk or opportunity facing Tasmania;
- Have worked elsewhere and are likely to work in Tasmania based on our circumstances;
- Were raised during the consultation as issues important to Tasmanian communities; and
- Are not the sole responsibility of a government agency/department.

I have deliberately omitted much reference to the mainstream service systems of governments, not because these are unimportant but because these have reasonably clear mandates and governance arrangements in place. However, there is no doubt that, for example, higher levels of income support payments from the Commonwealth or a significant investment in social housing would markedly improve prospects for social inclusion. What is much less clear is the willingness or capacity of governments and the Australian electorate to move in this direction. Although I note in passing that governments running deficits were seen as anathema and political suicide two years ago but now are acceptable and no doubt will soon be desirable.

The focus in this Report is instead on those strategies that cut across boundaries within and between governments, communities, and businesses. The logic is to better connect with and add value to existing systems rather than duplicate them.
This approach is unlikely to satisfy those critics who would push for volume increases in existing service systems from the Commonwealth (e.g. levels of income support payments) and the State (e.g. health and social housing). How this might happen and be financed is worthy of a quite separate report. However, as acknowledged in Appendix 2 and raised during the consultation, a national social inclusion agenda may enable the Tasmanian Government to promote issues outside its responsibility, such as a review of the income support system. The 10 strategies should be understood in this context. These strategies do not replace the need for Tasmania to pursue issues outside its existing levers.

Whilst it would be unrealistic to expect Tasmania to be able to adopt all 10 strategies immediately, I have painted a picture of what needs to be in scope.

The most important overall point about the 10 strategies is that these work in conjunction with each other. For example, it is most unlikely that families can take a greater responsibility for social inclusion if they:

- Are too busy trying to find the next meal for the children (strategy 1 tackles this);
- Can’t travel anywhere (strategy 2 tackles this);
- Don’t have access to good quality local knowledge (strategy 3);
- Don’t have local supports (strategy 4);
- Are locked in a welfare model and can’t be enterprising (strategy 5);
- Don’t know how to organise locally (strategy 6);
- Local government is seen as the enemy (strategy 7);
- Are disconnected from the resources of new technologies (strategy 8);
- Are more worried about the children heading off to the big Island (strategy 9); and/or
- Face a lot of red tape (strategy 10).

**Actions**

The proposed actions under each strategy are designed to illustrate how the strategies would play out on the ground. The actions are not comprehensive nor individually essential.

Like the strategies, the actions have a background logic to them. They:

- Have the capacity to be, or already have been implemented (but not to scale) in Tasmania;
- Add value to mainstream service systems;
- Have the capacity to leverage investment from business, community and government - especially from the Commonwealth; and
- Can be organised following one or more of the principles suggested for social inclusion in Tasmania.
Like the strategies, the actions have a high degree of connectedness. For example, the proposed Leadership Institute could have a role in:

- Building social enterprise capacity around food security (strategy 1), transport (strategy 2) and community networks (strategy 4);
- Promoting social entrepreneurship (strategy 5);
- Supporting groups and places to develop and deliver their own diversity and skills training packages (strategy 3);
- Promoting and skilling up volunteers (strategy 6); and
- Providing specialist leadership courses to attract and retain future leaders for local government and the community sector (strategies 7, 8 and 9).

Both the strategies and actions are designed to encourage debate in Tasmania about what to do and achieve scale, scope, sustainability and connectivity for social inclusion in Tasmania.

As with the strategies, the actions could be targeted at particular groups, issues and places. Some of the actions are more complex than others and some more resource intensive. Some of the actions already have basic ‘platforms’ in place and are ready to grow (such as food security) and others could be a ‘first mover’ (such as with the Leadership Institute). Particular actions where Tasmania could leverage its capability are:

- Food security actions;
- The Leadership Institute;
- Transport connectivity/one-stop shop;
- Diversity training;
- Social procurement legislation;
- Community Development Finance Fund;
- Enterprise Investment Fund;
- Social inclusion planning reforms;
- Place/shaping role of local government/community sector; and
- ICT inclusiveness strategy.

**Outcomes**

Appendix 3 discusses how outcomes of a social inclusion strategy could be measured. The extent to which outcomes can be achieved for any particular group, issue or place will depend primarily on the extent to which these strategies and actions are implemented to scale, to scope and in a sustainable and connected manner.
At its broadest level a more inclusive Tasmania would see higher levels of wellbeing, productivity and community sustainability. In plain English:

- Wellbeing means being healthier, safer, happier and in control of your life;
- Productivity means you make the most of your talents; and
- Community sustainability means you are part of a place or a group that is resilient, works together and doesn’t trash its assets.

Across and within there are choices that could be made around focus for particular population groups or issues. This in turn would play out in specific outcomes measures for groups or issues or places. Many groups with high levels of exclusion risk would benefit from some strategies more than others, either because of gaps in the existing system or because of readiness to adopt strategies and actions. In addition there are some groups who have developed knowledge and practice in particular areas of action that, when shared, could help guide how those gaps are addressed. For example, the disability sector has well developed knowledge and practice around social enterprises – indeed the original ‘sheltered workshops’ were some of the first examples of social enterprises in Australia. For other groups, such as homeless people, there is a much less developed social enterprise history on which to draw (although there are exceptions such as ‘The Big Issue’). As these groups work together, the opportunities for social inclusion can be strengthened and the scope and scale of social enterprise expanded.

The choices to be made around selecting the strategy/actions mix, the targeting of strategies at particular groups, issues and places, and the capacity to take up the strategies will together set the template for outcomes and therefore the baseline data sets required. The current suite of benchmarks in Tasmania Together provide a framework within which the agreed outcomes could be measured and tracked over time.

Appendix 3 also discusses measuring the economic benefits of social inclusion and the economic costs of social exclusion. The question of economic costs and benefits tends to galvanise views around social inclusion and could be the subject of Parliamentary consideration to help thrash out the various views on costs and benefits of the strategies proposed here.

Chapter 3 provides a more detailed discussion on each of the 10 strategies and the associated actions proposed as a way forward for social inclusion in Tasmania.
### GOAL

A fairer Tasmania where all Tasmanians have access to the personal, social, economic and civic resources and relationships that make life healthy, productive and happy.

### PRINCIPLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Everyone’s responsibility:</th>
<th>Enterprise not welfare:</th>
<th>Think family:</th>
<th>Address the basics and Structural:</th>
<th>Early intervention and prevention:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community driven solutions; partnerships - individual responsibility</td>
<td>Welfare to assets; risk and protective factors; a strengths based approach</td>
<td>Families (in their many forms) can be an appropriate focus for building resilience to life’s many new challenges</td>
<td>Action across the spectrum is required if long term change is to be achieved</td>
<td>Start early for resilient individuals, families and communities</td>
</tr>
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### STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access to the basics</th>
<th>Accessible services</th>
<th>Diversity and skills training</th>
<th>Building supportive local networks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food security council</td>
<td>Food preparation program</td>
<td>School based food security</td>
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<td>Transport services partnerships and plans</td>
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<td>skills training for diversity</td>
<td>life skills education</td>
<td>literacy &amp; numeracy</td>
<td>diversity &amp; employment</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 3: The Strategies and Actions

This Chapter canvasses 10 strategies for social inclusion. The logic of the strategies and associated actions is outlined in the previous Chapter. The strategies are designed to work in parallel with rather than cut across mainstream service systems. For that reason there is limited focus on the mainstream service systems such as health, housing, education and justice.

The strategies are loosely organised in a sequence starting with addressing the basics (strategies 1-3), then moving to a focus on prevention and early intervention (strategies 4-6), and finally tackling structural factors (strategies 7-10). This way of organising the strategies also helps explain the complexities of tackling social exclusion. We need to be rethinking the role of planning instruments in preventing social exclusion and promoting social inclusion (tackling causes), but this means little to approximately 64 000 Tasmanians living below the poverty line 19 (addressing the basics). If we simply use traditional welfare approaches to food provision we will be missing opportunities to engage in more enterprising, less stigmatising approaches to food provision and healthy eating (prevention and early intervention).

To be effective all strategies require new partnerships between governments, business and communities, and strategy 10 canvasses this topic. The strategies are designed to work together and complement each other. For example, without new forms of local leadership it is unlikely that we will see the brisk growth of social enterprises and innovation we need in regional Tasmania.

Community gardens are a good example of how the strategies complement each other and reflect the principles. Community gardens can:

- Provide readily accessible healthy food at low cost on a regular basis;
- Build supportive local networks across diverse groups;
- Support more sustainable and independent families and communities;
- Demonstrate smart use of local assets to mitigate climate change;
- Create wealth through enterprise to be reinvested in the community; and
- Develop skills that can be accredited and transferred (e.g. horticulture, marketing).

Community gardens are an asset based approach to inclusion. They build skills and community resilience; demonstrate partnerships across community, government and business; and promote independence and community sustainability. Community gardens may not be for every street, neighbourhood or town, but there are a hundred such actions the strategies would support.

To start up a community garden requires some community leadership, skills around gardening, access to capital and land, ways of engaging local people, a ‘business plan’ to pull it all together and a decent amount of time and energy to keep it going often with local volunteers.

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19 In 2005-06, 64 000 people or 13 per cent of the Tasmanian population, were living below the ‘50 per cent median poverty line’ - that is, living in households with incomes that fell below the median equivalised disposable household income in Australia (ie. the midpoint of all Australian household incomes, adjusted to account for different household sizes). In 2005-06 this value equated to $281 per week. Source: Poverty in Australia: Sensitivity Analysis and Recent Trends, in Saunders, P, Hill, T, and Bradbury, B, 2008 Poverty in Australia: Sensitivity Analysis and Recent Trends, commissioned by Jobs Australia on Behalf of the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS), SPRC Report 4/08, Social Policy Research Centre, Sydney, Table 23, p.44.
Many communities have already chosen to go down this path but others don’t have the capability and mix of resources to make it happen.

In essence, the 10 strategies are designed to create a platform of resources for social inclusion to grow to scale across Tasmania, but grow in ways that suit the profiles of each community.
**Strategy 1 – Access to the Basics: Making Ends Meet**

Social inclusion begins with the basics of life – access to food, shelter and security. A socially inclusive community makes sure that no-one goes without these basics. We have lost sight of this basic right and need to rebuild it.

The Tasmanian data in Appendix 1 and the social inclusion consultation summarised at Appendix 2 demonstrate that not all people who live in Tasmania are able to make ends meet, particularly those who live on government pensions and allowances. Many are finding it tough to stretch their incomes to provide the necessities of life. When the family budget cannot stretch enough, research shows that people often go without food (especially expensive fresh fruit and vegetables), electricity for periods of time, adequate heating, new clothing, insurance, social contact, entertainment, transport, holidays, medical and dental care.

The Social Inclusion Consultation has told us that nothing undermines social inclusion more than financial hardship. Financial hardship causes problems in being able to access transport, and therefore services, to afford nutritious food, adequate and appropriate housing and the expenses that enable social involvement with friends or the broader community.  

The costs of basic items such as food, electricity, transport and fuel costs have risen considerably in recent years, and these increases have impacted more heavily on low income households which spend proportionally more of their income on the basics. Notwithstanding the current effort of all levels of government, the community sector and businesses, the numbers of people accessing emergency relief assistance, and the numbers not eating well are increasing.

As identified throughout Appendix 2 and referred to in numerous community sector reports, the reality of life on a low income is that often it takes just one large unanticipated expense such as a medical emergency, an unexpectedly large bill, or a number of bills arriving at the same time to tip people over the edge and make a manageable situation unmanageable. A study on the circumstances of people who use emergency relief services has found that the most common reason for seeking emergency relief relates to ‘low income leading to an inability to manage finances’, followed by unemployment, housing issues, significant financial debt, and physical health. Between 2006-07 and 2007-08, the number of people accessing emergency relief services in Tasmania increased by 29 per cent from 12 300 to 15 900. The global financial crisis is likely to have accelerated this trend.

Struggling to make ends meet on a low income can easily lead to increasing levels of debt and to greater levels of social deprivation. It can lead to physical and mental health problems, increased

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20 See section on financial hardship, low incomes and poverty in Appendix 2.
21 See Appendix 1 for further information.
22 TasCOSS, 2009 Just Scraping By? Conversations with Tasmanians Living on Low Incomes, TasCOSS, Sandy Bay.
24 Calculated from Emergency Relief Program Data Reports for 2003-04 to 2007-08 provided by the Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) Tasmanian Office. See Appendix 1 for further information.
costs and further hardship. For many people facing these circumstances, this is not a static or temporary condition, but instead persists and has a compounding effect.

“Good health is ... less worry about bills, that’s just stressful and makes you sick, having to stretch a dollar. How you’re going to get by each week. You don’t need that stress it just makes you sick”.

Respondent from Greater Hobart,
Just Scraping By? Conversations with Tasmanians Living on Low Incomes

At any point in time, housing and homelessness will be a contentious public policy issue. The debates are usually about volume (how much is needed), who pays, who gets priority and how best to efficiently deliver infrastructure. This is currently the case for Tasmania.

While emergency relief and adequate housing are critical issues to tackle as part of ensuring all Tasmanians have access to the basics, food security lags behind in comparison and yet stands out as an opportunity for action. Many Tasmanians are excluded from access to regular and nutritious food. This is one of most basic forms of exclusion, and can entrench disadvantage throughout life. Tasmania can do better.

The Social Inclusion Consultation has told us that food insecurity can be both a cause and effect of social exclusion. Not being able to eat nutritious and regular meals is a compounding and direct result of living on low incomes. This was raised as a matter of significant concern, particularly given that Tasmania has the highest proportion of people on low incomes of all the States and territories.

Food security means regular access to safe, nutritionally adequate, culturally acceptable food. Food insecurity means experiencing hunger as a result of running out of food and not being able to afford more. Food insecurity also means eating a poor quality diet as a result of limited food options and having to rely on emergency relief. Food insecurity plays out in lower levels of wellbeing, learning and productivity throughout life.

“The thing is you tend to buy crap and then it affects your health and you end up paying out for that. You can’t buy the healthy stuff, all the crap is cheap. The stuff that doesn’t have much nutrition. We eat a lot of bread, which in the long run isn’t really good for you”.

North West Coast Respondent
Just Scraping By? Conversations with Tasmanians Living on Low Incomes

Groups that are more vulnerable to food insecurity include people on low incomes, people who are unemployed, people who are homeless, young people and people paying rent or board.

25 See Appendix 2.
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups, refugees and other migrants are also vulnerable to food insecurity.26

“If you have children, the children use more electricity. Because of the cold we use more heating... So sometimes we cut down on food when the power bill comes. We eat rice”.

Woman from West Africa living in Hobart from Dropped from the Moon

Tasmania has significant capability around food security. Both now and in the future, agriculture will be a major Tasmanian industry with huge potential to supply quality nutritious food so that no Tasmanian need go hungry.

Longer term ‘food bowl’ strategies should help build a regional system that includes grass-roots and social enterprise initiatives such as farmers markets, innovative farmer-grown home delivery programs, community gardens and community-supported agriculture. Tasmania’s longer term food strategies should also include initiatives such as Local Food Plus, which builds and fosters local sustainable food systems by certifying farmers and processors and linking them with local purchasers.27 It should also incorporate (subject to agreed competition frameworks) procurement policies that result in the purchase of more local food, as well as resources to public sector and institutional buyers, food service providers, restaurateurs and retailers who need assistance to increase their procurement of local food.28

Tasmania has a strong and innovative agricultural sector that is likely to grow into the ‘food bowl’ for Australia’s export markets such as South East Asia. Our increasing advantage in information-communication technologies (ICT) means that the complex systems associated with high volume food production, storage and distribution can be readily managed at the local level. Our transport and logistics systems have good coverage of the State and there is a long history of business support and business expertise for initiatives around food security.

The existing delivery system is effective but lacks scale (volume capacity to meet need - especially for remote areas); scope (e.g. to enable schools to access food for ‘breakfast club’ type services and ‘kitchens’, such as the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program in schools); sustainability (heavy reliance on grants); and connectivity (e.g. use of ICT to better connect the ‘supply side’ agencies with the ‘demand side’ agencies). There are simple and effective supply chain models to draw on such as Foodbank, SecondBite and Market Fresh. Even though Tasmania does not currently have the appropriate volume, range and depth to cover the need, it has the expertise in agriculture, warehousing and delivery systems that is needed to deliver on initiatives such as these.

CASE STUDY: SecondBite

SecondBite is a not-for-profit organisation established in 2005 to identify, collect and redistribute surplus food to feed people who would otherwise go without. In the four years that it has been operating, SecondBite has grown from a small group of committed volunteers collecting food and delivering meals in Melbourne to an organisation employing nine staff with a turnover of almost half a million dollars to June 2008 and 240 tonnes of fresh food, enough for 480 000 hearty meals. SecondBite will expand its services in Tasmania during 2009.

SecondBite works in partnership with, and indeed relies on, a wide range of supporters and food donors. Some supporters offer financial support while others provide pro-bono services that enable donated food to be collected, sorted, stored, made into nutritious meals and then distributed to people in the community.

With a focus on sustainability and collaboration, SecondBite is committed to increasing food security for the most vulnerable people in society as well as reducing landfill and the negative effects of food waste on the environment.

CASE STUDY: Market Fresh

The Market Fresh Schools Program, which is designed to educate children about the importance of fruit and vegetables in their diet and the processes used to bring produce into their home, was piloted in West Coast and North West Coast schools during August 2009.

The aims of Market Fresh are to:

- increase awareness of the importance of eating fruit and vegetables;
- introduce children to fruit and vegetables they may not have previously experienced;
- make learning about fruit and vegetables fun; and
- create new opportunities for learning about nutrition at school and at home.

Over 1,500 students from ten schools participated in education sessions that included a video presentation, questions and answer, tasting seasonal fruit and vegetables and recipes for meal preparation.

The introduction of Market Fresh to schools in the region was organised by the Community Partnership Team North West which is part of Disability Child Youth and Family Services (DCYFS), in the Department of Health and Human Services. DCYFS works in collaboration other stakeholders including health service providers, community houses, schools, local councils and community sector organisations to increase awareness about healthy lifestyle choices and health promotion.

It is envisaged that Market Fresh will expand to include other schools in the region. Co-ordination between the Primary Health Unit, the Department of Education, the University of Tasmania and the Melbourne Market Authority will enable the program to be extended.
Organisations such as The Salvation Army, Red Cross, St Vincent de Paul Society, Anglicare Tasmania, the City Mission, church groups and local councils provide emergency food relief parcels or vouchers as part of their emergency relief services. Some organisations also provide financial counselling services for people experiencing difficulties with money management. These are important responses that provide help in a time of crisis. It is also important to have responses that enable people to have food security over the long term by improving understanding about and access to nutritious food.

Increasingly, community sector agencies and government departments (notably the Departments of Health and Human Services and Education) are developing strategies around nutrition and food access support including access to financial skills, transport, food preparation, food storage and food production. Programs such as Market Fresh Schools Program are an effective model for developing capacity. These can be particularly effective if linked to programs such as the Eat Well, Live Well Program and other health promotion and community garden programs running in the community. Food education, or literacy, is based on the principle that eating is a critical life skill.

This focus on ‘enterprising’ approaches to food nutrition is key to the future as it shifts focus from a ‘hand out’ to a ‘hand up’ approach. It also shares the responsibility between individuals, families, business, governments and communities.

**Actions**

1. Establish a **Tasmanian Food Security Council** with a legislative mandate to oversee the planning and delivery of a Food Security Strategy. The Council to hold in trust a capital fund to support infrastructure investment in food security and to promote food security social enterprises. The Council would have responsibility for ensuring a more connected statewide supply chain system and be responsible for the following:

   a. **A statewide school based food security program.** No Tasmanian child need go hungry. The numerous successful schools based food preparation and delivery models should be assessed and one or more models then scaled up to cover all of Tasmania. The option of reintroducing ‘free milk’ as well as a piece of fresh fruit\(^\text{30}\), should be considered as it will highlight the many issues associated with state provision of essential commodities. These issues include: Who pays? Why milk? Why fruit? Storage and safety issues? Role of schools? Responsibilities of parents? It’s a discussion that needs to be revisited rather than just assuming it is someone else’s responsibility to sort out;

   b. **Statewide food preparation programs.** This includes developing family and community capacity in relation to the importance of good nutrition, budgeting skills, and other fundamental capacities. The program would be accessible from the early years of development throughout life to older people in aged care; and

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\(^{30}\) An example is 5+ A Day™, which was launched in New Zealand in 1994 by the non-profit organization United Fresh NZ Inc. and became a Charitable Trust in 2007. The objective of 5+ A Day™ is to encourage all New Zealanders to eat and enjoy eating 5 or more servings of fruit and vegetables every day for health, taste and variety. United Fresh is part of the Ministry of Health’s Fruit in Schools program, which aims to enhance student learning through promoting the well being of the school community with particular focus on Healthy Eating, Physical Activity, Being Sunsmart, Being Smokefree. [http://www.5aday.co.nz/fruitinschools.html](http://www.5aday.co.nz/fruitinschools.html)
c. **Tasmania – the community garden state.** There are already numerous examples of successful community gardens in Tasmania and these have the huge benefit of simultaneously building social capital, enterprise, healthy lifestyle and sustainable environmental practices. New forms of urban ‘no dig’ gardens are emerging as both commercial and social enterprises\(^3\) and Tasmania has the potential to lead this new ‘urban revolution’ that links social inclusion to economic and environmental sustainability.

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\(^3\) Campbell, A, 2009 *Paddock to Plate: Policy propositions for sustaining food and farming systems*, The future food and farm project propositions paper, Australian Conservation Foundation, Melbourne.
Strategy 2 – Accessible Goods and Services: In Our Reach

A socially inclusive community removes the barriers that stop Tasmanians from participating in society. It makes sure that community assets and the services people need are available to everyone.

The research literature in Appendix 1 and the responses to the Social Inclusion Consultation in Appendix 2 all highlight the importance of local communities being able to access health, housing, education and training, justice, policing, transport, financial, and community and personal support services. For individuals, families and communities to thrive, they must also be able to access community facilities and amenities, including shopping centres and leisure, recreation and cultural activities.

A recent report by TasCOSS indicated that the lack of, or inadequate, local services is common to all types of disadvantaged areas. This includes “health services, affordable retail shopping, childcare and transport services, local or accessible opportunities for education, training, employment and recreation. Some rural and urban fringe areas also lack basic infrastructure such as adequate and affordable drinking water, public telephones and broadband internet connection”. This finding was reinforced by responses to the Social Inclusion Consultation.

The research shows that not everyone has the same opportunities and capacity to access the goods and services they need to effectively participate in their communities. Data in Appendix 1 illustrates the differential access to transport experienced by groups such as sole parents, people on low incomes and people with a disability. Across Tasmania there are areas where people experience disadvantage in relation to accessing goods and services – in some areas the disadvantage is related to low income, in others it is related to being small and geographically isolated.

“Tasmania’s highly dispersed population is also an issue in terms of social inclusion. While rural communities may be well-connected, they often lack basic services. Young people, particularly those from diverse groups, can be very isolated, further exacerbated by lack of access to support services, education, recreational activities and transport. Plentiful and affordable food and child care, health and education services may also be limited”.

Youth Network of Tasmania Submission to the Social Inclusion Consultation

In many circumstances, transport has emerged as a critical factor in the ability of Tasmanians to access the services they need. Some of the key themes emerging from the submissions were being able to afford the cost of travel either privately or on public transport, transport being accessible and appropriate for people with particular needs (such as travelling with prams or having a disability), transport being safe, and transport operating at times and over routes that enable people to participate in social activities and access the wide range of services available to them.

Given the importance of transport as the means by which people access goods and services, many of which are outside their local neighbourhood, this strategy has transport for communities as its focus.

32 TasCOSS, 2009 Just Scraping By; Conversations with Tasmanians Living on Low Incomes, TasCOSS, Sandy Bay.
Transport for communities

Transport is fundamental to connecting people to opportunity. For many years now, Tasmanians have expressed concern about the adequacy of transport assistance for people who do not drive a car or have limited access to private cars. The importance of accessible transport for Tasmanian communities is a reflection of Tasmania’s dispersed population, with most people living outside the major metropolitan centres of Hobart, Launceston, Devonport and Burnie.33

“Housing affordability is pushing people out of the urban areas into cheaper rural and regional areas for example Dodges Ferry. Rental is still high and there is no infrastructure and services, employment opportunities are limited and even if employed, public transport is an issue to travel to work”.

Dunalley Neighbourhood House, Social Inclusion Forum

Transport assistance that is available to communities includes taxis, public passenger transport (school buses and general bus services) and community transport. These services are provided by commercial operators as well as by community groups and volunteers. Research shows that most people who need transport assistance consider that the assistance they receive is ‘adequate to excellent’. In spite of this, lack of accessible transport continues to be raised as a significant issue across Tasmania.34

“There’s only one bus to Hobart at 6am in the morning and one bus back at 6pm at night”.
Respondent from the Tasman Peninsula

“I know a bloke who hitchhikes into Launceston to pick up his three year old so that he can afford to bring the two of them back on the bus”.
Respondent from Rural North East Tasmania

Just Scraping By? Conversations with Tasmanians Living on Low Incomes

Research consistently shows:

- Tasmania’s rural and urban-fringe communities need more transport services outside the morning and afternoon peak – services during the middle of the day, in the evening and on the weekend;

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Transport assistance for those who need it is often fragmented and uncoordinated – some groups’ needs are met well while others receive little or no assistance;

- Commonwealth, State and Local Governments are all involved in funding and/or subsidising many different programs and services;

- Few of the programs and services that are available provide transport assistance to the full range of those in need;

- For the majority of the community transport sector, funding is via grants for projects, rather than as a coordinated response to regional transport needs; and

- In many areas there are a range of transport providers, including commercial operators and community groups and volunteer. Sometimes these services cover similar routes to take passengers to the services and activities they need to attend.

“Transport issues are an ongoing problem especially for the many carers looking after someone with mobility issues. Many carers drive vehicles in urgent need of repair and maintenance, and many cannot afford sufficient insurance or even petrol. Yet they depend on these cars to get people with disabilities to medical appointments, school and to social activities. Soaring fuel prices have been a particular problem in the last year. Carers cannot suddenly say to their care recipient “Sorry, but we can only afford to get to 3 dialysis appointments this week instead of the 4 you need to stay alive.” Instead, the carer will cut back on food costs to pay for petrol, which inevitably leads to poor nutrition and this has long term health implications ... Tasmanians living in rural and outer regional areas face substantial barriers to accessing affordable and efficient public transport options, and Carers Tasmania agrees that this needs to be one of the priority issues”.

Carers Tasmania Submission to the Social Inclusion Consultation

Currently Tasmania has an extensive school transport network; limited taxi services outside urban centres; need-specific community transport targeted at social or non-emergency medical transport for the frail aged and young disabled and other specific groups in the community with a transport disadvantage; and private sector subsidised transport such as that provided by aged care, group facilities and day respite centres for their clients; and general access services – in which concessional travel is subsidised by the government – operating in urban areas, between urban fringe and urban areas, and long distance between the regional and metropolitan centres. In spite of this, gaps remain in the availability of transport services for small, remote communities, in timetabled local transport options linking regional communities, and in on-demand/door-to-door general access services to support community mobility and social isolation.

Through local partnerships and the use of existing assets and services, communities can develop innovative, sustainable approaches that provide transport access for the whole community. This needs to involve key players in transport provision and local governments working together to find ways to better use existing underutilised infrastructure, and to develop transport options at an integrated system level.
For isolated, small and dispersed communities not currently provided with public transport and unable to support a regular transport service, initiatives are needed that provide a community managed flexible transport option. *Cars for Communities* is a recent example. Another option is to explore the capacity of existing school bus services to meet transport needs of other user groups.

For rural towns that can support a regular local transport network with connections to a main regional service centre, initiatives are needed that ensure a regular passenger transport service linking regional and rural communities to their main regional service centres, and which effectively utilise existing school buses, community transport and commercial transport services including the operation of wheelchair accessible taxis. For larger communities not currently provided with public transport to regional or major metropolitan service centres, initiatives are also needed that ensure a regular passenger transport service linking regional population centres to their main regional or metropolitan service centres.

An exciting opportunity exists for Government to leverage off emergent broadband capability to reshape service delivery for even greater accessibility. The availability of new GPS and smart-card technologies can help build a seamless transport network for Tasmanian communities that enables better integration between different services, improved access (via the internet and SMS texting) to information and greater capability for people to easily plan their journeys.

**CASE STUDY: Connecting Coastal Communities in North West Tasmania**

For many years, North West Coast Communities were without a regular bus service between Devonport and Ulverstone. This was a stumbling block to ‘shrinking’ the Cradle Coast region so people could easily access education and employment opportunities in towns across the coast, as well as businesses, health and community services.

This situation changed in January 2009 because local bus operators worked with the State Government, Central Coast Council, Devonport Council, the Cradle Coast Authority, and community groups to put a new bus service into place. Coastal communities like Forth, Turners Beach and Leith are now part of a passenger service that provides people – from Wynyard through to Port Sorell – with buses from early in the morning to late in the evening on week days and Saturdays.

Metro Tasmania and Phoenix Coaches have worked closely together to make sure their timetables integrate with each other and meet up with Merseylink bus services operating within the Devonport area. Bus operators and the Local Councils have worked together to make sure that bus stops are in the right places for passengers to catch buses easily and safely.

Many different groups representing a wide cross-section of people got involved in community forums in Devonport and Ulverstone, and had their say about the times they needed buses to run and where they needed the buses to go. The bus operators are now running services that reflect their suggestions.
CASE STUDY: *Youth Futures*

Young men who leave home at a very young age without secure housing or employment can experience disadvantage that can lead to long term unemployment, homelessness and poverty.

*Youth Futures* is a not-for-profit organisation in Launceston that gets to the heart of these issues by providing accommodation and employment and training support to young men who experience difficulty in securing accommodation and income.

Located to the north of the CBD, *Youth Futures* provides information and support about seasonal and casual employment, short-term and affordable accommodation as well as support to secure more permanent accommodation and employment. It is not uncommon for some clients to be unable to get to work due to lack of a car or driver’s licence, so where necessary, *Youth Futures* will provide transport to and from a client’s place of employment.

*Youth Futures* is also working in partnership with the University of Tasmania School of Architecture and Student Works on a project called The Castle, which provides micro-housing options for young people who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or otherwise excluded from mainstream housing.

**Actions**

1. **Establish an on-line one-stop shop** for local transport options, taking advantage of ICT and smart technology. As a first step, this would involve an audit of the total vehicle matrix available in regional and urban areas mapped against travel patterns of potential customers and community-identified transport need. The next stage would develop a model for coordinating all the transport requirements of a community. This could begin with one region and once successful, be implemented statewide.

2. **Establish a Transport Infrastructure Fund** that communities can access to:
   - Trial the expansion of school and general access bus services to broaden public access and connect communities in rural, regional and metropolitan centres; and
   - Develop off bus infrastructure including disability access, assistive technology, bus stop shelters, kerbing and associated requirements to increase the accessibility of public transport in Tasmania.

3. **Transport services development plans** to create localised plans for transport needs that are consistent with a one-stop shop model. These plans could be funded through the Transport Infrastructure Fund, and would:
   - Focus on strengthening peri-urban or urban fringe services and services outside peak times;
   - Examine the innovative use of existing underutilised transport infrastructure including but not limited to school buses in communities with limited commercial services; and
   - Examine transport alternatives, ‘green’ transport options and encourage the use, attractiveness and accessibility of public transport.
Strategy 3 – Learning for Life: Diversity and Skills Training

A socially inclusive society is based on lifelong learning that enables people to develop the skills to participate in employment and education, as well as in social networks and community life. From basic life skills to the training needed to get a job, socially inclusive communities make it possible for people to learn new skills no matter what their age or ability. Inclusive communities value continuous improvement, encourage healthy debate, welcome different perspectives and embrace a diversity of people and ideas.

The Social Inclusion Consultation has told us of the need for diversity skills and training for front line service delivery. Appropriate service delivery can be a significant barrier to social inclusion, particularly for culturally, sexually and gender diverse communities, people living with a disability or mental illness, and low income or isolated Tasmanians.

Data in Appendix 1 indicates that people living outside the major cities and towns and people with a disability are among the groups facing difficulties in accessing services. For many people seeking assistance, their first contact with service providers is a critical one. It can make or break their ability to get on track, receive help and change their life course for better or worse. Negative experiences of service delivery during a vulnerable period of someone’s life can result in withdrawal, isolation and often a reluctance to re-engage with services.

“The process of telling people what they want and what they are going to get not only disempowers people but also is dangerous in that it does not anticipate or take into consideration local conditions/environment.”

Coming Out Proud Program State Steering Committee Submission to the Social Inclusion Consultation

Frontline workers must be appropriately skilled and trained to provide services to people experiencing disadvantage and who are at risk of social exclusion. Whether the service is delivered in the community sector or by government, it is vital that the service and support is provided in a non-discriminatory, non-stigmatising, supportive and appropriate way.

“In Tasmania there are too many citizens whose rights are not fully considered in the development of public policy. They include a number of marginalised groups whose lives are not understood nor fully accepted because that experience of life is beyond the comprehension of mainstream society”.

National Disability Services Submission to the Social Inclusion Consultation

There are currently a number of services statewide, in the community, business and government sectors that undertake diversity training for their staff. In particular, Tasmania Police, the education system, many health and human services including local General Practitioners, charitable organisations and Local Councils. Although good training programs are underway, these are often organisation specific, offered on an ad-hoc basis and not designed for delivery at local or regional
levels when exclusion and discrimination can often be heightened in rural and remote communities.

“If training is required, then invest in the community - train community members to do it. Many non-government organisations that deliver local services are well respected for being able engage with the community”.

Central Highlands/Southern Midlands Council, Social Inclusion Forum

Tasmania has a comparative advantage with exemplary service systems to build a network of frontline skills training for service delivery. Consultation Submissions noted Service Tasmania as a model that could be further developed. The Stronger Communities Taskforce report also commended Service Tasmania as a notable example of progress in Tasmania for coordinated service delivery for communities.

“Service Tasmania offers a model of good practice that could be developed in other jurisdictions. Its staff are well trained and informed in communicating with the public and its decentralised centres offer a range of services in a friendly, supportive environment. This model needs to be extended so that more user friendly services are readily accessed through the state”.

National Disability Network Submission to the Social Inclusion Consultation

A commitment to skill building and a variety of strategies for skills training are required for social inclusion to be realised in Tasmania. This includes a significant investment in life skills education programs statewide. Many good programs are currently operating in Tasmania but these do not have statewide reach and the client scope is minimal. Consequently, people at risk of social exclusion cannot access the support they need, and many services are not aware of other services and organisations providing similar or complementary supports. Coordination, including a stock-take of available support and greater linkages to engage people who are vulnerable and at risk of social exclusion, would enable a greater number of Tasmanians to become engaged in their communities.

Only when basic life skills are addressed can a person focus on other barriers to being included in the community. Literacy in the broadest sense includes a range of skills necessary for everyday life that can have a powerful bearing on an individual’s capacity to participate in the community. A community that is literate is a socially inclusive community.

Unfortunately the Tasmanian data and responses to the social inclusion consultation show that Tasmania’s performance on adult and community literacy is not good, with almost half the Tasmanian adult population without the literacy and numeracy skills they need to function effectively in their daily lives.

35 Coming Out Proud Program State Steering Committee, 2009 Submission to the Tasmanian Social Inclusion Consultation.
37 See Appendices 1 and 2.
38 Department of Premier and Cabinet, 2009 Background Paper on Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Tasmania. Tasmanian Government, Hobart.
Developing literacy and numeracy skills begins from birth and continues into and beyond schooling and throughout our adult lives. If someone has reached adulthood without developing the basic literacy and numeracy skills they need for everyday life, we as a society have let them down. The unfair stigma associated with low literacy and numeracy within our community must be removed if we are to encourage and motivate people to seek out the support they need.

CASE STUDY: George Town Community Engagement Project
“Finding Your Pathway into School and Beyond”

In 2007 a program was introduced at Port Dalrymple and South George Town Primary Schools to target improvement in Aboriginal students’ literacy. Funding provided to purchase computers and specialised software now enables students to undertake self-paced learning, with home usage and loan of the computers presented as an incentive to encourage participation.

Through a literacy program that allows contact between the students, their parents and homes, and the schools the project facilitates the:

- provision of alternative learning opportunities offered primarily by Indigenous mentors so that students and their families reconnect with learning;
- provision of home/school-based learning opportunities to increase literacy skills; and
- linking with off-campus learning opportunities available in the community

Monitoring to date shows an increase in school attendance and a decrease in suspension rates. The project is assisting 55 Aboriginal students and attendance rates have increased to 95 per cent.

Without basic literacy and numeracy skills the tasks of everyday life are made more difficult, whether reading a bus timetable, applying for a home loan, filling in Centrelink paperwork, getting a driver’s licence, reading the newspaper, enrolling in a course, correctly taking medication, applying for a job, or reading to a child. Literacy and numeracy skills enable people to make the most of opportunities in life including getting and keeping a job (or getting a better one), being an active member of the community, starting and finishing a qualification and accessing government and community services.

Improving the literacy and numeracy skills of people already in the workforce benefits not only the employee. For employees, the benefits of improved literacy and numeracy may include increased confidence and improved prospects for increasing their earnings capacity. For an employer, improving the literacy and numeracy skills of their workforce may improve the productivity of their business, enhance occupational health and safety and may encourage employees to contribute innovative ideas for business development.

There are many investments and commitments recently made in Tasmania that will help people to build the literacy and numeracy skills that they need. These include the Learning and Information Network Centres (LINC)s, and Community Literacy Co-ordinators. It is important that the State also commits to developing literacy and numeracy services in a range of educational, community and workplace settings through partnerships and joined-up approaches if any lasting impact is to be made on the statistics. Tasmania’s poor performance must become everybody’s responsibility with the private sector playing a role in employment related literacy as well as supporting literacy programs in non-threatening environments such as via sport, recreation and cultural participation.
**CASE STUDY: **Huon LINC

*Huon Learning and Information Network Centre* (LINC) brings together a number of government and non-government organisations to make it easier for people in the Huon Valley to access information services and life-long learning opportunities. *Huon LINC* partners with organisations such as the University of Tasmania, the Tasmanian Polytechnic, Adult Education, Mission Australia, and other training organisations such as STEPS, Wilson Training and APW to deliver training at a local level.

Since the Centre opened, there has been an increase in the number of people using the Centre and borrowing at the Library, volunteer numbers have improved with many gaining new qualifications through sponsorship and encouragement into courses, and enrolments and retention in Polytechnic courses have improved with many students using introductory courses as a pathway to further education. Clients have accessed literacy support through a non-threatening process, supported by a large volunteer tutor team.

A survey of Huon LINC users in 2008 reported very high client satisfaction, with the majority of users saying that they had re-engaged in education and wanted to continue to improve their education into the future.

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**CASE STUDY: **TOOL

*TOOL*’s aim is to create a future for young people on Hobart’s eastern shore who are at risk of educational disengagement, long term unemployment and criminal behaviour. *TOOL* targets young people in the 15-25 year age bracket, but the initial intake is students in grades nine and ten from local high schools who are struggling to complete their education in the traditional school system.

*TOOL* is establishing sustainable, commercially-based facilities that incorporate on-the-job training in a range of practical work skills, entrepreneurship and personal development opportunities for youth at risk. As young people "graduate" out of *TOOL* with a range of employability skills, *TOOL* is committed to their being employed by local businesses or going on to further training, perhaps in those skill areas they have been developing during their time at *TOOL*.

To this end, *TOOL* works collaboratively with local businesses that are affected by the skills shortage in Australia now; *TOOL*’s students may well be able to meet the labour demand of a local enterprise.

*TOOL* recently joined with two corporate partners - Nyrstar based at Lutana, and Gunners Quoin Estate based at Old Beach - whose generosity provides excellent work sites for *TOOL*’s students to begin their training.

This initiative joins local community centres in an historic collaboration, and works with local industry and a range of service providers in the education, employment and community sectors to transform the future of local at-risk young people. STEPS Employment and Training Solutions is also a partner of the project.
As well as being a source of income, jobs provide social connections and build self-esteem and a sense of purpose. Improvements in employment and labour force participation benefit society as a whole through improved productivity and economic growth⁹. In the context of demographic change affecting Tasmania, “improving skills and sustaining the health of the workforce are becoming increasingly important.” In the last 15 years there has been a reduction in unemployment rates, but Tasmania continues to have the highest proportion of people looking for full-time work, and the highest proportion of children living in jobless families. Approximately 20,000 Tasmanians are marginally attached to the labour force⁴¹.

The Social Inclusion Consultation has told us that access to employment opportunities is a major barrier for inclusion. Transitional employment programs are important for developing the skills and confidence to be job ready, particularly for people with mental health issues, people living with disability, culturally diverse communities, and people being released from Prison or Youth Detention. A promotional campaign will help to educate the wider community regarding the benefits of diversity and employment and ‘giving us a go’⁴².

Tasmania’s productivity could be vastly increased with a focus on job opportunities for long term unemployed Tasmanians as well as more secure work for people struggling on low incomes due to part-time or casual employment, as well as people who are ‘under’ employed.

“Employment is the key to building self-esteem, skills and networks for involvement in the community and economic freedom. Financial freedom is fundamental to settling into a community and to build a family.”

Multi-Cultural Resource Centre, Social Inclusion Forum

Re-engaging Tasmanians in employment allows many people to connect and maintain employment associated networks and relationships. It also increases Tasmania’s productivity and prosperity.

**Actions**

1. Establish a **statewide skills training for diversity program** to focus on skill building to ensure early intervention and prevention, appropriate referral and support for clients, and front line workers who are confident and able to respond to an individual’s needs. The program should:

   - Increase awareness of the importance of frontline services as the first point of contact for people who experience exclusion and isolation in the community in urban, rural and regional service delivery;
   - Build effective, efficient and timely service delivery to enable support for clients with multiple complex needs or clients facing discrimination; and

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⁴¹ See the Unemployment, Participation, Underemployment and Part-time Work sections of Appendix 1.
⁴² See Appendix 2 for further information.
- Work with educational organisations that train frontline staff (nurses, doctors, police) to ensure that service delivery for people with multiple or complex needs is included in training and reflects practical feedback from isolated groups regarding barriers they face to inclusion.

2. Establish **life skills education programs** statewide in areas of sexual health and relationships education, drug education, harm minimisation budgeting and financial literacy, and other basic life skills as determined as priorities by communities.

3. Deliver **adult and community literacy and numeracy services** in a range of educational, community and workplace settings through partnerships and joined-up approaches. Identify opportunities to support individuals, children and families with low literacy and numeracy skills through initiatives such as the **Learning and Information Network Centres**, the **Community Literacy Coordinators** and the **Child and Family Centres**. Work with **businesses and industry bodies** to encourage businesses to identify and address the literacy and numeracy needs of their workforce, and deliver literacy and numeracy initiatives in workplace settings.

4. “**Give us a go**”. Establish a **community education campaign** to highlight the benefits of diversity and employment and provide employment pathways for at-risk Tasmanians. Provide further education and training opportunities for disadvantaged job seekers in areas of locational disadvantage by enabling the delivery of accredited training programs in community based settings. Ensure those in need have access to childcare while undertaking training and provide pre, post and ongoing employment support to people who face ongoing barriers to and discrimination in the workforce.
**Strategy 4 – Building Supportive Local Networks: Connected Communities**

Supportive networks provide people with resources and experiences that make life meaningful. Without supportive networks people can miss out on the essentials of life (such as food and housing), on developing the skills (such as literacy and numeracy and other work skills) they need to be productive in their communities, on being able to have a say on issues that affect them, and on enjoying safe and loving relationships that give them the confidence to reach their potential.

Supportive local networks create community bonds that encourage identity, trust and belonging in local communities, which in turn encourages more stable population settlement.

> “Trust is important. However, isolation creates a lack of trust. Isolated people lose their sense of a world beyond the border of their communities. Once they have lost this sense they lose their contact with wider society and a mistrust of outsiders is fostered within the community”.

*Clarendon Vale Neighbourhood House, Social Inclusion Forum*

People who are connected to each other and to their communities are much more resilient in the face of other factors that generally cause exclusion. In the TasCOSS research with low income Tasmanians, many people identified feeling supported and being able to give support in return as essential components of a good quality of life. They emphasised the role that neighbours and the community play in providing support and comfort.  

When supportive networks are missing, people are more likely to experience isolation and exclusion, which in turn can impact negatively on their physical and mental health and wellbeing. Many submissions to the Social Inclusion Consultation highlighted that the highest burden of illness is experienced by those on the lowest incomes, and that people on low incomes include some of the most socially excluded and disadvantaged people in Tasmania. Evidence of the link between low socio-economic status and poor health outcomes is also outlined in Appendix 1.

> “Those with the least resources suffer the most illness, pain, chronic disease, and reduced life expectancy. Inequalities in health can spiral into lower education and employment outcomes, exacerbating social exclusion”.

*Department of Health & Human Services Submission to the Social Inclusion Consultation*

The evidence shows that disadvantage and the experience of health and wellbeing is unequally distributed across Tasmania. In some Tasmanian communities, individuals and families are more vulnerable to social isolation and have fewer opportunities to maintain relationships and participate in social and civic activities. People who live with these circumstances often need multiple forms of supports, either from government, non-government services or other community groups.

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43 TasCOSS, 2009 Just Scraping by? Conversations with Tasmanians on Low incomes, TasCOSS, Sandy Bay.

Unfortunately, they often have to deal with complex systems and processes which result in them missing out on the support they really need.

Not only is health and wellbeing distributed unequally in areas across Tasmania, it is also unequally distributed across generations. The chances are high that children who grow up in poverty and disadvantage will, as adults, go on to experience the same kind of outcomes as their parents. However, the cycles of disadvantage that tend to be reinforced within families and communities can be broken. The way to do this is to provide early and appropriate support during the early years of a child’s life and during other critical transition points in a person’s life.

Children’s early learning experiences create pathways for lifelong learning and development. Building capacity in families and communities to provide support in these critical early years is the best way to give children the best possible start in life.45

“We need to connect kids … before they get disconnected. Bring other organisations into school or take them to another organisation that can provide the support they need. This intervention needs to be early not just when problems become really complex”.

West Moonah Community House, Social Inclusion Forum

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**CASE STUDY: Building Blocks**

*Building Blocks* is a successful early childhood mobile outreach program operating from the Break-O’Day Health Resource Association (BODHRA) in St Helens. *Building Blocks* builds family and community capacity by supporting parents and carers in the development, learning outcomes, health and well-being of children 0-5 years of age.

Activities delivered through *Building Blocks* include ‘Play and Learn’ playgroups and fun days, assessment of child development, information and support to parents who have concerns about their child’s development or their parenting role, education on good nutrition, and a parent library. It has evolved as a linking point for the development and support of partnerships with other organisations and groups in the area.

*Building Blocks* aims to develop effective parenting skills, enhance early learning capacity and improve support to families and the community by delivering better services. It has established partnerships between local services and it assists local residents and parents to participate in community life through volunteering, which has in turn enabled some parents to engage in further education and training or paid employment.

The success of *Building Blocks* has resulted in the development of other programs to further implement family partnership concepts as an extension of the original program.

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It is possible to identify children and families who are vulnerable and most at risk of being/becoming socially excluded, and to build supportive local networks around them. These supports need to be person-centred (recognising that ‘one size does not fit all’), family focused (recognising the role families can have in supporting vulnerable individuals), and place based (recognising that local communities are the places in which people make friends, forge identity and belonging, and through which they can come up with locally relevant solutions and access effective supports).

“Services have for too long dealt with people as individuals. We want to build on the transformation taking place in children’s services to encourage greater integration and multi-agency working with adults’ services so that we can shape all these services more closely around the needs of families”.

Hilary Armstrong, Reaching Out: Think Family

In Tasmania there are many excellent examples of collaborative projects and partnerships involving the government, non-government and private sectors as well as the community. “These partnerships are built on common goals, shared visions, cooperation, trust and mutual respect.” However, there are some significant challenges facing the State. Much of these collaborative projects and partnerships are scattergun, occurring without reference to what others are doing and thus creating the potential for both duplication and individuals falling through the cracks.

CASE STUDY: Aboriginal Early Years Program

The Aboriginal Early Years Program has been supporting parents/caregivers of Aboriginal children aged 0-5 years of age since 2005. The program has successfully connected Aboriginal families with their local early years education services and provided parents with culturally appropriate activities to help them nurture and stimulate their children’s learning, with emphasis on early literacy, language development and school readiness.

The program employs four Aboriginal Early Years Liaison Officers state-wide to work closely with parents/caregivers of Indigenous children from 0 to 5 years of age. Successful projects include “Make and Take Workshops” where families make a variety of resources for use at home to support early literacy and numeracy acquisition.

The Aboriginal Early Years Liaison Officers are also involved in implementing the Universal Access to Early Childhood Education Project for 5 year old Indigenous children. This project aims to identify all Indigenous students who are not enrolled in Kindergarten and to support their parents/caregivers in the enrolment process. It also aims to monitor attendance and support parents/caregivers to enable their children to attend Kindergarten.

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46 TasCOSS, 2008 Submission to the Social Inclusion Consultation, p. 7.
In making his recommendations to the Tasmanian Parliament, the Director of Public Health has urged that the socio-economic health gradients existing within Tasmania should not be inadvertently compounded, nor should intergenerational equity be compromised through unsustainable decisions. Services and projects need to be part of a ‘joined up’ approach to partnership that dismantles artificial sectoral, budgetary and service boundaries in order to increase individual and community capacity. Investments need to tackle the structural, technical and managerial challenges of collaborative approaches, ensuring both longevity and the capability for expansion for projects.

Tasmania’s investment in building supportive local networks needs to recognise that new technologies are changing the way people think about community, where they find support and how they interact with others (for example, through Facebook, YouTube or MySpace). Through the Internet, many people are discovering new ways to connect to each other, and to find out about and use services.

Improving the sustainability and development of community sport is a vital to improving social inclusion in Tasmania, as it is often the focal point for community interaction. Over the years there have been clubs that have disappeared from local communities in Tasmania as the economy has changed and people have left areas. This has meant that people associated with teams have lost important social networks and friends. The impact and importance of sporting clubs to local communities was most evident in the aftermath of the tragic bushfires in Victoria in February 2009. One of the key decisions made following the tragedy was to rebuild local sporting infrastructure as soon as possible because of the importance of sporting clubs in building communities. To ensure that local sporting clubs survive and thrive in Tasmania it is critical they have good resources, good management skills, good facilities and volunteers who are motivated and rewarded.

It is important that all Tasmanians make connections with each other through sport, recreation, culture and the arts. Evidence in Appendix 1 indicates low income, education and unemployment can affect participation in these activities. Partnerships with artists and arts organisations can facilitate activities that promote social inclusion at the local level and community participation in local issues. Community arts can be employed in ways to “empower individuals, heal communities, foster social connections, create employment and encourage educational participation.”

“What I like about living in my community [is] I have a whole world in one from my family, Aboriginal Community, Arts friends and colleagues with access to cultural programs, events and within driving distance to almost anywhere in Tasmania to study landscape, flora and our pristine sea shore environment ... To build good social skills encourage people to discover their unique talent we need to build good communication links for all people in some way whether health education or skilled programs”.

Lola Greeno, Program Officer Aboriginal Arts, Arts Tasmania Submission to the Social Inclusion Consultation

Many groups in the community can be more easily engaged and become more socially included using the arts. Through these activities, people can develop confidence, self esteem and skills that help them take more control over their lives and build connections with others in their community. Artists can also work with communities that have experienced trauma, helping them to deal with grief and loss, and to help people identify their strengths and build connections with others. Although community arts projects can support social inclusion, they face barriers such as lack of funding, appropriate training, evaluation, facilities, and recognition of the value of arts participation.

CASE STUDY: meenah mienne – my dream

meenah mienne is a mentoring project bringing at-risk Aboriginal young people and Aboriginal artists together to ‘share time, tell stories and make really deadly art’. It aims to:

- Improve the emotional health and wellbeing of Aboriginal youth;
- Foster more confident cultural and community connections;
- Increase opportunities for social/economic participation by Aboriginal youth;
- Support education achievement; and
- Assist transitions to the workforce.

meenah mienne is a partnership program between the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community, Tasmanian and Australian Governments. The origin of the program came from a group of nationally-recognised Aboriginal artists and cultural practitioners in Tasmania four years ago, including Aunty Phyllis Pitchford, Vicky West, Delia Summers, Ruth Langford and Alan Mansell. meenah mienne has been and remains the dream of the highly respected Aboriginal Elder Aunty Phyllis Pitchford. The project is a model example of a community incubated and supported practical initiative. Specifically, meenah mienne targets safe communities, schooling, economic participation, and governance and leadership.

The outcomes to date have included recruiting, screening, training and professional development of 11 one-on-one Aboriginal mentor-artists and a further pool of Aboriginal and non-Indigenous group workshop leaders. They have also included setting up a community-based arts centre in central Launceston and conducting a series of arts skills workshops with young people in Ashley Youth Detention Centre.

As part of building supportive communities there are opportunities to expand the role of schools and other publicly funded community spaces including Learning and Information Network Centres (libraries, online access centres and other learning services) and Community Houses as community hubs that bring together individuals, families, community groups and service providers. The development of Child and Family Centres as one-stop service centres will help to build sustainable supportive networks at the local level. These combined community spaces can make it easier for children and families to access a range of services without having to re-tell their story to different service providers or be expected to navigate the complexity by themselves.

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**CASE STUDY: CORES**

The ability and willingness of a community to identify and respond to members who are at risk of suicide or self-harm can have a significant impact on reducing suicide rates. A program that builds the community’s capacity to intervene early to prevent suicides has been established in the Kentish Council area in North West Tasmania.

**CORES - Community Response to Eliminating Suicide** - educates community members in how to intervene when somebody in their community is at risk of suicide or self-harm. Individuals from the community are trained to be trainers and they in turn pass on their skills and knowledge to other community members.

The objective of CORES is to assist community members identify suicidal and self-harming behaviours and intervene early. This may include talking with the person at risk or their family and friends, or referring them to local mental health and other health-care professionals. Local authorities and professionals are part of the network that the community can call on.

Over a 12-month period, community members are trained to deliver the one-day CORES course to around 100-200 people in the local community. After a year, the local community has formed its own network, which continues to train community members in the techniques of suicide intervention and prevention.

**Actions**

1. **Place based family support strategies.** Ensure each municipality across Tasmania has a sustainable 0-5 years family support strategy identifying excluded populations and places. The strategy should consider integrating community infrastructure including Children and Family Centres, Integrated Care Clinics, Gateway Services, Community Houses and Schools as community hubs. It should coordinate access to services available to meet the needs of Tasmanian families including, in particular, jobless families and sole parent families.

2. Build on existing **outreach early years networks** for social inclusion in rural and regional locations. Work on developing robust decentralised service accessibility from the Children and Family Centres statewide and invest in successful locally grown models of family support networks.

3. Establish a basic **platform for local network building** that focuses on research and development of networks and their economic and social capability across Tasmania. The platform would:
   - Explore opportunities to attract cross sectoral resources, and share resources statewide;
   - Explore the civic participation of marginalised groups in supportive local networks; and
   - Build on successful models of local networks promoting social inclusion.

4. **Community wellbeing networks.** Involve the arts, sports, recreation and cultural sectors in identifying the most appropriate infrastructure (facilities, staff and resources) to support growth and sustainability of associated networks, including the development of a plan to build and support the long term viability of community arts and wellbeing practice and increase the participation of excluded Tasmanians in sport and recreation.
**Strategy 5 – Social Enterprises: A Hand Up, Not a Hand Out**

Internationally social enterprises and social entrepreneurship are hallmarks of new approaches to social inclusion. These approaches begin not with the deficits of people and places but with their assets and potential, aiming for both a fairer society and a stronger economy. They recognise that the knowledge, abilities and energy of people and communities – including those described as ‘poor’ and ‘disadvantaged’ – are an enormous resource. Social enterprises foster innovation and confidence. They can be a pathway to skills, employment and independence. They mobilise talent and resources, bringing people back into the community and economy who have been excluded.

“A social enterprise is a business. But it’s a business with a difference. All profits made by a social enterprise are reinvested back into the community to develop much needed services and resources. A social enterprise is run in a socially responsible manner and the business itself often provides an unmet service to the community”.

*Brotherhood of St Laurence website*

Social enterprises are businesses that primarily have a social objective, where ownership is with local communities and where ‘profits’ are reinvested in the community. They are the fastest growing type of business in many countries. For example there are now over 55,000 social enterprises in the UK.

Social enterprises can be set up as cooperatives, incorporated bodies, companies and trusts depending on the purpose for which they have been established. Some emerge when local communities identify a need and start looking for innovative ways to meet it and at the same time be self-sustaining; others are set up like traditional business driven by the need to make a profit that can be invested in its social purpose. Some come out of major community renewal, housing or economic strategies that are put in place at a local or regional level\(^50\). Whatever way social enterprises emerge, a key characteristic is their use of local know-how, know-who, know-where, and know-what-needs-doing\(^51\). Social enterprises allow people to develop and own their own solutions.

*Social enterprises often thrive where private businesses are weak, such as in areas of urban deprivation or rural isolation, and they can play a critical role in community regeneration. They can help make public and community services more affordable and accessible, spread new ways of working, prepare people for the world of work, promote community safety or generate local wealth in marginalised communities.*

*Creating and Sharing Wealth Fairly: The Social Enterprise Action Plan for Wales*

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Social enterprises can be a mechanism to reach people who face barriers to employment and provide them with opportunities to develop skills and gain employment. It is important that social enterprises are able to reach the most vulnerable. In Victoria, for example, through the government’s Neighbourhood Renewal Program the Brotherhood of St Laurence supports social enterprises that operate in communities with high concentrations of public housing. Some of these enterprises are linked directly with maintenance contracts provided through the Victorian Office for Housing (e.g. undertaking upgrades of housing stock to improve energy efficiency); others have started up to meet demand in local communities (e.g. Cafes and the provision of fruit and vegetables). The people involved in these enterprises get the opportunity to develop business and leadership skills and gain formal qualifications. These enterprises are examples of targeted ways to develop links between people who are disadvantaged to local labour markets and educational opportunities.

Social Enterprises help to form social capital through increasing democratic engagement, volunteering and participation. Generally, they are membership based organisations that encourage participation in decision making and help give people who are disadvantaged the opportunity to influence decision making and access material resources. In this way they help empower people and help them to have a more direct influence on issues facing their communities.

The extraordinary dynamism and commitment of the social enterprise movement is already in Tasmania from local Farmers Markets through to disability businesses such as Self Help Workplace and microcredit operations such as the No Interest Loans Scheme; and from regional community arts projects through to agencies such as Youth Futures linking at-risk young people into job markets.

**CASE STUDY: Self Help Workplace**

Australian Disability Enterprises are commercial businesses that provide employment opportunities for people with disability. Australian Disability Enterprises enable people with disability to engage in a wide variety of work tasks such as packaging, assembly, production, recycling, screen printing, plant nursery, garden maintenance and landscaping, cleaning services, laundry services and food services.

*Self Help Workplace* has provided real employment for people with a disability for over 44 years and is the largest employer of people with a disability in the Launceston area.

As an Australian Disability Enterprise, *Self Help Workplace* provides a range of products and services to many local and national businesses that range from pallets to survey pegs, mail-outs to assembling components.

*Self Help Workplace* also operates Encore Clothing, which is Launceston’s premier clothing recycling shop, with a range of current fashions that is the envy of “up-market” retail outlets.

Over 70 people are employed in the modern facility in Launceston, and all enjoy the benefits of real employment including wages, holidays and long service leave.

With an active social club and dedicated employees, *Self Help Workplace* provides a place of employment that is productive, fun and enjoyable.

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People experiencing social exclusion can face barriers to accessing the financial and other resources to establish social enterprises. Rural isolation, cultural differences, language skills and credit ratings are some of the barriers people face in accessing mainstream financial and banking products. Credit provision to households and community entities, which are often small and lack assets against which to borrow, is seen as too high a risk compared to returns. As a consequence, funds are sometimes accessed from other sources – friends and family, no interest loan schemes, and payday lenders. The negative consequences of this are documented in Appendix 2 and include greater susceptibility to predatory lending, and lack of provision for essential needs and emergencies.

CASE STUDY: Saver Plus

Saver Plus is a program that helps people on low incomes establish a long-term savings habit. It is delivered by a number of community organisations in partnership with ANZ Bank. People set a savings goal and receive financial education and support in reaching their goal. Once they reach their savings goal, ANZ matches their savings dollar-for-dollar up to $1,000.

Saver Plus was developed jointly by ANZ and the Brotherhood of St Laurence. It was piloted in 2003, after ANZ's research into adult financial literacy demonstrated a correlation between low levels of saving and lower than average financial literacy. Since 2003, the program has been extended and Saver Plus is now offered in 20 locations across Victoria, NSW, Queensland, Tasmania and the ACT. A 2008 study conducted by RMIT University found that Saver Plus "has the highest level of success of any international matched savings program," with 96 per cent of participants meeting or exceeding their savings goals, and about 70 per cent of past participants continuing to save the same amount or more 2-3 years after completing the program.

The Smith Family has successfully implemented the program in Tasmania in Wynyard, Launceston and the northern suburbs of Hobart.

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Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFIs) are a type of social enterprise that have emerged internationally as a way of providing banking and financial services for households and communities to create wealth and build equity. CDFIs can provide specialised financial services to people, groups and organisations excluded from mainstream services; engage these people, groups and organisations in developmental opportunities that build their financial capabilities and financial security; foster economic development; and provide access to capital.\(^57\)

Governments have a key role to play in creating the enabling conditions for social enterprises to thrive. This can include some form of Ministerial accountability for developing social enterprises in the community sector. In Victoria, for example, Ministerial leadership for social enterprise is placed under the broader Community Development portfolio. The UK Government has placed social enterprises within its Office of the Third Sector which is centrally located within the Cabinet Office. It assesses the impact of new policies of the social enterprise sector and appoints Social Enterprise Champions within government to advocate the interests of social enterprises and work across public agencies, community sector and business to raise awareness.\(^68\)

Evidence shows that social enterprises rely on developing skills, accessing advice about best practice and market opportunities. Personalised support for social entrepreneurs is crucial in terms of providing peer support, mentoring and access to information and advice.\(^59\) Governments traditionally provide a range of support services for small and medium sized businesses, and some governments have developed similar arrangements for the social enterprise sector. Measures to include social enterprise in business course syllabuses and promote social enterprise as a career choice have also been undertaken in the UK and USA to support the growth of social enterprises.

Governments can make a difference by enabling the development of institutional arrangements to support the growth and development of social enterprises. Governments can also provide small loans to support enterprise start ups, and funding to support enterprise growth. For example, in Victoria a Community Enterprise Grants Program provides access to funding for purchasing tools and equipment, facilities, technical assistance, and help with business planning and sourcing funds.\(^60\)

Public procurement also plays an important role in supporting social enterprise.\(^61\) Purely cost based criteria for public procurement can disadvantage social enterprises. Social procurement, on the other hand, also looks at the social outcomes not just how cheaply a business can provide the product or service.\(^62\) The UK Government provides guidance materials for social enterprises to win public sector contracts, and to promote social enterprises as a way of delivering public services.\(^63\)

Related to social procurement is encouraging community ownership and management of public assets. Physical accommodation is a significant need and expense for any business. The transfer of public assets to community management has the potential to grow and support social enterprise.\(^64\)

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58 McDonald, C., 2009 Ibid.
61 Brotherhood of St Laurence, 2007 The Community Enterprise Development Imitative, learning from Work with Twelve Disadvantaged Neighbourhood in 2005-06, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Fitzroy.
**Actions**

1. Foster a culture of social enterprise through appointing **Social Enterprise Ambassadors** to raise awareness of social enterprise potential across Tasmania.

2. Encourage **social enterprises in education** by:
   - Establishing a scholarship program for social entrepreneurs to attend the Social Entrepreneurs School at the Centre for Social Impact in Sydney;
   - Developing a skills base for social enterprise in Tasmania including social enterprise in business studies syllabus; and
   - Promoting social enterprise as a career choice. Run events to discuss and promote best practice – including within schools to encourage social entrepreneurship amongst young people.

3. Extend the Department of Economic Development’s **small business support services** to provide expert advice and support for social enterprises to start up and grow. The UK model is to tailor existing small business support and services for social enterprises. Alternatively the Victorian model is to establish a new service supplied through an intermediary. Either approach would include:
   a. Training, business plans, innovation start ups, accessing finance and mentoring, peer support, and access to information and advice;
   b. Single web portal bringing together information and advice for social entrepreneurs and access to financial advice to improve investment readiness and training in business skills including social audits, business planning, corporate governance, legal frameworks;
   c. Building awareness about emerging threats/ opportunities/ what’s happening elsewhere including Information about best practice/ new ideas; and
   d. Developing champions who can represent the interests of the sector, raise profile amongst decision makers and mainstream business.

4. Establish a **Community Development Finance Fund** for developing financial instruments such as microfinance, that can:
   - Provide specialised financial services to people, groups and organisations excluded from mainstream services including technical assistance;
   - Engage people, groups and organisations in developmental opportunities that build their financial capabilities and financial security;
   - Foster economic development in disadvantaged communities; and
   - Provide access to capital to fund plant and equipment, purchase tools and equipment and support social venture capital investments.

5. Introduce **social procurement legislation** to support tendering processes that look at the social outcomes of hiring a particular business to undertake a contract, not just how cheaply they can provide the product or service. Broaden criteria to include social equity objectives such as increasing local skills and employment.
Strategy 6 – Volunteering: A Robust Civil Society

Volunteers enrich Tasmanian communities and help individuals and community organisations on a day-to-day basis and in times of need and community crisis. Volunteering performs a crucial role in supporting social inclusion, skills and economic development, and represents an important investment in Tasmania’s future social and economic prosperity. At an individual level, volunteering is about social networks and relationships that help provide links to employment, cultural and community activities, and well as a helping hand between neighbours. At a community level, volunteering provides people with strong social and community networks that build the capacity and resilience of communities to respond to issues and crises (such as bushfires).

Overall Tasmania is doing relatively well in volunteering policy development, and the rebuilding of Volunteering Tasmania should establish a more robust platform for the future. The key issues here in Tasmania as elsewhere are the ageing of the volunteer workforce, how to engage younger people in new forms of volunteering, the professionalisation of volunteering, regulatory barriers, and remuneration and reward policies.

Through the Tasmania Together consultation in 2006, Tasmanians identified the importance of community involvement, engagement, connectedness, cohesion, support, common goals and values, community organisations and volunteering.

“Voluntary organisations are crucial to social capital because citizen involvement in the community, especially its voluntary associations and intermediary organisations teaches the ‘habits of the heart’ of trust, reciprocity, solidarity and cooperation”.

Volunteering Tasmania: A Community of Volunteers

Through volunteering, Tasmanians of all ages and backgrounds can form diverse and supportive networks where they can develop and express their talents and interests. Participation in volunteering helps develop relationships that generate trust and cooperation and build connections between people in their communities. Where disadvantage divides communities, volunteering does so much to unite them, creating pathways to participation in neighbourhoods and organisations.

“Tasmania has an opportunity to develop a unique ‘brand’ – nationally and internationally – as a jurisdiction where community still exists … the ‘raw material’ for these communities, for a robust Tasmanian civil society, is volunteers”.

Volunteering Tasmania, Submission to the Social Inclusion Consultation

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65 Tasmania Together, 2006 What We Heard - The First Tasmania Together 5 Year Review: Community Consultation Summary.
Tasmanians are facing difficult times as a result of demographic changes, the global financial crisis, climate change and local pressures brought on by bushfire and drought. In these circumstances, people working voluntarily together in their communities can help Tasmania withstand the upheavals these changes bring and move forward productively and inclusively to the future.

Volunteering contributes to social inclusion in a number of ways. It can help end personal isolation by providing people with their only opportunity to get out of their home and interact with others. Volunteering can help people feel more in control of their own destiny, giving them the chance to effect change and to realise they have a worthwhile contribution to make. Volunteering can help people feel less excluded because they are able to help others. It is a great way for young people to benefit from the wisdom, knowledge and life experience of older people, and young people being able to share their skills, knowledge and capabilities with older people. It gives people the opportunity to learn a whole range of skills, from interpersonal to vocational skills. For some people, volunteering can also help them enter the labour market, by helping to boost their confidence, give them the training they need and develop their networks. For others, due to physical or mental ill health, it can become an alternative to employment that lets them make a contribution in a more flexible and relaxed environment.

“People most frequently said they volunteered because of “I guess people, yeah, people”. They love, like, want to meet, have a connection with other people... It provides them with an interest, something to do, and something to learn about. It is rewarding, satisfying. It provides a purpose, it gives them pleasure”.

*Focus Group Participant in Sustainability of Rural Volunteers in Tasmania (UTas)*

**CASE STUDY: Still Gardening**

Operating since April 2008, the *Still Gardening* program is based on research which found that, while a majority of older people love their gardens, many need help to continue managing their garden as they get older.

The program uses volunteers trained as Peer Educators who raise awareness of the health benefits of gardening to encourage clients to continue gardening and Garden Mates who provide support and companionship, working with the client to identify ways to help the person better manage the garden and to make it more accessible.

Funded by Home and Community Care (HACC) and under the auspice of the Council On The Ageing (COTA), *Still Gardening* uses an extensive network of organisations and partners who provide practical assistance, support and information on gardening and volunteer activities.

*Still Gardening* volunteers meet once a month to discuss their roles and identify issues, concerns, progress, potential negatives as well as positives particular to the group. These meetings boost camaraderie and instil a sense that the volunteers belong to a group.
Across the state, Tasmanians are involved in a wide range of volunteer activity covering health and welfare, nature and the environment, arts and culture and heritage, music and entertainment, education and learning, fire and ambulance services, sport and recreation, social and political advocacy, personal development (including faith and self-help groups), and special interests.

“Every Tasmanian comes into contact on almost a daily basis with some activity that is supported or maintained by volunteers”.

Volunteering Tasmania, Submission to the Social Inclusion Consultation

As outlined in Appendix 1, Tasmania outperforms the national average when it comes to volunteering. Despite this, major structural changes in Tasmania’s economy and society have led to a decline in the quantum of volunteer hours in Tasmania – from an average 78 hours per year in 2000 to only 55 hours in 2006\(^68\). We work differently and have different family arrangements, which result in less capacity for volunteering. Our institutions have also changed, becoming more professionalised and less likely to be locally based. As a consequence it is necessary to develop new mechanisms that will support volunteering for those Tasmanians who are income-poor, time-poor, and/or lacking in family or neighbourhood support networks.

The Social Inclusion Consultation has told us that barriers to volunteering include out-of-pocket costs to volunteers such as petrol and other transport costs as a contributing factor in declining volunteer numbers. Communities are concerned about finding appropriately-skilled volunteers to locally deliver specific services such as literacy programs. They also identify public liability insurance as a barrier to the delivery of services through volunteers and as an inhibitor to the use of community facilities by community organisations. The option of using government owned spaces such as schools including their sporting facilities, libraries and online access centres outside of business hours was suggested as a solution to both the lack of suitable community facilities and the public liability insurance issues.\(^69\)

Another factor impacting on volunteer trends is the multi-generational nature of volunteering. The traditional generation, born between 1922 and 1943, tend to be long-term volunteers contributing large blocks of time each month to helping roles and often across multiple associations. The baby boomer generation, born between 1946 and 1964, tend to be strong on community involvement, taking their skills and experience of the workplace into boards and committees, but often do not sustain their commitment or interest. Generation X, born between 1965 and 1980, tend to be involved in short-term episodic volunteering and do not usually commit to sustained long term volunteering. Generation Y, born between 1980 and 1994, tend to be committed and loyal when dedicated to an idea, cause or product. Although they are likely to get involved in voluntary associations related to social and political change, they are unlikely to be drawn to more traditional volunteering roles. These multigenerational dynamics present significant challenges to sustaining volunteering, bringing the need for strong skills in volunteer management.

\(^68\) Volunteering Tasmania, 2009 Submission to the Social Inclusion Consultation.
\(^69\) See the Volunteering section of Appendix 2.
Increasingly, volunteer management needs to be strengthened and supported to take account of how people are using information and communication technologies and what they want from the technology. These new technologies also offer potentially new ways to connect people into volunteering opportunities. Organisations also have the challenge of developing volunteering opportunities that are flexible enough to let individuals combine activities with existing roles and to respond to their different work and family pressures.

The development of new volunteering pathways needs to recognise the importance of social and economic connections at the local level, particularly in those areas where there are socially excluded and geographically isolated groups. This means establishing and maintaining an effective network of locally based organisations in which there are local people who are committed and knowledgeable about their community, and through which people can become connected and involved in their local community.

“I think you’ve got to make volunteering for them as much fun as you can. I think people forget, you know, that you can really, have a really good time and enjoy volunteering and that’s what we try and do here. We reciprocate it with our volunteers if they give us their time, we give them training, any areas they’d like to improve we do organised training”

Focus Group Participant (Volunteer Coordinator) in Sustainability of Rural Volunteers in Tasmania (UTas)

The Supporting Tasmanian Volunteers program is a recent initiative funding Volunteering Tasmania to develop a statewide network of volunteering ‘access points’ that will increase and sustain volunteer participation in community based organisations and enhance social inclusion by increasing volunteer participation by excluded groups.

Another important pathway is employee volunteering, which can help people connect to their community while dealing with the pressures of balancing work and home life. As the largest employer in Tasmania, the State Government is well placed to take a leadership role in supporting its employees to volunteer their services to a local community organisation.

Many Tasmanian businesses already recognise the importance of playing an active part in their local communities. The Stronger Communities Taskforce report showed a number of examples where employees are being supported to participate in local voluntary and community organisations. Recent research into rural and regional volunteering in Tasmania has confirmed that there is a substantial voluntary business contribution to community life taking place in Tasmania, and that volunteers feel well supported by local business. This research recommends that the existing relationships between businesses and the volunteer sector should be encouraged and enhanced but without trying to fit a national level concept of corporate volunteering to the local conditions.

72 Crowley, S, Stirling, C, Orpin, P, & Kilpatrick, S, 2008 Sustainability of Rural Volunteers in Tasmania. UTas Department of Rural Health, Tasmania.
“We need to consciously plot alternative pathways that could lead socially excluded Tasmanians into rewarding experiences in our rich array of not-for-profit organisations and associations”

Volunteering Tasmania Submission to the Social Inclusion Consultation

The Demographic Change Advisory Council has identified the need to develop a Tasmanian Volunteering Strategy that addresses issues such as costs of volunteering, the recruitment and management approaches adopted by volunteer-involved organisations, mechanisms to link prospective volunteers to appropriate positions and the role of Tasmanian employers in encouraging employees to engage in volunteering activities. This strategy will also need to examine the structure or volunteering to ensure that potential volunteers are not excluded because of the way processes are designed.73

Actions

1. Develop a sustainable network of volunteer access points across Tasmania that can provide information to link prospective volunteers with appropriate volunteering roles, using existing social infrastructure such as the Learning and Information Network Centres, Children and Family Centres and Community and Neighbourhood Houses. Locate the volunteer access points in a wide range of locations, which are recognised by local residents as credible, neutral and stigma-free. The access points should develop programs for excluded communities including isolated, rural, regional, remote and low socio-economic communities to better meet local community volunteering needs.

2. Develop a Tasmanian Volunteering Strategy that includes:
   - Subsidies for volunteers to acquire formal skills associated with volunteering (e.g. Certificate 4 in Volunteering) and/or volunteering activities (e.g. Food Handling Certificate for volunteers working with food);
   - Promotional campaigns that feature consistent messages to individuals and communities about the value of volunteering, and which appeal particularly to socially excluded people and younger Tasmanians; and
   - Building the capacity of the public service and business sectors to support employee volunteering in their local communities.

3. Volunteering Audit. Audit of existing legal, institutional and administrative barriers to volunteering to identify opportunities to increase incentives and access to volunteering. This could build on the existing two-year State Government trial to enable community, not-for-profit and sporting groups using local schools or other Department of Education facilities that aren’t already insured to be protected by third party insurance. This model could be extended to access to other community facilities.

73 Demographic Change Advisory Council, 2009 Demographic Change in Tasmania: Strategies for Addressing Challenges and Opportunities. DCAC, Hobart.
**Strategy 7 – Building Local Capacity: Home Grown Solutions**

Most social inclusion and exclusion experiences are played out locally – in the places and spaces where people live and work and play. Where local communities are active, caring and resilient there are likely to be much higher levels of social inclusion, for example as measured through people’s ability to raise resources to respond to a crisis.

Supportive local agencies and networks – public, community and private - are the frontline for social inclusion planning and delivery. These are where many people first turn for support. Increasingly, these local agencies and networks are also a source of innovation, creativity and leadership in building community resilience and prosperity. These are core assets and need to be nurtured and grown\(^74\). Local councils and community sector agencies are key to this.

*Nowadays towns are really not so different from businesses, they need to keep recreating themselves. Not so many years ago country towns were subject to the general trends. They would all do well or all do badly. The picture now is very uneven. The successful towns are likely to be driven by people who are passionate and creative, who see an opportunity and go for it. You need communities with a bit of get up and go spirit. Some have it, some don’t*.  

Roy Powell, Centre for Agricultural and Regional Economics

Internationally there is an increasing focus both on the role of local government as ‘place shapers’\(^75\) and the role of local networks in ‘relocalising’ communities\(^76\) that is, regaining control of their futures. While historically these local networks were often associated with traditional welfare agencies, more recent networks associated with the arts, recreational, leisure and civic goals are growing rapidly and are just as important to social inclusion (e.g. Community Houses).

*“Why not give communities the resources and allow them to apply their knowledge of their own issues and needs towards solutions ... Build on what the neighbourhood house already does”.*

Risdon Vale Community House - Social Inclusion Forum

A recent report has highlighted the significance of festivals in rural and regional Australia. Although many of these festivals are small with a local orientation, they are effective focal points for celebration and community. They act as catalysts for local job creation, volunteering, and local sponsorship opportunities. They bring together “scattered farm folk, young and old and disparate

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\(^{74}\) See Community Strengths section of Appendix 2.  
subcultures”, blending attitudes, enlarging social networks, and providing coping mechanisms at times of drought and economic hardship.\textsuperscript{77}

Most importantly, these agencies, networks and events can see the world through the lens of the person and family in the community rather than though the lens of a program or service. They can therefore be more responsive and flexible. These local agencies and networks are a crucial part of the asset structure of local communities but in many Tasmanian places they are in decline. Driven by demographic, economic and climatic disruptions many of these agencies and their communities face uncertain futures. This impacts for example on levels of volunteering as discussed in Strategy 6.

\textbf{The community services industry comprises over 350 organisations that employ up to 11 000 Tasmanians in paid work and thousands more as volunteers. It attracts at least $281 million in combined private, state and commonwealth investment, with a turnover of at least $300 million per annum. If we then add in those sporting, recreational, cultural and leisure groups, the numbers would rise considerably.}

Both the community services industry and Local Councils face common future challenges around the need for greater resource sharing, ageing infrastructure, an ageing workforce, skills shortages, ICT capability, increasing demands, and limited resources.

In Tasmania many councils are already in the business of social inclusion, with Hobart City Council being the first to be developing a dedicated social inclusion strategy. But for most councils, social inclusion is still on the fringes with an unclear mandate, limited resources, limited knowledge of best practice and a concern about cost shifting risks. The first step to address these legitimate concerns is to demonstrate the potential capacity of local councils to be stewards of social inclusion and then to show how the resourcing capability can be developed.

Internationally, local government whilst varying considerably in size and functions, is increasingly seen as being the sphere of government best able to manage the complexities of organising social inclusion locally.

Increasingly these local networks and institutions are combining a focus on social inclusion with a focus on sustainability more broadly.

\textit{“Citizens, rather than being treated as powerless dependents, can become collaborators in the design of programs to meet their needs. They can become co-producers”}.

\textit{Peter Shergold ‘Devolve Power to the People’, Weekend Australian (July 2009)}

The community sector – comprising voluntary groups, service clubs, charities, social enterprises, sporting, cultural arts and recreational groups – is often ideally placed to provide supports for the

\textsuperscript{77} Gibson, C and Stewart, A, 2009 Reinventing Rural Places: The Extent and Impact of Festivals in Rural and Regional Australia, University of Wollongong, Wollongong. In 2007-08 there were 226 festivals across Tasmania’s rural communities, including King Island, the Northwest Coast, West Coast, the Tamar, Central Highlands, the East Coast and Southern Tasmania – covering sport, community agricultural, gardening, music, arts, food, wine, heritage/history, cultural, environment and other activities.
local needs of individual communities. Organisations closest to the people are likely to understand what will work in a particular community and what will not.

In Tasmania both Councils and the community sector face uncertain futures. Both are changing from their traditional roles into new and more important roles around ‘place sharing’ and creating the enabling conditions for creativity, innovation and sustainable growth. Whilst the two industry sectors have many points of difference there are sufficient similarities for the State Government to form a strategic view on their future capability around addressing new roles and arrangements that can respond to dynamics faced by all communities but which are played out differently from one local circumstance to another. These include issues such as demographic change and liveability, educational participation and skills, economic, social and environmental innovation especially at the regional and local level, and leadership.

“Leadership, mentoring and talking with community members is important to learning what the community’s needs are. To reduce burn out - we need to train up more people to do this. It’s all about building relationships - strong trust relationships - between organisations and individuals. Trust is pivotal. The best support is assisting the community to better address its problems”.

Oatlands/Central Highlands Forum, Social Inclusion Consultation

“The old style of throwing money at the problem is not the high impact solution for regional development in Australia. Given the task of rejuvenating a region and the choice of $50 million, or $2 million and 20 committed leaders, we would choose the smaller amount of money and the committed leaders”.

McKinsey and Company, Lead Local Compete Global: Unlocking the Growth of Australia’s Regions

Internationally those communities with strong leadership have higher levels of social inclusion, innovation and resilience. Leadership is the most crucial factor in shaping the future of Tasmanian cities, towns and villages but there is a lack of depth in leadership capacity across Tasmania generally in civic, social and economic life. For this reason there is a need to:

- Focus on identifying, training and developing emerging leaders interest and capacity in civic roles, especially on councils;
- Prepare more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to access mainstream leadership opportunities both place based within their local communities and in a regional or state roles as ambassadors and representatives on committees or boards;
- Facilitate the sharing of knowledge and information between the public service and community based organisations to assist in building the longer term capacity of the non-government sector in Tasmania;
- Develop explicit future leadership within the public service through structured and ongoing programs that are not time limited; and
• Develop a centre of excellence for schools, local government, business and government to strategically plan and implement leadership programs and share models, knowledge and resource.

**CASE STUDY: FUTI-POP (Facing up to it – Playing our Part)**

In 2000, the Clarence Plains Support Network recognised that abusive relationships, including family violence, child abuse and neglect and school bullying were a significant issue in the community and that existing methods of tackling the issues were not adequate. Community members had also raised concerns about the incidence of family violence.

*FUTI-POP* began in 2005 when two programs merged. *FUTI* was established in 2001 to foster the development of healthy relationship skills across the community, facilitate skills development of community members and increase community awareness of family violence. The POP project was developed in February 2005 as a community response to protecting children and keeping them safe in the community.

As *FUTI-POP*, the combined project focuses on community awareness raising and skills development so that individuals who experience violence or abuse can receive support from within their own family and friendship groups as well as from agencies within the community. Community members, including children and young people, receive training and information that raises their awareness and gives them the skills to support others who experience family violence. This is done through a range of activities including a comprehensive and accessible resource library, Family Fun Days and community activities, promotional materials and school based programs.

Over 400 people have participated in the training since 2001 and young people suggested expanding training to reach other young people in Years 9-12 at local schools and colleges.

*FUTI-POP* has resulted in an increase in the skills and confidence of local people. Participants report that they think more about their own relationships, have gone on to use their skills and knowledge to further their education and are more willing and able to respond to issues of family violence if these are raised.

**Actions**

1. **Appoint a Philanthropy Ambassador.** To reduce the complexity for both givers and receives by having a single point of entry for initial enquiries (giving and receiving), to promote philanthropy across Tasmania, and to better match potential philanthropic resources with appropriate social inclusion purposes. The Ambassador would also be charged with assessing the extent to which the current state and local government regulatory environment could be reformed to maximise giving opportunities.
2. Establish a **Tasmanian Leadership Institute** to enable early identification and development of the future leaders in Tasmania – civic, social, business, environmental and cultural. The Institute would have a particular focus on young people who for a range of reasons may not have the opportunity to participate in leadership development and training. The Institute would enhance and provide support to existing leadership programs across Tasmania, act as a hub for new leadership activities and link Tasmania into the emerging international network of social entrepreneurship. The Institute would:

- Provide key information, research, learning and advice on best practice models to provide for future growth in skill and capacity of the State;
- Focus on identifying, training and developing emerging leaders’ interest and capacity in civic roles especially on Local Councils and other local civic networks;
- Prepare more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to access mainstream leadership opportunities and support them over time as they progress through to leadership roles;
- Act as a centre for excellence for schools, local government, business and government to strategically plan and implement leadership programs and share models, knowledge and resource; and
- Act as an incubator for social innovation.

3. **A joint ‘Place Shaping’ Review** of the community sector and local government in Tasmania to assess their future potential to address the key challenges facing the state. The Review to incorporate but not be limited to (4) and (5) below.

4. **Audit of Local Government Social Inclusion Capability.** This process could be initiated and supported through the Partnership Agreements to:

- Assess the current and future potential for local councils to engage in social inclusion planning and delivery;
- Determine the appropriate mechanisms for a co-ordinated state-wide approach; and
- Identify sustainable resourcing options.

5. **Invest in the capacity of the community sector,** including:

- **Explore co-location models** such as the ‘Mezzanine’ community services model of structures for sharing back office services. Sharing the supporting functions that enable organisations to carry out their activities can mean these are developed more efficiently than if each organisation were to provide these services themselves in-house and can enable informal partnerships and synergies to flourish. This model would also support social entrepreneurs to scale up their business and maximise their social impact, by providing high-quality flexible office space and leveraging social capital investment with strategic business support to the community sector;

- **Establish an Innovation Precinct** for the community sector which co-locates community sector agencies with a range of other private and public sector agencies to spark innovation; and
a. **Pursue a ‘compact with the community sector’** that acknowledges and invests in its role in social inclusion and enables collaboration and leveraging of support from a national compact.
**Strategy 8 - Digital Inclusion: Equity for the Information Age**

Technology is present in everyday life. It can hold great promise as it creates goods and services, makes things work, supports lifestyles and extends our communication networks. Communication is central to human life and new communication technology has the potential to expand our lives through broadening our connections and relationships. Society is changing as a result of new technologies, and with these changes come new opportunities for people to be involved in their communities. However, the capacity people have to access and use these technologies can become either an enabler or disabler for social inclusion. It is important that no-one, no group and no place are left behind.

Increasingly, information and communications technologies (ICT) are impacting on a daily basis in the work place, the market place, service delivery, and the way people relate to friends and family, community members and local political representatives. These digital technologies, such as computers, digital mobile phones, video telephones, electronic games and EFTPOS, the Internet and Broadband networks, electronic books, digital broadcasting and internet TV, provide opportunities for us to participate in a wide range of economic, civic and social activities. For many young people in particular these spaces are important communities. Like traditional place based communities these virtual communities are spaces where they can:

- Forge identity and belonging;
- Have fun and make friends;
- Be safe; and
- Access resources.

The ability to access information and evaluate its quality, and adapt and create knowledge using ICT is critical to an individual’s capacity to be socially included. As an enabler, ICT has the potential to improve the lives of people who often feel marginalised or isolated from society because of their social and cultural situation. Used badly, such technologies can increase exclusion dramatically. For example, unemployed people are at a disadvantage in the job market if they do not have basic digital skills, older people can find it difficult to access public and commercial services on-line, and people with disability can find it difficult to work, volunteer and get involved in social, cultural and recreational pursuits.

As indicated in Appendix 1, not everyone in Tasmania fully benefits from the development of the digital society. The main reasons cited elsewhere are lack of access to or availability of equipment or networks, the limited accessibility of user-friendly technologies, the cost and ability to afford it, motivation, limited skills, fear and anxiety, and lack of confidence. These needs must to be taken

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into account not out of charity but in recognition of people’s status as citizens and customers. Investigating how and why this occurs in Tasmania, in addition to cost factors, is an important area for further research.

Tasmania has relatively low rates of ICT take-up especially in disadvantaged areas and amongst disadvantaged groups. Those living in disadvantaged or remote areas are at risk of further exclusion in the future if they cannot fully participate in the information society. Tasmania’s future depends in part on how well all Tasmanians embrace the changes in ICT. Increasingly information is only available online, which means that digitally excluded people in the community are limited in their capacity to make informed decisions about all aspects of their lives – personal, business and community – and to participate more fully in public decision-making at all levels. This is a challenge for government, as it needs to understand that socially excluded people who could benefit most by accessing its services will be the least likely to, or able to, use electronic means. This emphasises the need for mediated access to online services to build people’s confidence and ability so they can have the choice to use these independently in the future.

"Access to computers and particularly the internet is becoming increasingly important to people’s capacity to be socially included, particularly as government information and service delivery moves on-line."

_Anglicare Tasmania, Submission to the Social Inclusion Consultation_

The new high speed broadband network being rolled out in Tasmania will bring many opportunities to use new technologies to increase social inclusion - mainly through better connecting people to each other and their communities, and through ready access to a range of supportive networks and other resources. In the first instance the rollout provides the infrastructure and therefore the capability to extend the range and reach of services in Tasmania and enable people to overcome barriers of limited time, distance, accessibility and cost. Importantly, attention must also be given to ‘eAccessibility’ so that the design and supply of ICT products and services ensures all Tasmanians have “equal opportunities for participation in everyday social and economic life in the Information Society”.

An example of inclusive practice in relation to access to high speed broadband could be to link up the food security warehouses with the communities wishing to place orders for their services. In addition, the planning reform debate needs to include a decision about whether or not all new houses should be connected to high speed broadband or another future ICT.

Although ICT is well suited to overcoming the barrier of geographic distance, digital inclusion is still primarily local in its focus because of the way individuals, organisations and governments interact. For this reason, initiatives such as the Tasmanian Communities Online network need to be location based. The 66 Online Access Centres based in local communities across Tasmania provide low-cost public access to computers and the internet, as well as one-to-one assistance and training in their use of online learning, finding online government information and supporting local community

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82 European Commission, 2008 _Accessibility to ICT Products and Services by Disabled and Elderly People. Towards a framework for further development of EU legislation or other co-ordination measures on eAccessibility_, European Commission, Bonn
development activity. Libraries, schools, Community and Neighbourhood Houses, Service Tasmania shops, community centres and cyber cafes also provide local access points to the Internet.

Another barrier to more wide-spread use of ICT is the concern that cyberspace is an unknown and potentially dangerous place to be. Cyber safety includes the threats of cyber-bullying, identity theft, misused personal details and photographs, and financial fraud. A program designed to prepare people for the dangers presented by ICT, could encourage people to make use of the significant social, educational and economic benefits of technology and make them aware of its capacity to exclude.

One of the most important social inclusion considerations is the need to provide appropriate Information Technology (IT) support in disadvantaged communities to ensure that people are able to use ICT technology. The development of community portals in rural communities can help develop community networks and practical ‘know how’ to build local solutions, give people a voice on hot issues, strengthen carer and volunteer networks by providing trusted support and coordination, encourage self and community help through blogs and electronic forums, translate successful ‘local’ employment projects into digital forms that can connect to major markets, and create new markets for goods and services.

**CASE STUDY: Tasmanian Communities Online**

*Tasmanian Communities Online (TCO)* is a network of 66 strategically located Online Access Centres across rural and regional Tasmania. The TCO aims to contribute to local initiatives that strengthen community capacity, facilitate access to IT-enabled education and training opportunities that enhance lifelong learning, promote and support access to government, business and other online services and provide equitable and supported access to computers and the Internet.

Online Access Centres provide public access to computers and the internet, along with basic training in their use. The Centres are located across Tasmania in regional and rural communities. Each Centre is staffed by a part-time Co-ordinator (full-time in the larger Centres) plus a team of volunteers, and supported by a board of management made up of members of the local community. Members of the local community can participate in organised training in the use of the Internet and other online resources, and can use computers located in the Centre. Many Online Access Centres provide the location for a range of education and training activities and have become a hub for other community-based activities.

New technologies offer an opportunity to advance democratic processes by ensuring decision-making process are more inclusive. Political parties, community groups and non government organisations are now using the internet to spread their message and mobilise people. Some people are more likely to engage as active participants in the political process when online opportunities are presented to them. This could take the form of online petitions which are often easier to organise, circulate and promote and are cost-effective. Online petitions can encourage engagement by allowing people to overcome geographical constraints. One way to encourage political engagement, particularly among young people, is to build institutions that welcome active citizenship.

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“Internationally, online petitioning systems have worked – they demonstrably bring people and community groups into closer contact with their parliaments, and contribute to the view that political institutions serve the interests of citizens”.

GetUp – Action for Australia Submission to the House of Assembly Inquiry into Electronic Petitioning

An important aspect of digital inclusion is that ICT products and services are accessible so that everyone has equal opportunities to participate in everyday social, civic and economic life. People with disability are particularly vulnerable in a highly competitive telecommunications market driven by rapidly changing and advancing technology. The ability of people with disability to use new technology may be dependent upon the availability of special features and at affordable prices.

Well designed ICT technologies (also known as assistive technologies) that are well matched to a person’s requirements and which enhance their capacities can potentially transform the way in which people with disability interact with their community and support them to fulfil valued roles.84 As highlighted in the Women With Disabilities Australia Submission to the Inquiry into the national Broadband Network, “the applications and assistive technologies which can be used on a broadband network, as well as on the mobile network, will mean that people with disabilities can participate in the digital economy, contributing both socially and monetarily to the community”.

“As a woman with ... a degenerative condition of the muscles [that] limits my physical mobility, assistive equipment contributes to the following benefits. I am able to live in my home on my own. It limits my hours required for personal care assistance. It gives me the freedom to pursue a career option. I am currently full-time employed, thus I am contributing to the economy. It allows me to participate fully in my community as an active volunteer and social member. It improves my choices. It allows me to establish social networks. It provides me with a quality of life and it promotes social inclusion and diversity within the community”.

Jane Wardlaw, Inquiry into the Provision of Assistive Technology and Equipment for People with Disabilities

The recent Tasmanian parliamentary Inquiry into the provision of Assistive Technology and Equipment for People with Disability highlighted the importance of the Community Equipment Scheme to provide people with access to appropriate assistive technologies. However, it also highlighted significant challenges in terms of the scope and sustainability of this scheme – increasing

84 Premier’s Disability Advisory Council Working Group on Assistive Technology 2008; See also, European Commission, 2008 Accessibility to ICT Products and Services by Disabled and Elderly People. Towards a framework for further development of EU legislation or other co-ordination measures on eAccessibility, European Commission, Bonn.; European Commission, 2006 i2010: Independent Living for the Ageing Society, European Commission, Belgium; Submissions to the Legislative Council Inquiry into the Provision of Assistive Technology for People with Disabilities.

demand on the scheme because of Tasmania’s ageing population, increasing number of private providers of assistive technology giving people a range of choices, fragmented access to funding of equipment, need for better coordination of information and client management, need for new funding arrangements that recognise the importance of ICT devices, and timely service support.

New ICTs have the potential to liberate many people with disability and enable the non-disabled world to connect with people with disability in ways that are new and promising. However, there is a tendency for those controlling and operating telecommunications companies to manage people with disability through ‘special needs’ and ‘special programs’, rather than including them as fellow participating citizens. These programs, often developed as a result of fear of anti-discrimination legislation, retrofit systems designed on able-bodied norms. A preferred alternative is that the design of ICT includes consideration to embracing/including the full range of potential users – such as universal service and universal design meaning that all ICT are accessible to people with disability.

Digital infrastructure to support social inclusion must also include the adoption of smart technology in energy, water, health and transport. As governments use these technologies to deliver services this can also help build digital confidence and digital skills throughout the community.

To ensure that all Tasmanians can participate in the information society, it will also be important for the Government to coordinate the development of digital infrastructure and ICT based services across government agencies, and in partnership with the community and business sectors.

Given the growth in social software and network tools, one of the challenges will also be how to involve individual users and community groups as co-producers and co-designers of public sector services.

**Actions**

1. **Strengthen online access capability** in the Learning and Information Network Centres and Children and Family Centres as part of the Community Knowledge Network. There is the opportunity to engage disadvantaged groups and communities through a range of community based publicly provided ICT facilities. This means that ICT support and courses in the use of ICT are able to be accessed locally in these communities.

2. **‘Not for profit ICT’**. Invest in the development of a corporate social responsibility outreach role for business to provide ‘pro bono’ ICT support to disadvantaged groups and communities.

3. **‘Don’t be a twit-ter’ stop cyber bullying.** Introduce a state-wide youth education campaign regarding cyber bullying and what to do when they have been a target of attack via the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones. A paper equivalent or other complementary strategy could be designed to reach parents and children who are not yet online or using ICT in other ways.

4. **Assistive technologies.** Develop and implement and/or strengthen existing programs for rolling out equipment and services appropriate to disadvantaged groups. The program would also develop partnerships between the government, community and business sectors to design and deliver ICT for different disadvantaged groups, including the promotion of digital literacy and skills.

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5. **Support ‘eAccessibility’**. Ensure ‘eAccessible’ regulatory mechanisms and legislation that better support the design and supply of ICT products and services with particular regard to ensuring these can be used by people with disability and others (e.g. many older people) for whom the technical features of ICTs can pose barriers to their usage. This includes ICT products such as computers, telephones. ICT-based network services, the many web-based and telephone based services that are in everyday use today (such as online government and shopping, call centres and so on) and other ICT-based modes of service delivery (such as self-service terminals like ATMs and ticket machines).
Strategy 9 – Planning and Liveability for Social Inclusion: Enabling Future Communities

“Critical to resolving locational disadvantage... is an asset based community development approach to urban [and] town renewal and the development of community and social spaces that includes green space, shops and wider community [use] of schools [in] out of school hours.”

Hobart City Council Submission to the Social Inclusion Consultation

Planning generally (land use planning, urban planning, statutory planning) has become much more complex with the traditional emphasis on providing certainty and simplicity to attract investors being tempered by a range of public policy goals associated with engaging communities, climate change, social inclusion, innovation and liveability. When planning all works well the end result is places where people are happy to live – liveability.

“We live in a great place and enjoy our friendly communities when we have the knowledge of the resources in the community and the ability to access those resources”.

Julie Milnes, Health Promotion Co-ordinator, Mersey Submission to the Social Inclusion Consultation

“Living in a beautiful place with helpful neighbours. If my car breaks down over there – it might be 6 o’clock in the morning or 6 at night and someone will stop. You can’t buy that. You can’t give it to your children either”.

Respondent from the Tasman Peninsula, Just Scraping By? Conversations with Tasmanians Living on Low incomes

Liveability is all about our feelings and attitudes towards a place – the perceived quality of life – the ‘vibe’. Liveability judgements are a mix of subjective and objective factors that lead people to form views about the places they live, how they live and where they might want to live in the future.

“Liveability reflects the wellbeing of a community and represents the many characteristics that make a location a place where people want to live now and in the future. The definition encompasses a wide range of common characteristics of a liveable place, such as: community strength; economic strength; built infrastructure; social infrastructure; amenity and place; environment; citizenship; equity and human rights; participation; leadership and good governance; information and communication technology (ICT); transport; government services; and innovation.”

Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission 2008

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The liveability of a place helps attract and retain people to live, to invest and to work. Socially inclusive places tend to attract and retain a broad range of people hence the link between the two ideas. Often the drivers of liveability and the drivers of inclusion coincide – for example the importance of accessible services and the importance of cultural, recreational, learning and leisure options for people of all ages.

“\textit{A number of people advocated the need for more things to do – whether for visitors to the State, young people or families. People want more skate-parks, cycle ways, swimming pools, sport and recreation facilities and camping grounds. Recreational opportunities, team sports and community events were seen as particularly important along with family friendly places whether for walking, bike-riding, shopping, dining or entertainment.}”

\textit{Tasmania Togetherness consultation}\textsuperscript{89}

Social inclusion starts with land use planning. The use of land, the built environment, use of open spaces and associated planning instruments are absolutely critically to shaping opportunities for inclusion or exclusion. Much of the spatial clustering of social exclusion in Tasmania today comes from well meaning but bad planning decisions in the past. These decisions created the conditions for social exclusion by housing people in ‘greenfields’ sites on the fringes of cities and towns – away from supportive networks, away from transport choices, away from industry and learning opportunities and away from key sporting, recreational and cultural facilities.

“\textit{...the location, form and demographic makeup of our communities is directly related to the degree of social inclusion. Decisions made about the location, tenure and affordability of housing is crucial to addressing the problem. The design of the physical environment, i.e. public spaces, buildings, etc, is essential to a community’s pride and sense of place; both are key drivers of high levels of social inclusion...Community safety and access to high quality recreational spaces are also important.}”

\textit{Launceston City Council, Submission to the Social Inclusion Consultation}

The peri-urban spatial clustering of people at risk of social exclusion continues today and Figure 33 in Appendix 1 illustrates this. This clustering is primarily driven by housing affordability but continues the trend of increasing the risk of exclusion from economic opportunities services and networks.

“\textit{Social inclusion as a first order issue has to be fundamental to all Cabinet decisions and government processes...Apply a social inclusion test to all policies to prevent social exclusion. The test is whether the community is strengthened”}.

\textit{Australia 2020 Summit- Final Report}

\textsuperscript{88} An example is the Victorian Government’s population strategy available at: \url{Department of Premier and Cabinet: Beyond Five Million - The Victorian Government’s Population Policy: Beyond Five Million - The Victorian Government’s Population Policy}

\textsuperscript{89} Tasmania Together Progress Board, 2006 \textit{What We Heard: The First Tasmania Together 5 Year Review}, viewed 24 August 2009, see \url{http://www.tasmaniatogether.tas.gov.au}
Tasmania continues to face a series of joint liveability and social inclusion challenges. These include the following trends (outlined in Appendix 1):

- The ageing of the population and clustering of older Tasmanians in specific lifestyle areas;
- The continuing loss of young people from the country to the city and from Tasmania to the mainland;
- The decline of many of our rural areas both in productivity and population; and
- The capacity to create inclusive communities in new areas of Tasmania associated with new infrastructure investments - especially around irrigation.

Much of the international interest in liveability for regional towns and communities comes from the evidence that whilst historically most regional towns and communities ebbed and flowed with economic circumstances, now days there are very different patterns. The new patterns show that some communities in like circumstances (e.g. population decline) are able to shape very different futures. Those towns and communities that are growing often have a focus on liveability, leadership, social inclusion and new enterprise. Across Tasmania there are groups emerging which have this focus, for example the ‘Community Futures Network’ in the North East or Community Togetherness Gathering Group in the Central Highlands.

The common theme is that these groups are thinking about their futures in a structured way. At a state level, and following on from the work of the Demographic Change Advisory Council, a population settlement strategy would greatly assist such discussions and locate them in a state-wide context. Population settlement strategies encourage debate about what the ‘number’ should be for Tasmania’s population in the future, the diversity of the population mix, the location of the population and how to shape these factors. For example, objectives for a Tasmanian population strategy could include but not be limited to:

- Understanding the opportunities and challenges of an ageing population;
- Retention of young people;
- A focus on families;
- Attraction and retention of migrants;
- Understanding and responding to Tasmania’s decentralised population;
- Workforce participation and addressing skills shortages; and
- Planning future communities and sustainability.

The question of the future of regional towns and communities is important for many reasons but two that are likely to shape futures are the roll out of high speed broadband and the proposed irrigation schemes associated with the ‘food bowl’ idea.

Figure 31 in Appendix 1 illustrates how currently there is a risk that the potential innovation and productivity gains associated with new irrigation infrastructure will not be maximised because many of the schemes are going into areas of population decline/low growth and low skills. It would be simplistic to assume that new infrastructure on its own will bring innovative people and liveability to these areas. What needs to happen is that a parallel process of population settlement strategies needs to be developed – strategies that are likely to attract and retain a diverse mix of talented...
people to help create inclusive communities. There is an opportunity in these proposed irrigation areas for businesses, governments and communities to work together on maximising the opportunities for economic growth, social inclusion and sustainability.

Just as the population settlement strategies associated with hydro industrialisation have shaped our Tasmanian society we need to be thinking more about how the next wave of demographic changes are likely to shape our future.

Indeed many of the strategies of the Demographic Change Advisory Council are also social inclusion strategies, such as sustaining Tasmania’s workforce, increasing Tasmania’s long term labour productivity growth, ensuring that Tasmania has an efficient, accessible and sustainable healthcare system, sustaining high quality of life for older Tasmanians, and sustaining the State Government’s overall fiscal position. ⁹⁰

There is a strong positive correlation between liveability levels and rates of economic growth, innovation and social inclusion. So, liveability becomes a tool for places to shape their future.

“Successful cities attract talented young highly-skilled workers, are centres of innovation and entrepreneurship and are competitive locations for global and regional headquarters. The proximity of universities to research and production facilities means cities are where new products are developed and commercialised”.

OECD 2007 Competitive Cities in the Global economy

Tasmania is in the midst of reviews of local planning schemes and this presents an ideal opportunity to use planning instruments to shape a more inclusive future. Planning has for too long been seen as primarily about regulations and attracting investment. Planning can also enable or disable the conditions for affordable housing, for accessible transport, for green spaces and buildings, for safety, for identity and for resilience.

CASE STUDY: State Infrastructure Planning System (SIPS)

The State Infrastructure Planning System (SIPS) is a spatially enabled system of tools and models that can represent current and future demands for infrastructure to assist planning and policy decision-making. The SIPS database uses spatially related socio-economic and infrastructure data to conduct analysis, produce graphics and images as well as reports about where, for example, particular population groups are located or services are delivered across the State.

While SIPS is primarily used to support infrastructure planning and policy development for the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources, it is being used across government to analyse data for the early years, homelessness and housing affordability. SIPS will continue to be used for social planning purposes, particularly in relation to social inclusion actions.

Internationally there has been a range of social inclusion initiatives associated with planning reforms. For example, the introduction of Community Infrastructure Levies (in the UK) requires developers and local councils to work together on planning and delivering community infrastructure in parallel with other developments. Other initiatives include neighbourhood notifications that require more structured consultations with local communities about the impact of planned developments; specialist authorities to jointly manage planning and delivery of infrastructure in ‘greenfields’ sites (e.g. Growth Area Authorities in Victoria); specific local government plans around the overall impact of development proposals on local communities (e.g. Local Development Framework Plans in the UK); the introduction of ‘Universal Design’ principles to encourage diversity of use of infrastructure and spaces generally; and various forms of ‘proofing’ associated either with people (e.g. ‘poverty proofing for the elderly) or places (e.g. rural proofing as part of the Irish reforms).

In Tasmania some Local Councils have social inclusion considerations in their specific reviews of planning schemes and in their residential strategies, but in general social inclusion matters are on the edges of most radar screens.

**Actions**

1. **Introduction of a State Policy on Universal Design and Social Inclusion** to guide the current three Regional Planning Schemes under development. Specific additional social inclusion principles should include connectivity capability especially for access to essential services, accessible open spaces, joint use facilities especially schools and other public infrastructure, and early provision of social infrastructure as part of development proposals. These principles could be articulated within the current Review of Regional Planning Schemes underway in Tasmania.

2. **Formal representation of social inclusion skills on planning decision making and appeals bodies** such as the Tasmanian Planning Commission, using the principles in Action 1 as the reference point and embodied in legislation.

3. **Neighbourhood notifications.** A directory of neighbourhood organisations and contact people should be maintained by planning authorities to ensure early communication and exchange of information with community members regarding proposed planning proposals that will create significant changes in the community.

4. **Equity impact statements.** Incorporate ‘equity impact assessment’ into the consideration of major new interventions and policy proposals. This assessment could also take the form of a retrospective audit of existing government policies and procedures that reinforce exclusion. Socio-economic gradients that exist in Tasmania should not be inadvertently compounded, nor should intergenerational equity be compromised through unsustainable decisions.

5. **A Strengthening neighbourhoods initiative** that works directly with small communities that are going through very rapid change and disadvantaged communities to give them the resources

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91 An example is the Launceston City Council’s Planning Scheme Review.
and support they need to bring together the ideas and existing resources of residents, government, local businesses and community groups to create more liveable communities. The initiative would build the capacity of people at a neighbourhood level to improve local amenities and develop needed community infrastructure.

6. A population settlement strategy for Tasmania drawing on the work of the Demographic Change Advisory Council and in the context of the ‘food bowl’ and broadband infrastructure investments.
Strategy 10 – Good Governance: Changing the Way We Work

One of the features of all the strategies identified here is that none of them fit neatly under the portfolio of individual ministers or government departments or spheres of government. Indeed a defining feature of social inclusion and why it is so hard to achieve is that it is what is called a ‘cross cutting’ issue. To work, each and all of the 10 strategies will need joint effort within and between spheres of government, communities and businesses. Five areas in which new forms of governance are desirable are in relation to place management, grants programs, consultative arrangements, leadership and legislation for social inclusion in Tasmania.

Place Management

Social exclusion has a postcode. Appendix 1 demonstrates how the spatial distribution of social exclusion risk in Tasmania clusters around the outer fringes of cities and towns. Nationally the work of Tony Vinson has highlighted the importance of understanding how to manage places as a response to this clustering of risk.

Place management is an important element of changing the way government works, and has been extensively tested in Europe and more recently in Victoria. It is a proposed focus of the Commonwealth’s social inclusion strategy.

The Social Inclusion Consultation has told us that government services generally are difficult to navigate and particularly difficult for people facing exclusion risk. The seriousness of the lack of sharing information between service delivery agencies was commented on. In particular, the need to re-tell the history of mental health issues during the process of seeking help was traumatic and led to people not pursuing further assistance – a dangerous outcome for those vulnerable to self-harm or suicide, and for others, it may simply be an example of exclusionary institutional processes.

A common theme throughout the consultations was that governments can seem opaque, distant and cold. This is often simply a reflection of the mismatch between the complexity of the barriers adding up to exclusion and the relatively narrow programmatic functions of the public sector. Most governments are already engaging in place management strategies, for example with the development of ‘community cabinets’. The role of LINCs, Integrated Care Centres, Child and Family Centres and Gateway initiatives have the potential to boost the capacity for increased levels of local ‘joined up’ approaches to managing social exclusion risk in Tasmania.

A more structural option to consider in Tasmania would be to appoint (from amongst existing Ministers and in addition to existing portfolio responsibilities) Ministers for designated areas in Tasmania. The logic is that where there are similar objectives (e.g. social inclusion) yet multiple agencies and complex issues involved, appointing a Minister to take overall co-ordination.

95 Vinson, Tony, 2007 Dropping off the edge: the distribution of disadvantage in Australia, a report of Jesuit Social Services and Catholic Social Services Australia.
96 An overview of Victorian place-based approaches is outlined by Ferrie, D, 2008 Social inclusion and place based disadvantage: What we have already done that is valuable for the future, Brotherhood of St Laurence and the Department of Planning and Community Development Social Inclusion and Place Based Disadvantage Workshop Proceedings, 13 June 2008.
97 See Social Inclusion Priorities in www.socialinclusion.gov.au
(not budget holding) responsibility for the place outcomes galvanises government effort and makes overall accountability clear. Currently no individual Minister is responsible for overall social inclusion actions.

In Tasmania appointing a Minister for each of the four state government regions (or some other set of regional boundaries) could be considered. The Ministers would work with the existing regional bodies, Local Councils, community groups, Commonwealth agencies and businesses to identify key social inclusion priorities; co-ordinate government effort to respond, including the pooling of grants funding; and provide assessments of the cumulative impact of social inclusion effort within the areas.

There are numerous other place management approaches that could be considered, for example devolution of more responsibility to Local Councils consistent with the principles of ‘subsidiarity’ (i.e. locating decisions as close as possible to the people affected by them). ‘More responsibility’ could include the pooling of all social inclusion grants and their distribution on a weighted per capita basis to Councils to administer within a set of broad social inclusion outcomes.

**Grants Programs**

Grants are a common instrument used by governments to supplement mainstream services. Grants can be flexible, responsive and tailored to suit specific circumstances. Currently across the State Government there are some 50 grants programs which are designed directly or indirectly to promote social inclusion. Alongside direct State Government grants programs there are other grants programs such as the Tasmanian Community Fund and the newly formed Community Transport Trust that also have a focus on social inclusion.

The plethora of grants programs could be seen as ‘a thousand flowers blooming’ or as a recipe for duplication and confusion, especially when we add in the various Commonwealth and other grants programs. This can lead to community agencies spending huge amounts of time chasing funding and bending goals to meet funding requirements. Very small grants are often accompanied by onerous reporting. Organisations are often funded for specific services with little consideration toward the administrative overheads of delivering the services, threatening the viability of organisations to deliver those services. The risk of this is that the knowledge gained in developing and delivering services is lost, as are the opportunities to scale up services for greater access.

From the point of view of government it is hard to determine the cumulative impact of grants on outcomes for particular groups or places. We can do better. Changing grants programs is notoriously difficult, as particular groups within community and government become wedded to ‘their’ grants program. However there are already good examples of alternative models such as the Tasmanian Community Fund which operates at arm’s length from government, is well connected into local communities across Tasmania and has very high ‘brand recognition’ and reputation.

One approach would be to examine whether and how grants related to social inclusion could be notionally pooled across the state on a weighted per capita basis (i.e. weighted for social exclusion risks/opportunities) and allocated on a regional or Local Government Area (LGA) basis, thereby beginning a different way of thinking about grants as public administration instruments.

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98 See the Funding Models section of Appendix 2.
There would be significant efficiencies associated with a single ‘front door’ to all grants, a single application process and single reporting regime. If each of the 29 LGA’s, or four regions developed their own social inclusion plans and priorities there would then be a more co-ordinated and localised approach to funding. Such local plans could then form input to the planning processes of government, possibly along the lines of the Sustainable Communities Act in the UK.

I make these general observations to illustrate the point that in the context of the many principles and the 10 strategies Tasmania needs to be rethinking governance that leads to a greater focus on local choice, responsibility and ownership of social inclusion challenges and opportunities.

If government departments were required to work together to assess the cumulative impact of their planned investments (outputs and capital plus grants) on a spatial basis (say regional or LGA) against key governments outcomes, then this would greatly help the cultural and skills shift required to orientate the public sector to people and place outcomes rather than primarily program outcomes. Again, the UK Sustainable Communities Act provides a broad template for this approach.

Consultative Arrangements

There are currently a range of consultative mechanisms in place for particular groups and places to engage with the public sector and government on social inclusion issues. These tend to be rather ad-hoc and primarily focussed around the traditional groups at risk of exclusion (e.g. disability, indigenous, multicultural) and/or around particular social inclusion issues (e.g. homelessness, mental illness). The many emerging place based groups tend to have less institutionalised access, as do newer groups such as drought affected farmers. Peak agencies such as the Tasmanian Association of Community Houses or TASCOSS are often left to fill in the gaps for individuals and groups that are unable to organise and have their voices heard.

Currently the Stronger Communities Task Force works with the Social Inclusion Commissioner and reports to the Premier as Minister responsible for Social Inclusion. The Task force provides invaluable advice on direction and issues. It is a voluntary Task Force not a governance body and is supported through the Social Inclusion Unit in the Department of Premier and Cabinet. The Task Force is an expertise based group, not a representative group.

If the position of Social Inclusion Commissioner is to continue it will be important to establish some ongoing advisory arrangements. Throughout the seven months I have been in the part time role there has been a high expectation that I will visit most all groups and places across Tasmania and indeed it is important for a Social Inclusion Commissioner to be seen as well as heard. A representative consultative body would be able to support the Commissioner in the engagement role.

The two basic options would be:
- Continue the Stronger Communities Task Force with either current or new membership; or
- Establish a new representative body.

The Terms of Reference for the Commonwealth Social Inclusion Board and for the Tasmanian Stronger Communities Task Force are at Appendix 4.

It would be prudent for government to revisit the multitude of existing consultative arrangements to consider a more systematic approach to engagement of individuals, families and communities with the public sector and with government and the parliament around social inclusion. Somewhere between a single voice on social inclusion issues and the complexity and fragmentation of current arrangements lies a new level we need to find.

**Leadership of Social Inclusion in Tasmania**

If there is agreement in Tasmania that the idea of social inclusion has and/or needs currency then the question of ongoing leadership arises.

*The ongoing role of the Commissioner*

The primary role of the Commissioner is to establish the extent of social exclusion in Tasmania and advise the government of the day on strategies to mitigate social exclusion and to promote social inclusion. The role does not have specific advocacy or review powers or function in relation to individuals, groups or issues. Given the existing roles within State Government that have investigatory and review powers around individual issues and matters of due process in public administration, it is not clear that the Social Inclusion Commissioner should also take on such powers.

Similarly, given the range of groups and issues for which there are specific advocacy groups it is not clear that an advocacy role for the Commissioner is warranted. What is warranted is the advocacy role for the importance of the idea of social inclusion and new ways of understanding, promoting and organising social inclusion. As I have noted earlier, social inclusion is still a dense and abstract idea for most Tasmanians (but the experiences of exclusion are sharp and real) and as a policy it is still in the nursery and needs nurturing.

The proposal to create ‘social inclusion advocates’ roles within the Child and Family Centres across Tasmania is a practical step towards ensuring that individuals, families and communities have access to a local person to advocate for them around social inclusion issues.

The position of Social inclusion Commissioner is a Crown Prerogative appointment with a degree of independence from the government of the day. However, since the position is not established under an Act of Parliament there remains a perception that the independence of the role could be compromised. This perception is reinforced by the Social Inclusion Commissioner being provided with support by a Unit within the mainstream of the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Establishing the Social Inclusion Commissioner’s role and functions through an Act of Parliament and having the Commissioner reporting to the Parliament could give an important message to Tasmania about the importance of social inclusion matters, and mitigate any perception of lack of independence.

*Human Rights*

As discussed in Appendix 2 the human rights approach to social inclusion is an established international approach which focuses on the use of legal instruments to effect change. The basic
principles of human rights for example the right to life, dignity, respect, equality of opportunity, health and safety, are all crucial to social inclusion. Those individuals and groups most at risk of social exclusion are more often than not the least able to exercise basic rights and more likely to be subject to the excesses of exclusion particularly violence and stigma.

There are a range of national and international frameworks for the promotion and protection of human rights (such as the United nations Conventions) although the extent to which they are comprehensively applied or shape behavioural change is much less clear. In Tasmania there are currently proposals underway for a Charter of Human Rights and for example a ‘Compact’ between the Community Sector and the State Government. As with the mainstream service systems, I have not focussed on human rights in this Report because there are already processes in place to carry the debate forward. The focus in this Report is on increasing the capacity of individuals, groups and places to exercise human rights and promote an inclusive culture in Tasmania.

As currently framed the Social Inclusion Commissioner’s role does not have a specific mandate or powers to investigate or advocate in relation to the interpretation or enforcement of human rights particularly as they relate to individuals. Many advocates for groups at risk of exclusion have sought such powers for the Commissioner. Any such powers would need to be considered in the context of existing State and Commonwealth arrangements. My view is that the mandate, role and functions of the Commissioner is a matter that should be canvassed by the Parliament.

A Social Inclusion Commission for Tasmania?

As I have noted above a defining feature of the strategies proposed in this Report is that to be effective they require extensive partnership arrangements both within government and between governments, businesses and communities. There is a risk that without clear leadership and accountability the strategies will fall through the cracks. Whilst as I have suggested above, a dedicated Minister for Social Inclusion is an option to canvass, as is the allocation of Ministers to areas, another more radical option would be to create a new Tasmanian Social Inclusion Commission or a Families and Communities Commission. The purpose of the Commission would be:

- To take responsibility for the Strategies and an agreed set of actions. Within the strategies suggested here the Commission could, for example, establish the Food Security Council (strategy 1) and the Leadership Institute (strategy 7) as well as manage the capital and recurrent funds associated with existing grants and proposed new resources;
- To make sure that Tasmanian investments in social inclusion are to scale, scope, sustainable and connected (e.g. by taking the lead on establishing the social enterprise platform for Tasmania);
- Community sector development;
- Co-ordination of social inclusion effort with the Commonwealth Government;
- Advocacy and support for families and community development;
- Population settlement policy for Tasmania;
- Monitoring and Reporting on social inclusion progress;
- Social innovation; and
- Review of public sector capability to support families and communities across Tasmania.
The Commission could be established through an Act of Parliament and membership of the Board include a nominated representative from each of the three main political parties, akin to the Vic Health model in Victoria\(^{100}\).

The Commission itself could be established without additional resources by subsuming a range of central agency entities with a focus on social inclusion and/or research and forecasting capacity including but not limited to:

- The Early Years Foundation;
- Community Support Levy;
- Tasmanian Community Fund;
- Tasmania Together;
- The Social Inclusion Unit;
- Demographic Change Advisory Council; and
- Grants programs across government with a specific focus on social inclusion including those in DPAC.

The Commission could also take a role in the co-ordination of the multiple social inclusion related consultative bodies and processes that currently exist across the three levels of government, often creating consultation fatigue within communities.

The basic arguments for such an approach are:

- Clear responsibility for social inclusion;
- Pooling knowledge and effort and institutional social inclusion ‘voice’ for families and communities; and
- Capacity for more nimble, joined up localised responses.

The basic arguments against such an approach are:

- It can look like another level of bureaucracy;
- It would take pressure of others to tackle social exclusion; and
- The governance is not representative of communities ... not my voice.

To mitigate some of these concerns the Commission could use the existing framework of Partnership Agreements with local councils as the mechanism through which it operates. Funding could notionally be allocated to the councils on a weighted per capita basis (for social inclusion risks/opportunities) and the Partnership Agreement process used for communities individually or jointly to propose specific initiatives with the strategic framework proposed in this Report.

Essentially the local communities would be the ‘purchasers’ and the Commission the ‘funder’.

This approach essentially ‘defines’ community by Local Government Area, but at least it moves in the direction of the principle of subsidiarity.

\(^{100}\) For more information, see: [http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/~media/About%20Us/Story%20of%20Vichealth/Attachments/History_Book_Full_Version.ashx](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/~media/About%20Us/Story%20of%20Vichealth/Attachments/History_Book_Full_Version.ashx)
I have sketched out the idea of a Commission simply to illustrate there are quite significant
governance reforms that could be considered as an alternative or complement to the many other
more incremental changes – such as a specialist Ministerial Portfolio or the designation of Ministers
to areas. It largely depends on whether and how the complexities of social inclusion can be managed
within existing arrangements without creating more problems than they solve.

Legislation
A number of groups and individuals have proposed various legislative frameworks for social inclusion
in Tasmania.

“Every new piece of legislation needs to have a social exclusion lens”.

*Tasmania Woman’s Council, Social Inclusion Forum*

The use of legislation for social inclusion purposes has a mixed track record. Legislative strategies
generally fall into three categories:

1. Human rights approaches – which enshrine either specific principles and/or practices in
   legislation. Sometimes these approaches respond to already changing community attitudes and
   others attempt to lead community change in a particular direction. The success of such
   approaches usually depends on the capability of promoting and/or enforcing provisions:

2. Enabling approaches – which establish principles to guide policy development and practices:
   and

3. Regulatory approaches – which set down specific guidelines for actions, for example in the area
   of social procurement *(see Chapter 3).*

The *UK Sustainable Community Act 2007* 101 is an example of legislation that combines the enabling
and regulatory approaches, and this should be considered for Tasmania. In the UK the extensive
public and parliamentary debate around this legislation highlighted the contested nature of social
inclusion but the ability to reach a bi-partisan solution. The Act essentially requires government to
respond to local initiatives around social inclusion and secondly requires government departments
to demonstrate how their investments are likely to improve community sustainability.
Such legislation is an important step in changing the way government works.

Actions
1. **Grants Review.** The State Government reviews the range of existing grants programs through
   the lens of local communities to examine:
   - A single portal for information and a single application form;
   - Pooled grants and increased local decision making;

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- A single reporting regime;
- Sustainable funding options; and
- Integration with Commonwealth grants programs (e.g. in conjunction with Regional Development Australia).

2. **Review of existing social inclusion consultative arrangements.** The terms of reference should include examination of:
   - The goals and objectives of existing consultative arrangements and the extent to which these are met;
   - The extent to which existing consultative arrangements cover the full scope of people, places and issues associated with social exclusion risk;
   - The equitable access of groups to the public sector, governments and Parliament;
   - Ways in which the high transaction costs associated with multiple consultations could be reduced and better co-ordinated;
   - More sustainable resourcing models for groups; and
   - Strategies to enable a greater range of individual and group ‘voices’ to be developed and heard (refer to the Leadership Institute action under strategy 7).

3. **Establish a Social Inclusion Commission** or a Families and Communities Commission. Explore the option of establishing a Social Inclusion Commission to take responsibility for the 10 Strategies and an agreed set of actions and ensure that Tasmanian investments in social inclusion are to scale, scope, sustainable and connected.

4. **Legislation.** Consider the introduction of legislation to the Parliament that incorporates the framework of the *UK Sustainable Communities Act 2007*. 
Chapter 4: Next Steps

In this report I have sketched out a framework for Tasmania to consider choices about how we could and should lift effort around social inclusion. My report is designed to paint the picture of where Tasmania is at and where we might head. It’s a signpost not a detailed road map.

The evidence suggests that if Tasmania increases its effort there would be significant personal, social, economic and environmental benefits. My advice is to consider all the 10 strategies and within them to identify specific actions to commence lifting our effort. The strategies and the actions are designed to benefit all groups at risk. However, particular effort could be initially to particular geographical areas or issues or groups more likely to face social exclusion.

Whilst in the Report I have generally avoided naming particular groups it remains clear that in Tasmania, as is the position nationally, many Aboriginal Tasmanians face ongoing and high risks of exclusion. Indeed the idea of social inclusion is primarily a modern western concept which may or may not readily translate across cultures. In writing this report I have been conscious of the extensive debate on the Northern Territory Intervention and the various COAG initiatives...and their critics. I believe a separate report developed with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community is warranted on just whether and how the ideas, strategies and actions proposed here might improve prospects for Aboriginal Tasmanians.

Tasmania could simply choose to grow existing investments in various mainstream service systems and bring these up to scale and scope. At any point in time there will be debates around scale and scope particularly in relation to health, education and safety services. As I have noted in this Report there is patchwork quilt across Tasmania which in places is fraying at the edges. One only need look at a snapshot of policy issues in any one week to observe: services at risk (e.g. for young children with Aspergers); new risk areas for which policies are still emerging (e.g. elder abuse); services for which there is gap between demand and supply (e.g. elective surgery); ongoing social/ethical/human rights dilemmas associated with exclusion (e.g. gay marriages); industrial conditions associated with exclusion (e.g. carers support) and; ongoing structural inequalities (e.g. the underemployment and under representation of women in senior jobs).

Tasmania is not alone in this. All other jurisdictions in Australia and indeed in most OECD countries have similar trends. he current State Government has put the issue of social inclusion on the policy table and we need to use the opportunity to focus discussion about where we can agree on strategies going forward.

The 10 strategies I have suggested sit alongside, complement and add value to the mainstream. Over time these should take pressure off existing service systems by creating a more community development, enterprising and less welfare oriented approach to social inclusion. The strategies should also create the conditions whereby the types of issues noted above can be mitigated through changes over time in culture and structure.

It is very easy to criticise the idea of social inclusion as dense, trendy, muddled, politically correct, confused, soft and fuzzy, unnecessary scaremongering, nothing to do with government, someone else’s responsibility – just as the idea sustainability was criticised 30 years ago. But social exclusion and its impacts could well be coming to a family and place and business very close to you.
People who don’t care about social inclusion don’t care about why one in four of our young people have a mental illness.\(^\text{102}\)

Clearly investing in social inclusion along the lines suggested in this Report has opportunity costs as well as benefits. As I canvass in Appendix 3 there is an ongoing international debate underway about the economic benefits of social inclusion and the economic costs of social exclusion. I have suggested that the Parliament might wish to consider the economic benefits of social inclusion and the economic costs of social exclusion as a way of galvanising the discussion in Tasmania.

As our knowledge of the causes and consequences of social inclusion grows we need to not only fine tune our current settings but simultaneously search for new channels. Based on the evidence outlined in Appendices 1 and 2 we do know that there is an imperative to act. As I have explained in this Report, Tasmania has high need but also high capacity to work collaboratively to make a difference. Tasmania has a number of comparative advantages in the form of its closely connected communities and people and a commitment from all sectors of the community to work together to address exclusion. Tasmania has a history of innovation and creativity and across Tasmania there are many signs of social innovation for social inclusion. Harnessing this innovation could well position Tasmania at the forefront of social inclusion.

All three Tasmanian political leaders agree that Tasmania has an exciting future based on leveraging our key natural resources – land, water and energy. Instead of thinking simply in terms of either public or private ownership strategies innovative social enterprises associated with community ownership/management of our core assets should be canvassed.\(^\text{103}\) Social innovation through social enterprises is already underway in Tasmania around our natural tourism and cultural assets. This could be expanded to include, for example, local social enterprises where renewable energy is generated and excess power sold back into the grid.

Tasmania has started well by being an early adopter of social inclusion in Australia and could lead the expansion of social enterprises into new fields. Tasmanians now deserve the fulfilment of the promise of a fairer Tasmania, where all Tasmanians have access to the personal, social, economic and civic resources that make life healthy, productive and happy.

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\(^{102}\) In 2007, just over a quarter (26 per cent) of people aged 16-24 in Australia had a mental health disorder and had experienced symptoms of this disorder in the 12 months prior to being surveyed. Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008 National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing: Summary of Results, 2007, Cat No 4326.0
