



# National Disability Services (NDS) 2024-25 State Budget Submission

November 2024

## About National Disability Services

National Disability Services (NDS) is the peak body in Tasmania and Australia for non-government disability service organisations, representing more than 1000 non-government service providers. Collectively, NDS members operate several thousand services for Australians with all types of disability. NDS provides information and networking opportunities to its members and policy advice to State, Territory and Commonwealth governments. We have a diverse and vibrant membership, comprised of small, medium and larger service providers, supporting thousands of people with disability. Our members collectively provide a full range of disability services, from supported independent living and specialist disability accommodation, respite and therapy, to community access and employment.

NDS is committed to improving the disability service system to ensure it better supports people with disability, their families and carers, and contributes to building a more inclusive community. NDS has a deep commitment to supporting the implementation of a successful NDIS and is supporting service providers across Tasmania as they work to thrive within the contemporary landscape.

## About this submission

We are grateful to the Tasmanian Government for the opportunity to provide input to assist in the process of shaping the Tasmania 2024-25 Budget.

NDS acknowledges the palawa as traditional custodians of the lands, seas, skies and waterways throughout lutruwita/Tasmania. We pay respect to elders past and present and recognise their deep and continuing connections with our shared country, culture and community.

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# NDS's 2024-25 budget asks

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## Executive Summary

National Disability Services' (NDS) vision is for an inclusive Tasmania where all people with disability live safely and equitably. To achieve this, people with disability need to access the right supports, at the right time, from the right people, services and systems. The introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS, the Scheme) was one of the “most important global innovations in disability rights of the past few decades,”<sup>1</sup> transforming the lives of many people with disability in Tasmania. The NDIS has, however, seen issues related to people with disability become part of the national discourse.

Tasmania has Australia's highest rate of people identifying with a disability at 26.8 per cent or approximately 140,000 Tasmanians.<sup>2</sup> As of 30 June 2023, there are now 14,181 Tasmanian NDIS participants.<sup>3</sup> The NDIS was not designed to meet the needs of all people with disability or to meet all the needs of its participants and, therefore, it is essential that investment in foundational supports occurs across all mainstream services.

The aged and disability workforce represents 55 per cent of the profile of the Tasmanian Community Services Industry.<sup>4</sup> Disability services are reporting widespread workforce shortages for skilled workers, especially for allied health professionals and behaviour support practitioners across all regions of Tasmania.

The disability sector is currently grappling with a significant reform agenda following three substantive pieces; the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of people with disability (Disability Royal Commission, DRC), the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Response to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings (the Commission of Inquiry) and the soon to be published NDIS Review.

In addition to these three landmark pieces, 2023 has seen ongoing reporting and evaluation of Australia's Disability Strategy by Department of Social Services and revision of both the Commonwealth Disability Services Act and the Tasmanian Disability Services Act 2011.

In the employment space, the Disability Employment Services (DES) program is undergoing redesign and there is the transition to a new wage system in Supported Employment. From a workforce perspective, there is development of a new National

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<sup>1</sup> Duffy S & Brown M (2023) Redesigning the NDIS: An international perspective on an Australian disability support system. Sheffield: Citizen Network Research pg 7 accessed 29 August 2023 <https://citizen-network.org/library/redesigning-the-ndis.html> .

<sup>2</sup> [Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings, 2018 | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://abs.gov.au)

<sup>3</sup> National Disability Insurance Scheme, [Quarterly Reports | NDIS](https://www.ndis.gov.au) 2023-24 Q1 – Tasmania Performance

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0017/228041/Community-Services-Industry-Plan-2021-2031-web.pdf](https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0017/228041/Community-Services-Industry-Plan-2021-2031-web.pdf)

Strategy for the Care and Support Economy, which is being driven by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and an Employment White Paper from Treasury.

NDS understand the State Government will need to consider their approach prior to commitment of actions against recommendations. NDS is keen to contribute wherever possible to ensure that disability service providers, the experts in service provision, are consulted and supported to implement changes that result in better outcomes for people with disability.

The sustainability of disability services has never been more tenuous. NDS's [State of the Disability Sector Report](#)<sup>5</sup> reflected a sector less confident than ever in their capacity to operate within current NDIS pricing and funding approaches. A NDS member survey in June 2023<sup>6</sup> found that 83 per cent of disability providers were concerned about their ability to deliver disability services using the new price limits set down by the NDIA. The time for action on securing the financial support and improvements required for people with disability and for the providers on the ground in Tasmania is now.

Not only are the NDIA price limits impacting providers but the cost of doing business within highly regulated frameworks continues to place additional pressures on an already stretched sector. The rise in costs of compliance is a major concern for registered disability service providers, and findings and recommendations from the NDIS Review are likely to introduce NDIS registration requirements (and therefore likely costs) to those providers who are currently not registered with the NDIS.

Tasmanian disability providers are increasingly grappling with the cost and access to insurance, especially physical and sexual abuse (PSA) insurance. NDS has been raising insurance concerns at both federal and state levels.

While we await the government's response to the DRC and the NDIS Review, there are numerous steps the sector can take particularly in response to compliance and safeguarding, to drive high quality service provision, to reduce unsafe practices and to support people.

Examples of these 'promising practices' were highlighted in the final report from the DRC including NDS's Zero Tolerance initiative, which if funded, could be immediately implemented and contextualised to address Tasmania specific legislation, such as the Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework (CYSOF). Disability services in Tasmania are now largely funded by the NDIA, however the sector continues play a critical role within the state's community services sector; contributing to local communities, adding social capital, and forming part of the network of social

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<sup>5</sup> NDS State of the Disability Sector can be accessed at [State of the Disability Sector Report \(nds.org.au\)](#)

<sup>6</sup> [New data sees closure of disability services on the horizon \(nds.org.au\)](#)

supports that strengthen our community. It is critical that the voice of disability services continues to be heard at the state level, as well as nationally. Ongoing funding of NDS as the peak body is critical to this.

There is ongoing widespread community concern about the need for high quality services following the numerous recommendations that were handed down by the DRC and Commission of Inquiry. The 2024-2025 budget presents an opportunity for the Tasmania Government to support the sustainability, viability, quality, and safety of disability services to drive positive outcomes for people with disability.

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## Priority One: A skilled and competent workforce

The Tasmanian disability sector has the capacity to deliver positive outcomes for people with disability through a resilient and skilled sector, which delivers safe and high-quality service.

### 1.1 Increased core funding for NDS to support high quality services and a strong NDIS

**Request:** An investment of \$300,000 p.a. with appropriate indexation, for the next five years.

NDS Tasmania has received a modest allocation of funding from the state government over many years to operate as the peak body for disability providers.

NDS specialises in quickly synthesising and delivering sector intelligence to government, mainstream services, Tasmanian and National regulatory bodies.

With the disability sector to undergo substantive reform in the coming years amid an existing sustainability crisis, it has never been more important to ensure continuation of this conduit; a peak body that enables information and action for Tasmanian service providers must be appropriately resourced. Several key DRC recommendations call for the implementation of proposed reforms to first start with sector consultation and co-design involving peak bodies. The Commission of Inquiry recommendations (for example 12.19) also call on disability services input and collaboration. Disability providers must be engaged, informed and responsive to proposed changes for reforms of the Tasmanian disability sector to practically succeed. NDS has a proven track record of collaborating across the sector as well as supporting disability service providers to adapt to change by activating our network of members to disseminate information, interpret policy changes, and provide advice on emerging trends and risks.

The Commission of Inquiry recommendations call on increased collaboration with the disability sector, for example recommendation 12.19 – develop a memorandum of understanding between agencies involved in delivering services to children and young people in detention, including child protection, health, disability support and education.

An increased investment in NDS core funding would further amplify the capacity of NDS to ensure the voice of disability services are heard in the multiple policy and legislative developments which impact and shape the services they deliver.

The pending reform agenda is substantial and the disability sector will not be able to contribute, respond or change appropriately within its existing funding model. A boost



to NDS peak body capacity is critical to provide increased support across the sector and to facilitate the required changes. A boost to peak body capacity will strengthen the sector, building a dynamic and innovative service system that offers quality supports to people with disability in Tasmania.

## 1.2 Invest in Safeguarding initiatives to prevent violence, abuse and neglect toward people with disability including support for the sector to implement the DRC Recommendations

**Request:** An investment of \$160,000 p.a. for the next three years.

Volume 10 of the DRC named NDS' Zero Tolerance as a 'promising practice'. This flagship NDS initiative aims to prevent violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability. Initiatives delivered under Zero Tolerance would address a range of DRC recommendations relating to Quality and Safeguarding as well as findings of the Commission of Inquiry, which stated that more than 20 per cent<sup>7</sup> of children in out of home care in Tasmania, have a known disability. Children with disability have increased vulnerability to sexual abuse.<sup>8</sup>

The NDS Zero Tolerance initiative offers a suite of resources to build capacity within the sector to provide high quality disability services that are free from violence, abuse and neglect. The Zero Tolerance Framework outlines practical actions and provides a suite of functional and portable resources that service providers can use to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, and violence toward people with disability.

A dedicated Tasmania NDS Zero Tolerance project officer could:

- review, contextualise and implement the Zero Tolerance initiative with Tasmanian providers via a place-based approach;
- guide and facilitate providers through the implementation of the Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework;
- facilitate provider adherence and adaptation to recommendations from the Commission of Inquiry; and
- lead providers through a transition towards the elimination of restrictive practice.

Funding for a dedicated project officer, committed to improving safeguarding initiatives to prevent violence, abuse and neglect toward people with disability is critical to ensure that the human rights expressed within the United Nations

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<sup>7</sup> Ombudsman Tasmania, Listen to the Children: Review of Claims of Abuse from Adults in State Care as Children (Report, November 2004)

<sup>8</sup> Tasmanian Government, 'Final Abuse in State Care Report Released' (Media Release, 6 November 2014)

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability are realised. 1.3 Developing a Tasmanian Disability Workforce that is skilled, capable and sustainable.

### 1.3 Develop a skilled, capable and sustainable disability workforce

**Request:** An investment of \$260,000 p.a. for the next three years.

The Tasmanian disability sector workforce requires ongoing direct investment to attract, retain and upskill workers that enable the delivery of high-quality services to Tasmanians with disability. Nationally, it is estimated that a 31 per cent increase to current workforce size will be required across the NDIS sector by 2024.<sup>9</sup> Due to Tasmania's high rate of people with disability, this percentage is likely to be much higher.

The Tasmanian Government's vision for a high-quality training and workforce development system that is accessible, job-focused and responsive to the needs of industry, employers, training providers, and learners is realised in the Disability Industry skills compact – Priority Action Plan. NDS is committed to focusing on supporting stronger collaborative partnerships between participants in the training and workforce development system, while recognising that both Government and industry have areas of strength and responsibility for the system.

The 2023 NDS Workforce Census reported that across Tasmania 65 per cent of staff were in permanent roles and 31 per cent in casual roles. For permanent employees, part-time employment continued to be extremely high at 84 per cent and full time at 16 per cent. Considered together, these figures may reflect a tightening labour market in the disability sector and the broader care sector. Organisations may be responding to this economy-wide battle for talent by offering permanent (part-time) positions to retain workers. Turnover rates for permanent staff averaged 11 per cent while casual turnover was at 23 per cent.<sup>10</sup>

With an ageing workforce, growing need for disability services, and a significant reform agenda ahead, the State Government must invest in the disability workforce to prevent market failure.

As the sector navigates significant imminent change from the DRC and NDIS Review, specific workforce priorities may arise or be directed by the State and Commonwealth Governments. It is abundantly clear, however, that changes will take time. Thus, NDS recommends addressing many of the existing and known issues to build workforce capacity and to enable a better platform for further changes.

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<sup>9</sup> [NDS Submission Federal Budget 2023-2024.pdf](#)

<sup>10</sup> [NDS Workforce Census Report 2023 Embargoed.pdf](#)

Two dedicated disability workforce officers would address some of the known workforce barriers by:

- Reducing entry pathway barriers for job seekers to the disability sector and encourage labour force participation from cohorts not currently in the workforce.
- Reducing administrative and other barriers to recruiting new entrants to the disability sector.
- Introducing measures to encourage and incentivise the employment of people with disability.
- Providing training for potential or existing board members to ensure appropriate governance structures are developed and sustainable (aligned to DRC recommendation).
- Updating the [Not-for-profits and the NDIS: Director Tool Kit and contextualising it for Tasmanian settings](#)
- Ensuring collaboration between the disability sector and educational and training institutions to foster a highly skilled workforce.

Dedicated disability senior policy and project officers would continue to collaborate across the Community Service Industry, and share successes and opportunities to partner, across sectors. As per the Community Service Industry Plan 2021-2031<sup>11</sup>, NDS has a commitment via Priority 2.1, a Workforce Coalition to position Tasmania as a national leader in thinking and practice.<sup>12</sup>

## 1.4 Indexation

**Request:** 70 per cent WPI/30 per cent CPI, plus the superannuation guarantee (0.5 per cent) indexation formulae be applied to community services.

Aligned with other peaks who operate in the community services industry, NDS recommends a 70 per cent WPI/30 per cent CPI, plus the superannuation guarantee (0.5 per cent), indexation formulae be applied to community services.

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<sup>11</sup> [Community Services Industry Plan 2021-2031 \(dpac.tas.gov.au\)](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Community Services Industry Plan 2021-2031 \(dpac.tas.gov.au\)](#)

## Priority Two: A more inclusive Tasmania

### 2.1 Appropriately resource the changes resulting from the new Tasmanian Disability Inclusion and Safeguarding Bill

**Request:** An investment of \$52,000 p.a. for the next three years.

Disability service providers are the key deliverers of services to people with disability, thus must be included in the implementation of the Tasmania Disability Inclusion and Safeguarding Bill.

NDS is willing to contribute to the development of the Tasmanian Disability Inclusion Plan and looks forward to seeing the development of measures for achieving the objectives of the Act. A Tasmanian Disability Inclusion Plan could serve as an important vehicle to house recommendations from the DRC the NDIS Review and the Commission of Inquiry such as building inclusivity and foundational services into mainstream supports and ensuring appropriate safeguards for people with disability.

To ensure the aspiration of better alignment with the human rights expressed within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD), are realised, implementation of the Act requires financial commitment, engagement and collaboration. NDS would welcome the opportunity to ensure appropriate input and collaboration from the disability sector was realised. This could include ongoing collaboration via Act and or disability inclusion plan implementation committees and / or the facilitation of opportunities for people with disability and disability providers to collaboratively codesign implementation strategies.

NDS is eager to assist with the development of the proposed Disability Impact Assessments, to ensure they are genuine and include the voice of people with disability and to collaborate with the Disability Commission in drafting the required guidelines and principles to support the implementation of the Disability Impact Assessment.

### 2.2 Tasmanian Social Procurement Framework

**Request:** An investment of \$150,000 p.a. for the next three years.

Supporting employment of people with disability makes financial sense and helps contribute to a more inclusive Tasmania. Recent research identified that NDIS supports contribute to the economic wellbeing of Australia; more than 250,000 jobs

have been created and for every dollar invested in the scheme \$2.25 flows back into the Australian economy.<sup>13</sup>

The State Government is a significant purchaser of services and products and has established Tasmania Industry Participation Plans to prioritise local Tasmanian content in its procurement activities. The opportunity exists to further promote social procurement to preference procurement towards Social Enterprises, which are typically not-for-profit organisations and exist to better the lives of their marginalised clients.

Through well-considered, practical social procurement policies the State Government can create an expectation that companies will support disability inclusive practices such as training and employing people with disability and/or purchasing from social enterprises that specialise in employing people with disability.

Social procurement sends a strong visible message to the community that disability inclusive practices supporting the rights of people with disability align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and are a responsibility of every business that aligns with recommendation 7.23 of the DRC.

Buying locally from a social enterprise providing supports in employment for people with disability enables the sourcing of high-quality products and services, while creating a direct benefit for communities and people who have been marginalised, isolated or unable to find mainstream employment.

A framework would streamline and embed social procurement within ordinary government processes and would offer a consistent approach across the State Government.

A funded and dedicated NDS Project Officer would consult on the development of a social procurement framework to ensure the State can contribute greater social value to the Tasmanian community through the government's significant buying power and procurement influences. NDS would research, adapt and create a framework that is scalable and applicable in all departments which will standardise the consideration of social procurement when purchasing decisions are to be made. Such a framework would be modelled on the successful outcome of similar processes across Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria.

### 2.3 Employment opportunities for people with disability.

In order to increased rates of employment for people with disability and to unlock workforce potential, the State Government should embrace recommendations 7.18 – 7.22 of the DRC, which include to establish specific and disaggregated targets for

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<sup>13</sup> Per Capita (2021). False Economy: The economic benefits of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the consequences of government cost-cutting. Teamwork Works campaign. Accessed 20 December 2022.

disability employment in the public sector, and public reporting on public sector disability employment strategies and targets, among other recommendations. The introduction of the new Disability Inclusion and Safeguarding Bill provides the perfect mechanism to do this, with its requirement for an updated Tasmanian Disability Inclusion Plan (previously Accessible Island) and Disability Impact Assessments for defined entities. The Tasmanian Disability Inclusion Plan, in particular, provides the vehicle for development of a cohesive vision for employment that brings together the range of existing supports available, improves how they work together, identifies gaps, develops strategies to address these gaps and supports a range of employment options for all people with disability. The establishment of a framework for a whole of government approach to accountability and transparency in relation to disability inclusion is needed; as for other paid employment, the framework should also include clear guidelines regarding remuneration, recognising the importance of lived experience and the labour involved in participating in consultation processes.

NDS calls on the State Government to collaborate with the Federal Government, on an extension of the pensioner work bonus and income arrangement to people on a disability support pension (DSP). The increase in the income test threshold by \$150 per week would remove some of the disincentives for people with disability to either increase their current working hours or receive increased wages.

## 2.4 Foundation Support – a joined up ecosystem of support.

**Request:** An investment of \$150,000 p.a. for the next three years.

Approximately 93 per cent of currently provided disability support is funded via the NDIS; yet of the 4.4 million people with a disability in Australia, only a small proportion will receive funding support through the NDIS. Supports and services currently available outside the NDIS do not meet the needs of many people with disability. This has resulted in inequity and the NDIS as being seen as the only option available.

[Australia's Disability Strategy](#) outlines the commitment and obligations of all governments to provide and make reasonable adjustments to mainstream and targeted services, supports, and infrastructure systems to people with disability. Although the NDIS now funds a significant proportion of disability services, it does not fund everything, nor everyone with a disability – gaps remain in pockets of service provision, advocacy, and research, as well as a critical shortfall in services for people with disability who do not qualify for the NDIS. It is critical for the State Government to commit to 'Tier 2' or 'foundational' services to ensure that it builds inclusivity and foundational services into mainstream supports.

The development of an intergovernmental strategy that support seamless transitions across support systems will be critical, to clarify responsibilities and enable shared funding mechanism so people with disability and providers are not left to battle

through an overly complex funding model. Levering on the expertise of the sector will be critical to inform this work, and to assist in designing 'foundation supports' across the service ecosystem.

The ILC program allocates grant funding, that aim to build the knowledge, skills and confidence of people with disability and improve their access to community and mainstream services. With the Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS) overseeing this grants program, there is a disconnect between what is funded and what is potentially needed in the State. As a first step, it will be critical to identify what has been funded by ILC Grants, what is currently funded by State Government departments and what are the gaps. Sharing existing resources and knowledge will be critical, which could be enabled via sector forums.

NDS welcomes the Commission of Inquiry - recommendation 9.23 - that children in out of home care have timely access to holistic assessments and for DECYP to appoint a specialised role to support children in out of home care to access the NDIS.<sup>14</sup> NDS also welcomes recommendation 12.11.b – The Tasmanian Government should develop and provide a range of community-based health, welfare and disability programs and services that are tailored to meet the needs of children and young people under the age of 14 years who are engaging in antisocial behaviour, and to address the factors contributing to that behaviour.<sup>15</sup>

Recommendation 21.6.2 suggest the Tasmanian Government should consult on the therapeutic service system with relevant stakeholders groups, including representative bodies.<sup>16</sup> These recommendations, among others from the Commission of Inquiry, align with the concept of implementing 'Foundational supports across the whole service system to better meet the needs of people with disability.

A dedicated, funded NDS project officer, would contribute to the development of an intergovernmental strategy, map existing supports and identify gaps, ensure existing supports and resources are broadly shared with the community via forums and the link, and draw on the expertise of the sector to assist in designing 'foundation supports' across the service ecosystem.

## 2.5 Housing Solutions

**Request:** An investment of \$145,000 p.a. for the next three years.

### 2.5.1 For the disability workforce

The housing crisis in Tasmania continues with elevated costs and lack of supply of both rentals and properties to purchase. The Community Services Industry Plan 2021-2031<sup>17</sup> proposes place-based approaches as an opportunity and local solutions

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<sup>14</sup> [COI\\_Full-Report.pdf \(commissionofinquiry.tas.gov.au\)](#)

<sup>15</sup> [COI\\_Full-Report.pdf \(commissionofinquiry.tas.gov.au\)](#)

<sup>16</sup> [COI\\_Full-Report.pdf \(commissionofinquiry.tas.gov.au\)](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Community Services Industry Plan 2021-2031 \(dpac.tas.gov.au\)](#)



for Tasmanians as a priority. Regional workforce shortages are disproportionately impacted by the housing crisis, with workers who are available and willing to relocate having nowhere to live. Research suggests that even Allied Health professionals and workers employed on full time salaries cannot find, and/or cannot afford, rentals in regional areas.<sup>18</sup> A place-based approach to support and foster shared or alternative housing for disability workers could help overcome housing costs for individuals, thus bolstering the potential workforce.

### 2.5.2 For people with disability

People with disability require housing options that are affordable and accessible. Existing home and living supports are not meeting many participants' needs, with much of the existing Homes Tasmania stock being non-specialist disability accommodation.

NDS welcomed the Specialist Disability Accommodation forum held with Homes Tasmania on the 28 November. NDS calls on Homes Tasmania to continue the discussion to better understand the current risks and opportunities that exist in disability housing in Tasmania, noting that at present, close to 70 per cent of active NDIS participants with SDA supports live in Homes Tasmania properties. The DRC recommendations in relation to housing indicate that significant changes from the group home model to alternatives that meet a broad range of needs and offer choice and control are required within the next 15 years. The DRC also made recommendations (for example 7.37 – Increase tenancy and occupancy protections for people with disability) to improve the occupancy principles for people with disability.

A dedicated NDS housing officer would collaborate with Homes Tasmania, disability providers and housing providers to understand and map out challenges and opportunities for the Tasmania disability housing market. This could include:

- implementing systems and strategies to better understand existing housing stock and future stock
- improving vacancy advertising for SIL and SDA across Government and Non-Government stock
- increasing collaboration, engagement and understanding of vacant stock with intermediaries and the Department of Health / Tasmanian Health Service, to address bed blocking caused by a lack of appropriate discharge destination for NDIS participants
- increasing knowledge of SDA and SIL requirements among Tasmanian disability providers and community housing providers (via forums or webinars)

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<sup>18</sup> Coates, B and Moloney, J (2022). The housing crisis has spread to the regions. Grattan Institute. Accessed 6 January 2023.



- working with participants and organisations who are seeking different models of support.

Without a dedicated resource to address housing issues in the disability sector, Tasmania runs the risk of continuing to have high vacancy rates and inadequate disability accessibility in Homes Tasmania stock, while other groups on the priority waitlist continue to wait for housing.

## 2.6 Sustainable Transport Solution

**Request:** An investment of \$165,000 p.a. for the next three years.

Transport is an essential service for people with disability to achieve full social and economic participation in the community. Access to a wide range of public and private transport options is critical for the inclusion of people with disability.

Tasmania has a unique set of circumstances with very limited accessible public transport making the reliance on taxis and the taxi subsidy scheme paramount. However, accessible on-demand transport options such as taxi and ridesharing services are not available in many areas. For example, in Burnie, there are no accessible taxis, however there are disability service providers with accessible vehicles which are currently underutilised. Not only do these vehicles meet many accessibility requirements, they have drivers who have expertise in working with people with disability. Purchasing accessible vehicles is expensive, and if the current market failure of the taxi industry continues, the State Government may need to consider becoming a provider of last resort. This would require purchasing vehicles and training staff appropriately.

NDS however, proposes an alternate solution, which is industry led, draws on existing resources and thus is more sustainable, and can be nuanced to ensure a place-based response. NDS proposes to capitalise on the underutilisation of privately owned disability service vehicles. The project would occur in two eighteen-month phases:

### 2.6.1 Phase one: Sustainable transport- scoping (totalling \$235,200)

An NDS policy officer would determine the viability of meeting current unmet transport demand for people with disability with underutilised disability service vehicles.

NDS would explore the legislative requirements of taxi and ride share services provision, specifically with regards to supporting people with disability, the rates of unmet needs, the underutilisation of disability service vehicles and an IT solution which could enable passengers to book rides in an appropriate accessible vehicle.

Phase one would present State Government with a road map, for both a pilot and subsequent project implantation. an eloquent solution to the current crisis.

#### 2.6.2 Phase two: Sustainable transport – implementation – strategy (totalling \$259,800)

An NDS project officer would lead implementation of the project road map, an eloquent, sustainable solution to the current crisis. Project implementation would be place-base and informed by the voice of people with disability.

Without investing in an industry led solution, the lack of transport options for people with disability will continue to result in terrible outcomes for people with disability.

#### 2.7 Court Based Diversion Programs

NDS encourages the State Government to accept and follow DRC recommendation 8.21 regarding division of people with cognitive disability from criminal proceedings. It is well acknowledged that people with disability are overrepresented in the criminal justice system in Tasmania. Rather than starting anew, the State Government should fund and expand existing programs, such as the [JustACE program](#), to ensue court-based diversion programs for people with disability charged with summary offences in local or magistrates' courts:

- are accessible and culturally appropriate, particularly in regional and remote areas
- provide support for defendants to access the NDIS
- satisfy service needs, including connecting defendants to appropriate education, housing, employment and other services.

It would be useful to fund appropriate evaluation of the program and to consider the economic and social benefits for both the individuals and the community.

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