YOUTH AT RISK STRATEGY
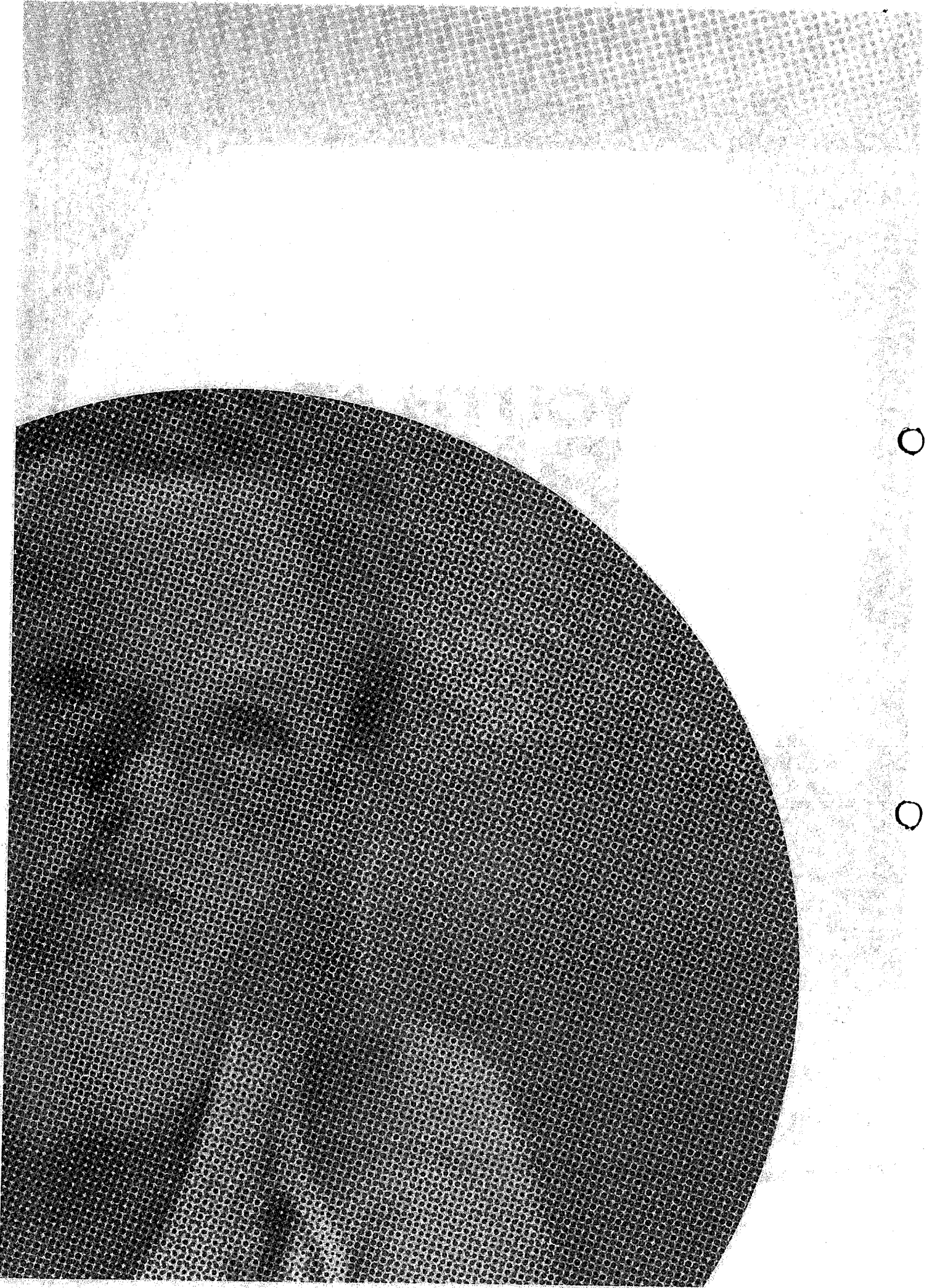
Foreword

Young people deserve access to the best possible opportunities in life, regardless of their individual circumstances. As a government, and as a community, I think we need to do all we can to make sure we don't allow young people to fall through the cracks, resulting in a spiral of substance addiction, mental health problems, homelessness and crime.

Therefore, assisting youth at risk to see a positive future is a shared responsibility which relies heavily on the input of government, but also from community sector organisations, families, the wider community, and of course the young people themselves.

As a community, we need to respond better to, and learn from, the lived experiences of young people who have multiple vulnerabilities so that we can keep them more engaged in life.

At the same time, we must provide help, support and guidance for parents/care givers and extended support networks. This help can come from many parts of our community – neighbours, schools, medical practitioners, community service providers, as well as from multiple government agencies.

Keeping young people engaged through positive daily routines is also critical; this includes, school, recreation and their community.
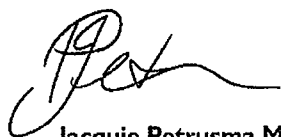
As a community we need to view a young person at risk NOT just at the point in time they are interacting with government services, but holistically.

The *Youth at Risk Strategy* is one of many current reforms that consider young people and their families/ care givers through a more holistic lens. Other important reforms occurring across government include, *Strong Families, Safe Kids*, the whole of government redesign of Child Safety Services, *Safe Homes, Safe Families*, Tasmania's first Family Violence Action Plan, Joined Up Human Services, *Tasmania's Affordable Housing Strategy*, strengthening of the Out of Home Care (OOHC) system and the *Youth Suicide Prevention Plan*.

This document is a first for Tasmania; a whole of government *Youth at Risk Strategy* which includes a stronger emphasis on education, health and safety for young people at risk. This Strategy will provide a strong foundation for future reforms that will improve the service system for vulnerable young people.

This Government is committed to supporting Tasmania's young people as they find their place in our community. For many young people, this process is simple, safe and secure but for others the path to adulthood is challenging and through the implementation of this *Youth at Risk Strategy*, together, as a community, we can empower the next generation of Tasmanians.

In closing, I extend my appreciation to everyone who provided wise counsel and frank feedback through the consultation and development of this Strategy. With our relatively small size, Tasmania is well placed to achieve lasting improvements for children and young people and the commitment from so many people working in the sector is greatly appreciated.

Jacquie Petrusma MP
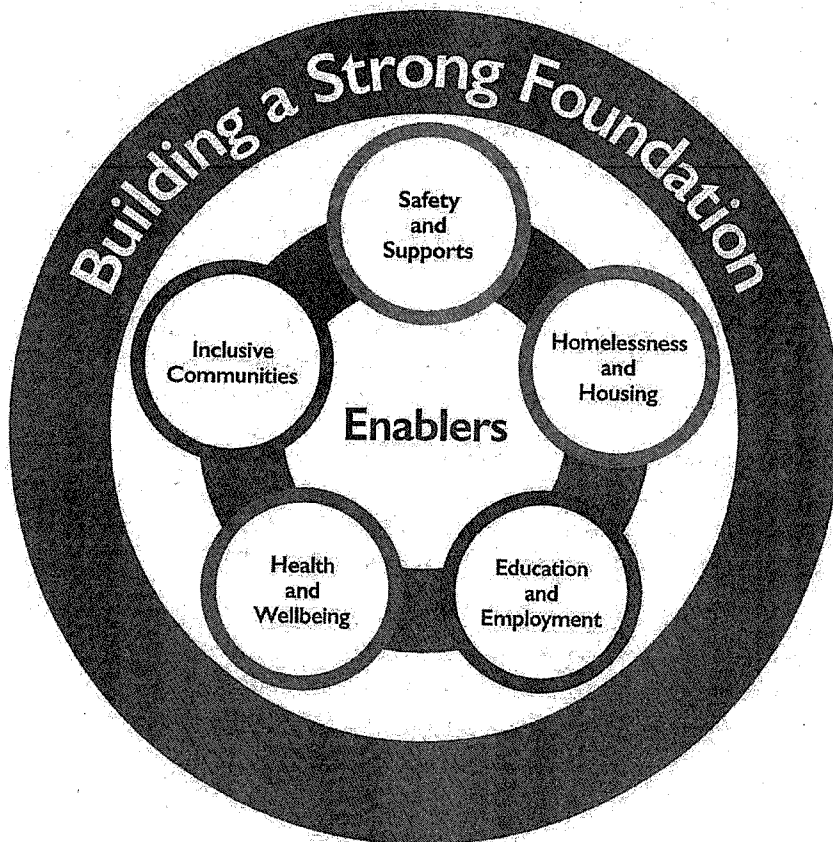Minister for Human Services

Action Areas

The Youth at Risk Strategy will improve outcomes for young people in Tasmania through actions in seven key action areas which are aligned to five strategic objectives (page 40).

The development of the Youth at Risk Strategy included wide ranging consultation and research. Through the consultation and research process, seven areas for action were identified as critical to guiding the development of the [34] actions that are included in the Strategy.
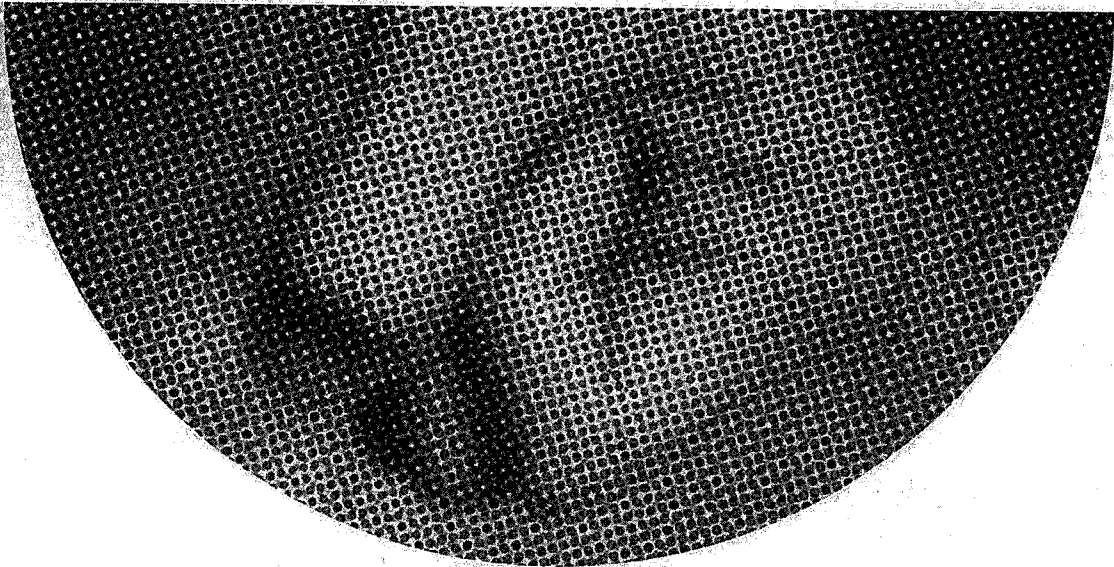
These seven key action areas have been colour coded throughout the document to demonstrate the relationship between vulnerabilities, actions and the key action areas listed in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Key Action Areas

Building a Strong Foundation

- Safety and Supports
- Inclusive Communities
- Homelessness and Housing
- **Enablers**
- Health and Wellbeing
- Education and Employment

Through a range of actions across these key actions areas, the
Youth at Risk Strategy will:

1 **Build a Strong Foundation** for the Youth at Risk service
system through the development of a vulnerability assessment
tool and the formation of agreed outcomes based on the
Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework;

2 provide timely and appropriate **Safety and Supports** for
young people in OOHC and those engaged in the Youth
Justice System;

3 increase awareness and create alternative pathways within the
Homelessness and Housing system for young people at risk;

4 improve the **Education and Employment** opportunities for
vulnerable young Tasmanians;

5 improve the **Health and Wellbeing** of our most vulnerable
young people;

6 create safe and **Inclusive Communities** for young people; and

7 establish system wide overarching **Enablers** to support the
youth service sector.

What do we mean by Youth at Risk?

'Risk factors cluster together in the lives of the most disadvantaged children, and the chances that they will become anti-social and criminally active increases as the number of risk factors increases.'[1]

'Youth at Risk' is a multifaceted problem combining complex social issues which are interdependent and, in many cases, resistant to solving. As shown in Figure 2 there are a number of vulnerabilities that a young person may experience which may place them, their family or community at risk of harm.

These types of problems are often beyond the capacity of any one organisation to respond to and challenge the traditional ways government organisations work. A key challenge for Government is to identify those interventions that deliver greatest value in terms of reducing risk for young people, and to build collaboration across the service system to respond effectively to the complex cluster of risks that must be addressed for the family and young person to provide sustained improvements.

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[1] Youth Justice Board. 2005. Risk and Protective Factors. United Kingdom. p 29.
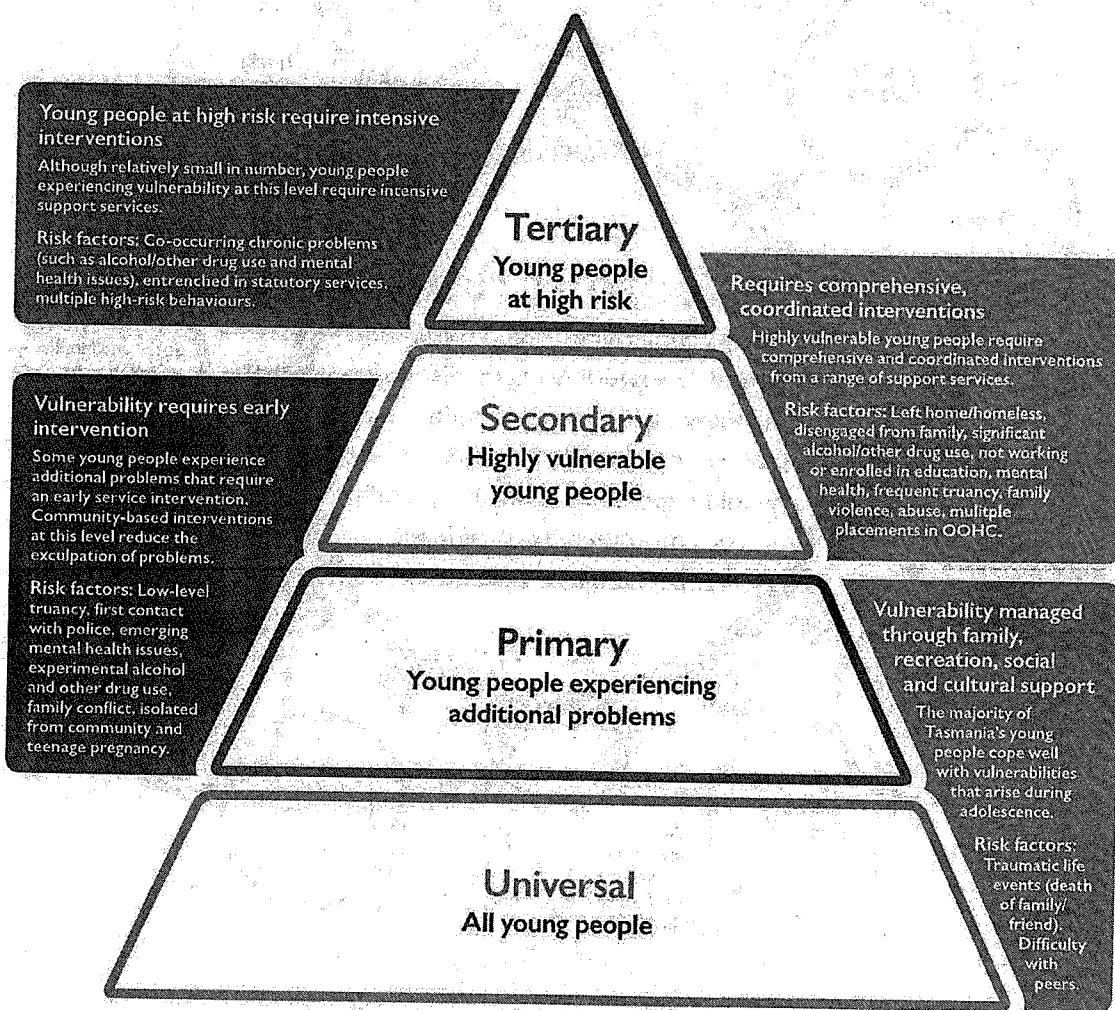
Figure 2: Vulnerabilities that may be present in Youth at Risk[2]

Youth at Risk

Any young person aged between 10 and 17 experiencing or displaying the following indicators of vulnerability (risk factors) which if not addressed would expose the individual, family or community to significant harm (actual or potential).

- Educational disengagement
- Legal problems
- Homelessness
- Suicidal thoughts
- Family violence
- Trauma
- Family troubles that require significant family supports
- Sexual health issues
- Social and familial isolation or exclusion
- Abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Drug and alcohol addiction
- Problematic sexualized behaviours
- Culture, identity and gender-related issues
- Offending behaviours
- Mental health issues / mental illness
- Violent or self-harming behaviours (including radicalisation)
- Disability, learning, speech impairments, etc

[2]Risk factors have been sourced from - White and Habibis (2005, p295) quoted in Van Krieken (2014, p379), Farrington (2000, pp 605 -622), Farrington (2006, pp9-26), Farrington and Welsh (2007, pp159-161), Farrington and Ttofi (2011, pp71-88).

The Youth at Risk Strategy is not intended to address the universal needs of all young people; the Strategy is deliberately focussed towards improving the outcomes for those young people who are at the highest risk, with a concentrated effort to improve Secondary and Tertiary responses (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Layers of Vulnerability for Young People[3]

Young people at high risk require intensive interventions

Although relatively small in number, young people experiencing vulnerability at this level require intensive support services.

Risk factors: Co-occurring chronic problems (such as alcohol/other drug use and mental health issues), entrenched in statutory services, multiple high-risk behaviours.

Vulnerability requires early intervention

Some young people experience additional problems that require an early service intervention. Community-based interventions at this level reduce the exculpation of problems.

Risk factors: Low-level truancy, first contact with police, emerging mental health issues, experimental alcohol and other drug use, family conflict, isolated from community and teenage pregnancy.

Tertiary
Young people at high risk

Secondary
Highly vulnerable young people

Primary
Young people experiencing additional problems

Universal
All young people

Requires comprehensive, coordinated interventions

Highly vulnerable young people require comprehensive and coordinated interventions from a range of support services.

Risk factors: Left home/homeless, disengaged from family, significant alcohol/other drug use, not working or enrolled in education, mental health, frequent truancy, family violence, abuse, multiple placements in OOHC.

Vulnerability managed through family, recreation, social and cultural support

The majority of Tasmania's young people cope well with vulnerabilities that arise during adolescence.

Risk factors: Traumatic life events (death of family/friend), Difficulty with peers.

Based on positive pathways for Victorian's young people.

Why focus on Youth at Risk?

As recognised in the *Strong Families, Safe Kids* reforms, building strength in children in the early years (under 5) has the greatest chance of lifelong improvements for individuals and families. It is inevitable, however, that issues for some children will persist and extend into adolescence.

The period between 10 and 17 years of age is critical for the positive growth of the child, the acquisition of education and life skills, and the development of confidence and a sense of self-worth that will be relied upon as an independent adult. The rapid brain development which occurs during these years represents a significant opportunity to undo damage caused by trauma and neglect in the early years.[4]

> The consequences of not addressing risks in young people are significant, for the individual, their families and the community.

At an individual and family level, our systems and services must be able to support young people when a multitude of risks combine to create impenetrable barriers for a young person to grow, build positive relationships and to actively participate in life.

These young people have multiple vulnerabilities that leave them, their family and the community exposed to significant harm. Once these young people are entrenched in the statutory system it is often difficult and costly to provide them with the specialist assistance they require.

The consequences are significant, both personally for the individuals involved and their families, and for the community. For example, research on costs of homelessness for vulnerable groups found that one individual, 'Casey', cost various government agencies over $5.5 million dollars between the ages of 10 and 21 years.[5] There is no doubt that there would also be significant ongoing costs to the individual and the community as these challenges extend into adulthood.

Figure 4 tells the story of a young person in Tasmania (with some key facts changed for anonymity). This story is not unusual, with many other young people facing similar challenges.

The case study highlights the numerous types of issues vulnerable young people may have to deal with, such as abuse and neglect, homelessness, family violence, trauma, disengagement from education, drug and alcohol addiction. Over time these issues have a cumulative and detrimental impact on the life trajectory of young people, highlighting the importance of early identification and intervention.

At a population level, the experience of young people in Tasmania can be influenced by their early life experiences and levels of disadvantage within their families and communities (refer to page 12).

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[4]Doidge, Norman. 2007. The Brain That Changes Itself: Stories of Personal Triumph from the frontiers of brain science. New York: Viking.
[5]Baldry, E. et al. 2012. Life course institutional costs of homelessness for vulnerable groups. School of Social Sciences University of New South Wales. pp 88 to 92.

Figure 4: De-identified Tasmanian Case Study (Lifecycle Problem Trajectory)[6]

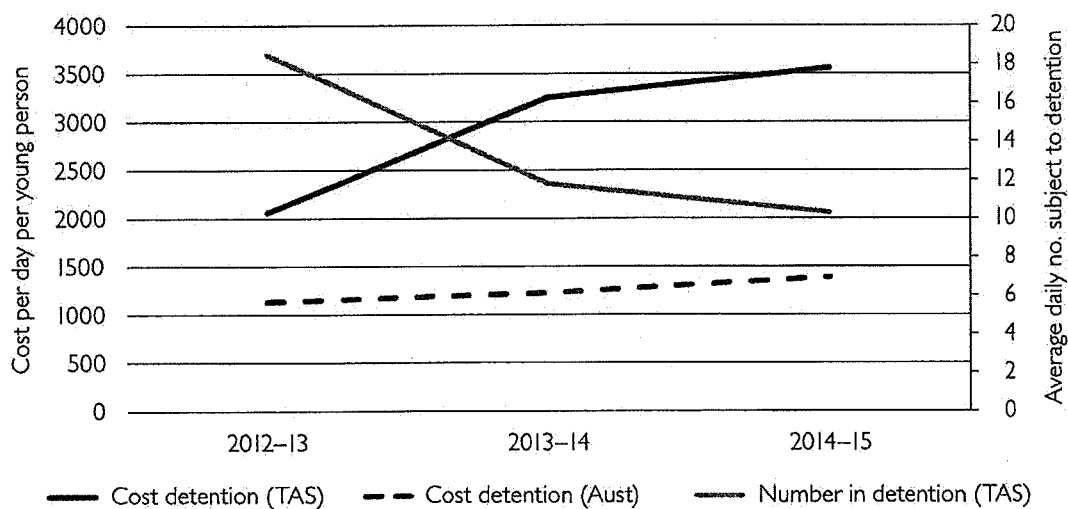| Risk Factors/Vulnerability	Lifecycle Trajectory	
Violent or Self Harming Behaviours	Committed a number of violent offences. Remanded after a month after release from AYDC.	13 to 18 Years
Homelessness	Released from AYDC at the age of 18 to inappropriate accommodation (of their choice) with only a small amount of money. Met with Centrelink two months after release to arrange benefits.	
Sexual Health Issues	At age 17 engaging in sexual activities with a much older partner.	
Trauma	Young person refused psychological therapy in AYDC, as a result it is unlikely they have ever received counselling for past trauma.	
Offending Behaviours	Sent to AYDC a further 7 times on remand and sentenced between the ages of 13 and 18. Model detainee while in AYDC.	
Social and Familial Isolation or exclusion	At age 13 was bailed to mother's address, but no longer welcome as she is going on a holiday.	
Drug and Alcohol Addiction	Alcohol and drug abuse first identified at age 13.	
Homelessness	Homeless or at risk of homelessness from age 13.	
Legal Problems	Lack of understanding of the Court process due to low levels of education and learning difficulties.	
Social and Familial Isolation or exclusion	At 12 years of age Care and Protection Order expired. At the same time younger siblings were placed on Guardianship Orders until the age of 18.	Birth to 12 Years
Offending Behaviours	First contact with Community Youth Justice at age 11.	
Educational Disengagement	At age 8 missed 33% of school year, age 9 missed 23% school year, age 10 missed 81% school year, age 11 missed 88% of school year.	
Disability, Learning, Speech Impairment	Low IQ, likely undiagnosed disability.	
Trauma	Significant cumulative trauma from years of abuse and neglect.	
Family Violence	Exposed to regular instances of family violence from birth, sister is now a perpetrator as well as a victim.	
Abuse, neglect and exploitation	Sexually abused at age 3, many counts of physical abuse and neglect (exceeding 34 notifications).	
Family troubles that require significant family supports	Family troubles identified early, 15 CHaPS visits with 13 visits before first birthday.	

[6]The information contained in this graphic is based on some of the known information relating to this young person, it is not exhaustive and does not include the numerous protective factors that were present or offered by service providers throughout their life trajectory.

Snapshot of Youth at Risk in Tasmania

Safety and Supports

- In 2015/16 Tasmania had the highest percentage (17 per cent) of young people on child protection orders who were aged 15–17 years compared to other Australian jurisdictions.[7]

- The Tasmanian foster care system is under increasing pressure with more children entering OOHC in 2015–16.[8]

- Tasmania had a decline in the number of young people subject to detention from 2012–13 to 2014–15. Despite the low numbers of young people in detention in Tasmania, the cost per day, per young person was the second highest in Australia and substantially higher than the national average (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Young people aged 10–17 years subject to detention on an average day and cost per day per young person in detention in Tasmania and Australia, 2012–13 to 2014–15[9]

Cost per day per young person — Average daily no. subject to detention

— Cost detention (TAS)   — — Cost detention (Aust)   —— Number in detention (TAS)

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[7]AIHW 2017. Child protection Australia 2015–16. Child welfare series no. 66. Cat. no. CWS 60. Canberra: AIHW.
[8]Ibid.
[9]http://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2016/community-services/youth-justice/rogs-2016-volumef-chapter16.pdf

Housing and Homelessness

- The Tasmanian rate of young people (15–24 years) receiving specialist homelessness services in 2015/16 was 23.2 per 10 000 which was higher than the national average of 18.2 per 10 000.[10]

- Tasmania had a higher rate of young people leaving care (4.9 per 10 000) who were receiving homelessness services in 2015/16 compared to the national average (2.9 per 10 000).[11]

Education and Employment

- Tasmania continues to have high levels of youth unemployment. As at 7 April 2017, the youth unemployment rate[12] for Tasmania was 15.7% which is well above the Australian youth unemployment rate of 12.7%.[13]

- Rates of attainment for the Tasmanian Certificate of Education increased from 46.5% in 2012 to 56.4% in 2016[14]. There has also been an increase in school retention rates[15] in Tasmania over the past 5 years, however school retention rates continue to be below the Australian average (Figure 6).

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[10]Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2017. Specialist homelessness services 2015–16: Tasmania fact sheet. Cat. no. HOU 285. Canberra: AIHW. ISBN 978-1-76054-072-2.
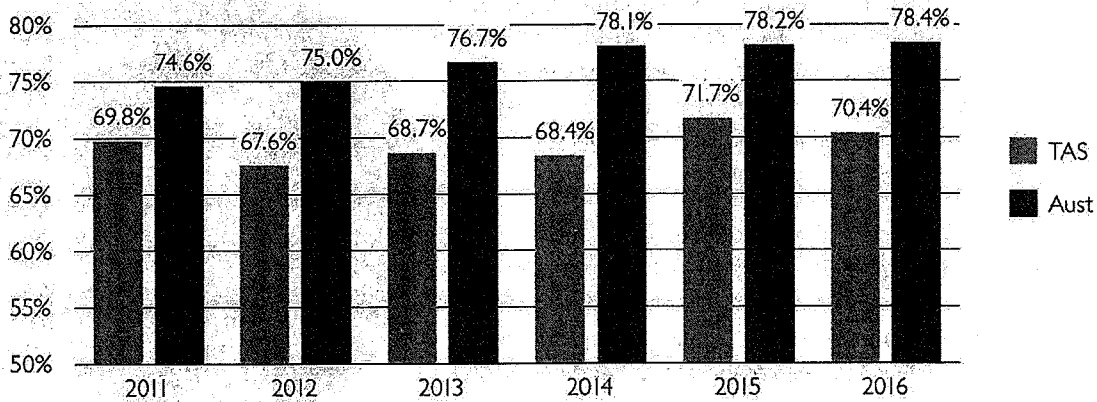[11]ibid.
[12]Number of persons aged 15 to 24 years who are actively looking for work as a percentage of the labour forced aged 15 to 24 years. This does not take into account a large proportion of young people not actively looking for work due to attending school or other educational institutions.
[13]Tasmanian Department of Treasury and Finance, Summary of Economic Indicators as at 7 April, 2017.
[14]Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification, Tasmanian Certificate of Education, Rates of Attainment 2016. http://www.tqu.tas.gov.au/1782
[15]ibid.

Figure 6: Comparison of Tasmanian and Australian Apparent Retention Rates from 2011–16 for full-time students Year 7/8 to Year 12[16]

Legend: TAS, Aust

Values shown: 69.8%, 74.6%, 67.6%, 75.0%, 68.7%, 76.7%, 68.4%, 78.1%, 71.7%, 78.2%, 70.4%, 78.4%
Years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016

Health and Wellbeing

- Mental illness is one of the most common health conditions within adolescence. In Australia 14% of young people aged 4–17 years have been assessed as having a mental health disorder; with 11% of 12–17 year olds reporting they have self-harmed.[17]

- Adolescent birth rates for Tasmanian young women were the second highest across all Australian jurisdictions in 2014 (Figure 7). Teenage mothers in Tasmania were more likely to be from remote communities and from low socio-economic areas.

Figure 7: Adolescent Birth Rate across Australia – women under 20 who gave birth (births per 1000 females)[18]

Values: ACT 7.9, NSW 13.0, VIC 9.3, WA 16.1, QLD 19.6, SA 13.1, TAS 20.1, NT 40.3

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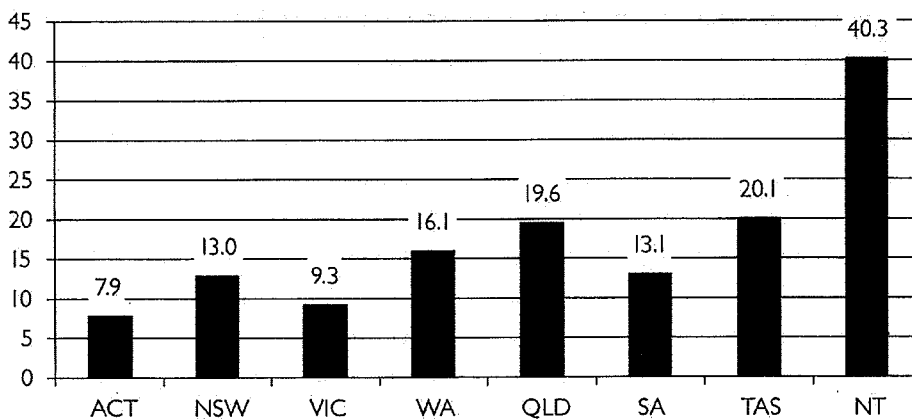
[16]Australian Bureau of Statistics, 4221.0 Schools Australia 2016, released February 2017.

[17]Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. 2015. *Mental health services – in brief 2015.* Cat. No. HSE 169 Canberra: AIHW.

[18]AIHW 2016. Australia's mothers and babies 2014 – in brief. Perinatal statistics series no. 32. Cat. no. PER 87. Canberra: AIHW.

Disadvantage in Tasmanian Communities

As shown in the snapshot of youth at risk in Tasmania (pages 9–11), there are particular geographic locations within Tasmania where there are poorer outcomes for youth. Disadvantage tends to be concentrated within particular communities, and has a cumulative effect on the health and life opportunities of young people in these communities.[19]

The 'Dropping Off the Edge' report ranks disadvantage within Australian communities based on nationally reported data including indicators such as family income, housing stress, unemployment, education levels, NAPLAN results, criminal convictions, family violence, child maltreatment and psychiatric admissions.[20]

As shown in Figure 8, within Tasmania there is a cluster of disadvantage in conjoined LGA's. Glenorchy was the only urban LGA in Tasmania which ranked as an area of 'most disadvantage'.

Communities ranked as 'most disadvantaged' were found to be:

- Twice as likely to suffer family violence

- Twice as likely to be disengaged from education and employment as young adults

- 50 per cent more likely to have had personal contact with the criminal justice system.
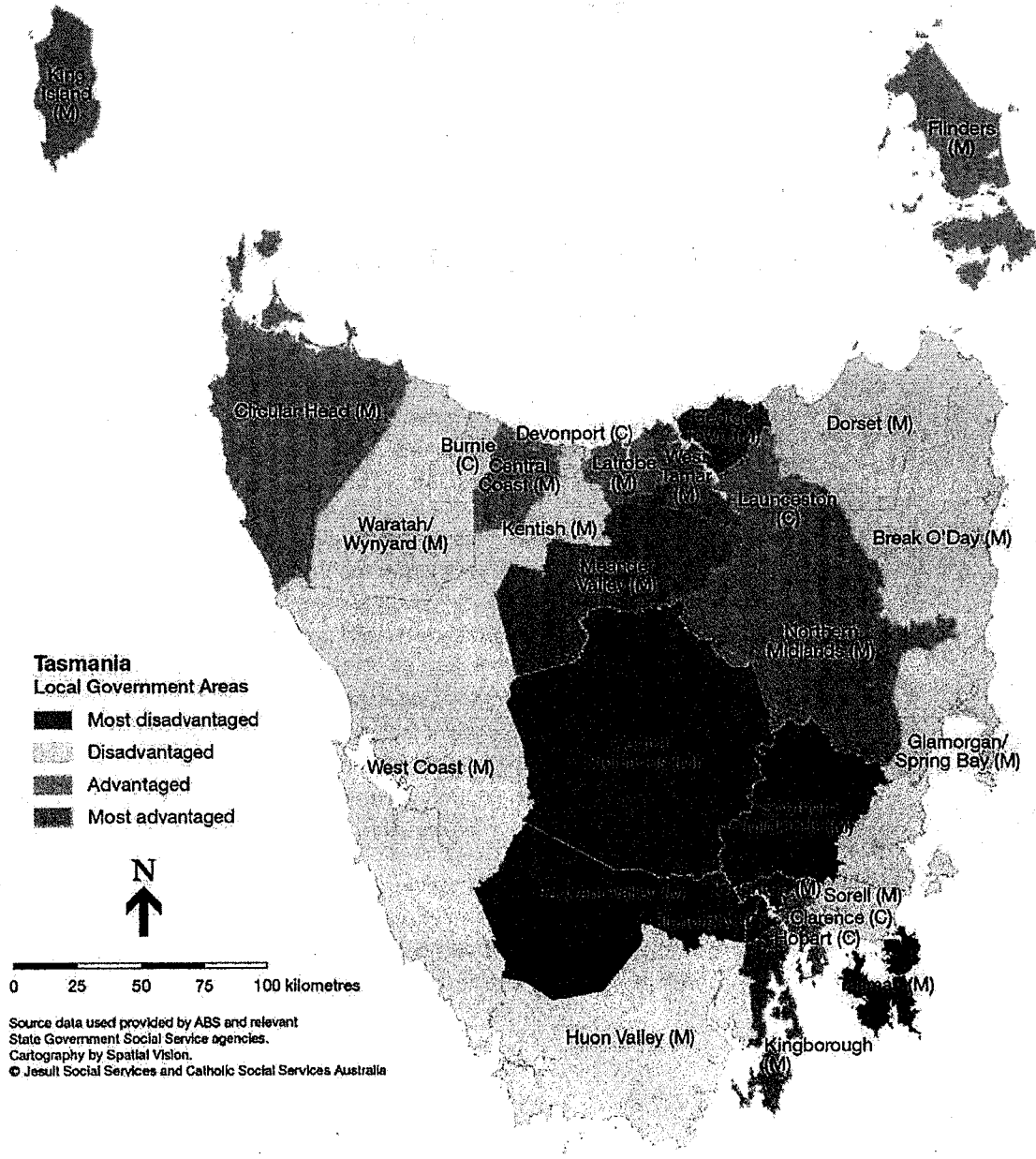
The Youth at Risk Strategy acknowledges the additional challenges faced by these communities, and seeks to improve the outcomes for young people at risk in these communities.

> **Growing up in communities with concentrated disadvantage has been shown to negatively impact on the socio-emotional and life chances of children.**

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[19]Vinson, T and Rawsthorne, M. 2015. Dropping off the Edge – Persistent communal disadvantage in Australia, Jesuit Social Services and Catholic Social Services Australia.
[20]Ibid.

Figure 8: Disadvantage across Tasmania LGAs[21]

King Island (M)

Flinders (M)

Circular Head (M)

Devonport (C)

Dorset (M)

Burnie (C) Central Coast (M)

Latrobe (M)

West Tamar (M)

Launceston (C)

Break O'Day (M)

Waratah/ Wynyard (M)

Kentish (M)

Meander Valley (M)

Northern Midlands (M)

Tasmania
Local Government Areas

Most disadvantaged

Disadvantaged

Advantaged

Most advantaged

West Coast (M)

Glamorgan/ Spring Bay (M)

Sorell (M)
Clarence (C)
Hobart (C)

N

0   25   50   75   100 kilometres

Huon Valley (M)

Kingborough (M)

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[21]Vinson, T and Rawsthorne, M. 2015. Dropping off the Edge – Persistent communal disadvantage in Australia, Jesuit Social Services and Catholic Social Services Australia.
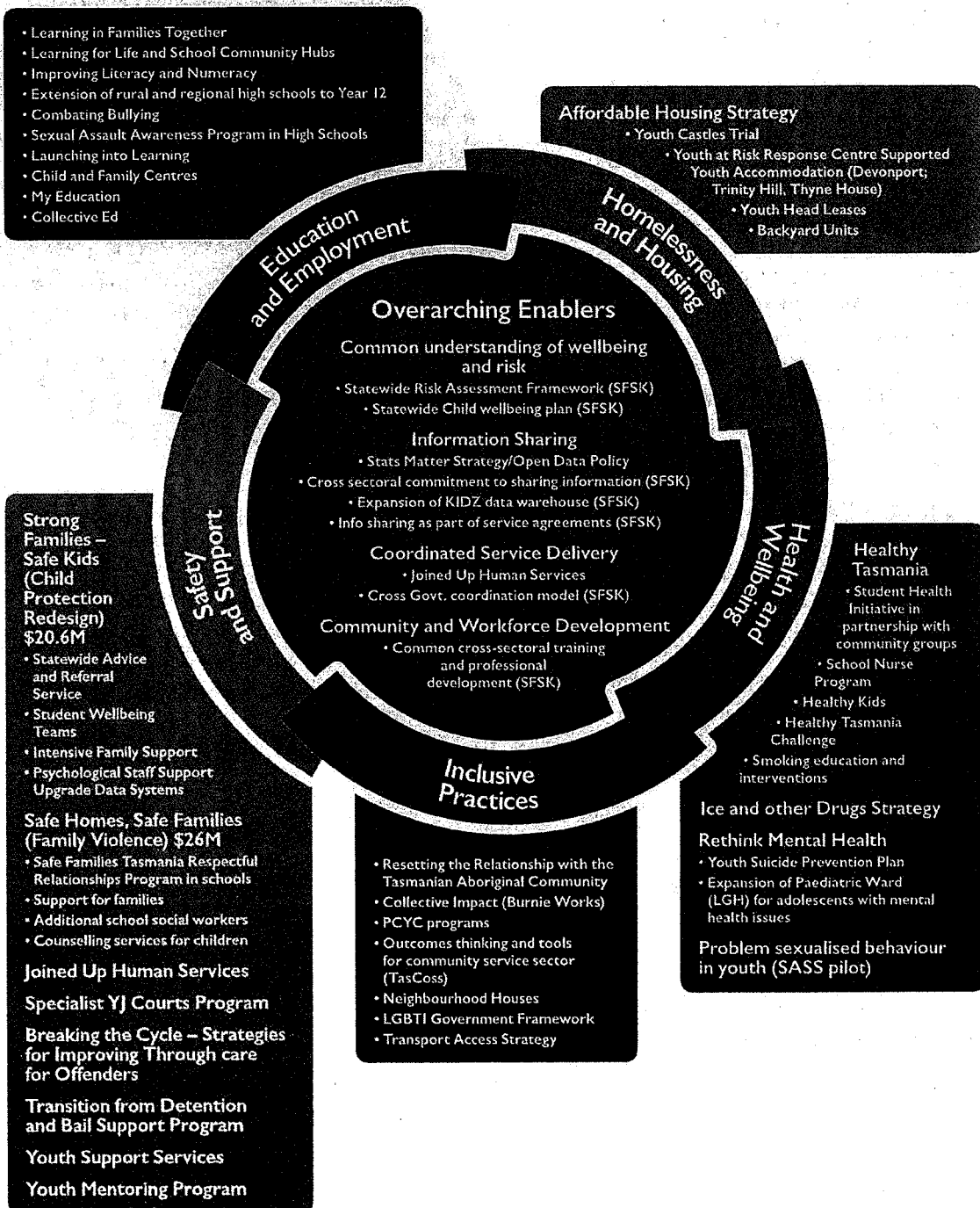
What are we doing now?

The Tasmanian government has invested a significant amount of funding across a number of reforms that support children, young people and their families (Figure 9).

The YaR strategy will build upon current government reforms and provide opportunity for existing youth services to work better together to improve outcomes for vulnerable youth.

Despite these investments, reforms are not always correctly aligned to meet the needs of young people (particularly young people who are most at risk), and many services and programs work in a siloed approach. Increased collaboration and improved service realignment is necessary to improve the outcomes for our most vulnerable young people and their families. A strong foundation and common understanding across government, non-government sectors and the community is required to achieve this.

The Youth at Risk Strategy will build upon relevant components of existing across government reforms to ensure that initiatives are not duplicating but strengthening whole of government service delivery for young people through improved information sharing, coordination and service realignment.

Figure 9: Current Tasmanian Initiatives and Reforms

- Learning in Families Together
- Learning for Life and School Community Hubs
- Improving Literacy and Numeracy
- Extension of rural and regional high schools to Year 12
- Combating Bullying
- Sexual Assault Awareness Program in High Schools
- Launching into Learning
- Child and Family Centres
- My Education
- Collective Ed

Affordable Housing Strategy
- Youth Castles Trial
- Youth at Risk Response Centre Supported Youth Accommodation (Devonport; Trinity Hill, Thyne House)
- Youth Head Leases
- Backyard Units

Education and Employment

Homelessness and Housing

Overarching Enablers

Common understanding of wellbeing and risk
- Statewide Risk Assessment Framework (SFSK)
- Statewide Child wellbeing plan (SFSK)

Information Sharing
- Stats Matter Strategy/Open Data Policy
- Cross sectoral commitment to sharing information (SFSK)
- Expansion of KIDZ data warehouse (SFSK)
- Info sharing as part of service agreements (SFSK)

Coordinated Service Delivery
- Joined Up Human Services
- Cross Govt. coordination model (SFSK)

Community and Workforce Development
- Common cross-sectoral training and professional development (SFSK)

Safety and Support

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Practices

Strong Families – Safe Kids (Child Protection Redesign) $20.6M
- Statewide Advice and Referral Service
- Student Wellbeing Teams
- Intensive Family Support
- Psychological Staff Support Upgrade Data Systems

Safe Homes, Safe Families (Family Violence) $26M
- Safe Families Tasmania Respectful Relationships Program in schools
- Support for families
- Additional school social workers
- Counselling services for children

Joined Up Human Services

Specialist YJ Courts Program

Breaking the Cycle – Strategies for Improving Through care for Offenders

Transition from Detention and Bail Support Program

Youth Support Services

Youth Mentoring Program

- Resetting the Relationship with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community
- Collective Impact (Burnie Works)
- PCYC programs
- Outcomes thinking and tools for community service sector (TasCoss)
- Neighbourhood Houses
- LGBTI Government Framework
- Transport Access Strategy

Healthy Tasmania
- Student Health Initiative in partnership with community groups
- School Nurse Program
- Healthy Kids
- Healthy Tasmania Challenge
- Smoking education and interventions

Ice and other Drugs Strategy

Rethink Mental Health
- Youth Suicide Prevention Plan
- Expansion of Paediatric Ward (LGH) for adolescents with mental health issues

Problem sexualised behaviour in youth (SASS pilot)

Building Strong Foundations

Strong Families, Safe Kids recognised the need to develop a shared foundation for identifying the critical elements of wellbeing for all children from 0 to 17 years (and beyond).

The State Government is currently consulting on a Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework, which will be one component of this shared foundation. The framework is currently being developed through the *Strong Families, Safe Kids* project.

The framework is based on the work of the Australia Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) and identifies a range of developmental indicators considered important for children and young people arranged across six domains. A draft of the youth specific domains for 13 and 17 year olds can be found at Table 1.[22]

The Youth at Risk Strategy will build on this work by ensuring that the wellbeing framework is relevant to, and meets the needs of young people in Tasmania.

In addition, the State Government will work with Government and non-government services to support more timely and systematic responses to vulnerable young people and help to link them into appropriate services through the development of a *Youth Vulnerability Assessment Tool* (Action #1).

Development of the Vulnerability Assessment Tool will be based on the *Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework*, with indicators developed to assist in identifying the level of risk a young person is facing and determine the appropriate interventions a young person may require.

> The Youth at Risk Strategy will build a strong foundation for the Youth at Risk service system through the development of a vulnerability assessment tool and the formation of agreed outcomes based on the Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework.

The Vulnerability Assessment Tool will be fully aligned with the decision-making processes of the Advice and Referral Service being implemented under *Strong Families, Safe Kids* to ensure that there is a consistent, coordinated and integrated response to our most vulnerable children and young people.

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[22]While the Strategy is focussed on young people aged 10 to 17 years consistent with the *Youth Justice Act 1997*, the Child and Wellbeing Framework has a number of domains separated into three age cohorts for Birth to 5 years, 6 to 12 years and 13 to 17 years.

Table 1: Draft – Youth Wellbeing Domains – 13 to 17 years

Domain	Developmental Indicator Areas
Being loved and safe	• Youth feels safe in their home and community environment. • Conflict with family may be more likely; but this does not turn into violence or aggression. • Growing level of independence from caregivers. • Youth is able to identify at least one person who they can rely on for support and assistance. • Youth has access to a safe environment. • Youth is provided opportunities to raise concerns and have their concerns addressed.
Having material basics	• Youth has access to educational or training materials. • Youth has access to healthy food in sufficient quantities; including increasing need for certain nutrients such as calcium and iron. • Youth has access to appropriate shelter and adequate heating. • Youth has access to sufficient clothing.
Being healthy	• Youth is a healthy weight for their age and height. • Youth is active. • Youth is emotionally and mentally well, happy and supported. • Youth is able to access health services, including oral health services, when needed, and is supported to do so. • Youth avoids smoking or engaging in risky alcohol/drug use; or is supported to give up smoking or risky alcohol/drug use. • Youth has access to, and a positive relationship with, the natural environment.
Learning	• Youth is receiving an education. • If attending a school, attends regularly, with minimal unexplained absences. • Youth is developing age-appropriate language and literacy. • Youth demonstrates positive and ethical behaviour. • Youth has access to educational or training materials.
Participating	• Youth is able to engage in organised activities, including sport. • Youth is able to satisfy emotional or social needs outside of family group (eg. by spending time with peers). • Youth is permitted and encouraged to engage with their community. • Youth is provided with opportunities to meaningfully participate in decisions. • Youth is encouraged to have a voice.
Having a positive sense of culture and identity	• Youth is supported to understand their family history. • Youth is supported to satisfy any emerging interest in their identity or culture, including gender identity. • Youth's environment, including educational environment, is culturally appropriate. • Youth's environment is free from bullying or victimisation based on culture or identity.

Action #1 – Develop a vulnerability assessment tool, which will be piloted by Student Wellbeing Teams, to identify children and young people showing signs of risk at the earliest opportunity.

The Youth at Risk Strategy will develop a common vulnerability assessment tool which will be informed by the risk/vulnerability factors identified in Figure 2 and the Victorian Vulnerability Framework (Figure 3). This will add to the suite of tools that are currently being developed within *Strong Families, Safe Kids* which are summarised in the Glossary of Terms.

This Vulnerability Assessment Tool will initially be developed for 13 to 17 year olds (depending on its success a child and young adult assessment will also be developed) and piloted by Student Wellbeing Teams which have been established across each Learning Service within the Department of Education. Experienced social workers within these teams currently provide support to children and young people to participate and remain engaged in education, making the teams well placed to pilot the effectiveness of the vulnerability assessment tool in the early identification of young people at risk.

Along with other actions outlined in this strategy, the vulnerability assessment tool will support more timely and systematic responses to vulnerable young people and help to link them into appropriate services.

Action #2 – Build on the Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework through the development of agreed outcomes.

There are currently no whole of government outcomes that measure the wellbeing of vulnerable children or young people in Tasmania.

This action will develop a number of agreed wellbeing outcomes that will be endorsed by relevant government agencies. These wellbeing outcomes will guide future children and youth reforms, form an integral part of funding agreements and the commissioning of services, and most importantly assist government to measure improvements to the lives of our most vulnerable children and young people.

Building Strong Foundations – Glossary of Terms

Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework – Based on work of the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY), this Framework will ensure that the entire service and support system has a strong and common understanding of the critical elements of wellbeing for children and young people.

Common Approach – This is a tool developed by ARACY to support an informal conversation with a child, a young person or their carer about their wellbeing and issues that may require further attention. The Common Approach will be aligned with the elements of wellbeing in the *Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework*.

Child and Youth Vulnerability Assessment Tool – This tool will be developed based on the *Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework* and will include indicators to assist in identifying areas of vulnerability for a child or young person.

Statewide Risk Assessment Framework – This will be a useful tool for all professionals working with complex clients to understand how key services assess risk for children and young people and when intervention may be appropriate.

Child and Youth Wellbeing Plan – These plans will assist in reducing duplication, decrease the need for the family to repeat their story, and will provide a platform for multiagency collaborative work. The Child and Youth Wellbeing Plan will include information and actions relevant to the needs of the child in relation to areas of need.

Safety and Supports

The Tasmanian Government will provide timely and appropriate safety and supports for young people in OOHC and those engaged in the Youth Justice System.

Keeping young people safe is a core objective of the Tasmanian government and the community. It is also a critical part of the foundation for children to build strength and resilience, to grow and to reach their potential.

The *Strong Families, Safe Kids* project will redesign the child safety system to ensure that support is provided o children and young people before it gets to the point that they need to be removed from the family home. Implementation of the Youth at Risk Strategy will include actions to ensure that this work meets the needs of young people as well as younger children.

Despite these efforts, there is robust evidence that some of the most significant risks, in terms of safety and support, are found in those young people that find themselves either in OOHC or being dealt with through the Youth Justice System.

For example, a recent report showed that in 2013–14[23]:

- Young people under a care and protection order were 27 times more likely to be under youth justice supervision in the same year compared to the general population;

- Almost half of young people in detention were also in the child protection system in the same year; and

- The younger someone was at their first youth justice supervision, the more likely they were to also be in child protection.

"I was placed in 32 different Foster placements between the age of 2 and 4"

Young person living in a shelter

Research shows that children and young people in OOHC have poorer health outcomes than the general population, across all domains of physical, developmental and emotional/mental health.[24] These young people are more likely to have significant unmet health needs, increased rates of developmental difficulties and are less likely to access preventative health services.

The Youth at Risk Strategy builds on the prevention strategies of *Strong Families, Safe Kids* by improving the planning and service system for this group of young people.

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[23]AIHW 2016. Young people in child protection and under youth justice supervision 2013–14. Data linkage series no. 21. Cat. no. CSI 22. Canberra: AIHW.
[24]Royal Australasian College of Physicians (2006) Health of Children in "Out-Of-Home" Care - Paediatric Policy.

Action #3 – Investigate an integrated and flexible therapeutic custodial youth justice system.

The State Government will work with the sector to identify the best integrated therapeutic models for juvenile detention in Tasmania. This will include further consideration of models that offer a range of additional accommodation options, and would include differing levels of security.

This action will also consider linkages to flexible learning, therapeutic interventions, alcohol and drug service, mental health and step down transition support from detention.

> "75 per cent of kids can be turned around, but if they get into the adult system they are institutionalised"
>
> Young person in detention

> "All I know is criminals"
>
> Young person in the adult prison

Action #4 – Provide ongoing support for young people on bail and youth transitioning out of juvenile detention.

Ernst & Young conducted a study to measure the social return on investment in Tasmania for the Bail Support and Transition from Detention programs. The study found that for every dollar invested more than three times is returned in social and economic value, with around a third of the benefits in the form of reduced sentencing costs and two thirds of benefits as 'social value' which are derived from helping young people return to education, developing positive social connections, improving their physical health and becoming more employable.

The State Government will continue to invest in these types of programs into the future.

Action #5 – Consider providing a statutory basis to the specialised youth justice court.

An evaluation report for the pilot Specialised Youth Court was completed in 2013. This innovative court model has now been implemented across each region of Tasmania, based on the success of the pilot. However, there is currently no legislative basis that supports the ongoing operation of this model. This action will examine Part 8 of the Youth Justice Act 1997 to better reflect the functions of the Youth Justice Court, including those key stakeholders who must attend each sitting of the Court.

Action #6 –
Investigate the potential role of Youth Court Duty Officer positions to provide greater support for young people engaged in the Youth Justice Court.

The *Specialist Youth Justice Court Evaluation Report* suggested that some young people attending court lacked the information and skills necessary to understand and steer themselves through this complex process, including procedures and language of the Court, which informs them of their rights and entitlements.

The evaluation report recommended the establishment of Youth Court Duty Officers across all three regions. This action will see Children and Youth Services consider the benefits and functions of the potential role of Youth Court Duty Officers alongside the role and functions of the current Youth Justice workforce and the current functions and resources available within the Youth Court.

Action #7 – Review and improve the quality of transition planning and case planning across the child safety and youth justice systems, and adherence to national data reporting standards.

> "Once you turn 12 it's like you don't need help, I would only hear from my worker every 6 months"
>
> Young person living in a shelter

In 2015–16 only 54 per cent of young people (10–17 years) had an approved Child Safety Service case and care plan. An even smaller percentage (23 per cent) of young people had an approved Leaving Care Plan. While all young people on custodial orders have case plans and transition/exit plans, feedback received through the consultation process indicated that the quality of these plans needed to be improved, so that young people have a higher chance of reducing or desisting from their offending behaviours once released.

Under this action Children and Youth Services will undertake a review into the current transition planning and case planning process across the Child Safety and Custodial Youth Justice Systems to ensure that children and young people in, or leaving care or detention facilities have a detailed case plan or transition plan which is regularly reviewed and updated.

Action #8 – Provide targeted support for young people in OOHC.

The Tasmanian Government recognises that highly vulnerable young people, who have experienced significant trauma, require specialised support and treatment options.

The Government is committed to investing in appropriate trauma informed therapeutic supports for young people in OOHC. These supports will provide young people in OOHC with the best chance of reaching their full potential.

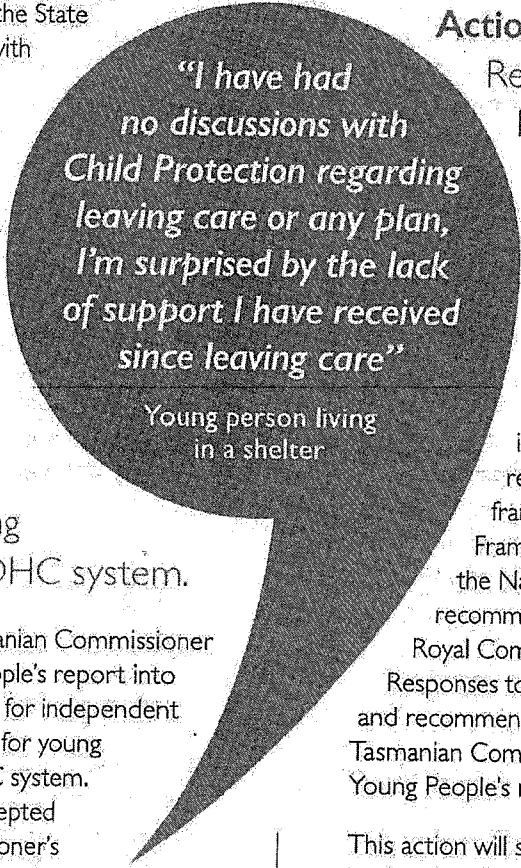## Action #9 – Enhance support for carers in the OOHC system.

Foster and kinship carers are the backbone of the OOHC system. Without them, the current model for supporting some of the most vulnerable children and young people in our community collapses.

Through the implementation of Phase 2 of the OOHC reforms, the State Government will work with the sector to improve the support and training provided to carers.

Action #10 – Establish independent oversight and monitoring of children and young people in the OOHC system.

As identified in the Tasmanian Commissioner for Children & Young People's report into OOHC[25], there is a need for independent monitoring and advocacy for young people within the OOHC system. The Government has accepted all seven of the Commissioner's recommendations, and implementation of these recommendations is underway.

Importantly, the strengthening of the OOHC system is being done alongside and in tandem with the redesign of our child safety system. The intersection between these recommendations, the *Youth at Risk Strategy* as well as *Joined Up Human Services*, the *Affordable Housing Strategy* and our *Family Violence Action Plan* will be a primary focus.

"I have had no discussions with Child Protection regarding leaving care or any plan, I'm surprised by the lack of support I have received since leaving care"

Young person living in a shelter

Action #11 – Develop a Regulatory and Quality Framework for OOHC that meets the needs of vulnerable youth.

The Tasmanian Government is committed to the development and implementation of a robust regulatory and quality framework for OOHC. This Framework will be based on the National OOHC Standards, recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and recommendations made within the Tasmanian Commissioner for Children & Young People's report on OOHC.

This action will see the Youth at Risk implementation team work closely with the OOHC Reform team during the development of the Framework to ensure the needs of youth are appropriately addressed.

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[25]Tasmania Commissioner for Children and Young People, Children and Young People in Out of Home Care in Tasmania, January 2017.

Action #12 – Enhance the ability of the Child Safety Service to respond to the specific needs of young people.

The *Strong Families, Safe Kids* project includes a range of initiatives that aim to increase safety for young people at risk. This includes the development of an advice and referral service, refocussing child safety services and the development of an assertive family intervention model.

This action will see a youth lens applied to initiatives in *Strong Families, Safe Kids* and will include the establishment of specific youth teams or youth workers across teams. Consideration will also be given to co-located youth teams which would include youth justice workers, and the possibility/viability of other co-located services.

Action #13 – Develop a referral map of services and programs for young people which will provide clear pathways and referral options for young people.

This action will see the development of a referral map of services and programs for young people. This map will be developed by the *Strong Families, Safe Kids* project team, will be based upon the vulnerability framework and will outline relevant services for differing levels of vulnerability across the youth population. It is anticipated the map will be rolled out across the youth services sector and will be a useful tool for new services, such as the Advice and Referral Service and Student Wellbeing Teams, when referring vulnerable youth to appropriate service providers.

Homelessness and Housing

Housing stress and the risk of homelessness impact people at different times of their lives as they transition from one housing situation to another. It is at these transition points that people are most at risk of becoming vulnerable.

As identified in *Tasmania's Affordable Housing Strategy 2015–25*, there are a range of common housing pathways that either support people when their housing needs change or put people at risk of becoming vulnerable.

For young people, vulnerability is commonly experienced when shifting to independence, when exiting institutions (including youth detention) and when exiting the OOHC system. Young people are also vulnerable to becoming homeless when they are disconnected from their family, or it is not safe for them to live at home.

> The Tasmanian Government will increase awareness and create alternative pathways within the homelessness and housing system for young people at risk.

The instability of being homeless often results in a young person becoming disengaged from school, training and employment and other support networks within their community.

The younger someone is when they first become homeless, the more likely they are to remain homeless for a longer period of time.

In Tasmania, young people are over-represented among the homeless population, with 25 per cent of homeless Tasmanians aged between 12 and 24 years, and 12.2 per cent of these young people being aged 12 to 18 years.[26]

Young people (particularly those aged under 16 years) who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness can be broadly categorised into three groups:[27]

a) Children who are temporarily disconnected from their family and home, and are at risk of homelessness.

b) Children who are unstably connected to their family/home and are homeless but where there is opportunity to reunify with family.

c) Children who are chronically disconnected to their family/home are homeless and there is no realistic prospect of them being able to return safely home.

The Youth at Risk Strategy will support Housing Tasmania to help young people find secure safe and stable housing by supporting Housing Tasmania to increase the awareness of existing services, enhancing support for young people in existing accommodation services and exploring new models for accommodation support in areas where there are limited options available.

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[26]ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) 2014b, Estimated Resident Population by Single Year of Age, Tasmania, Table 56, cat. No 3101.0.

[27]Unaccompanied Children and Young People 12–15 Years Accessing SHS Policy, NSW Government, October 2015.

Action #14 – Provide trauma informed, multi-disciplinary support services within the Youth at Risk Response Centre.

The Government has committed $1.4 million in the *Affordable Housing Strategy* to construct a Youth at Risk Response Centre in southern Tasmania. The centre will incorporate both accommodation suitable for young people, and facilities on the ground floor for the provision of services. The centre will be non-gender specific and service young people who are under 16 and provide accommodation and specialised support to make the young person safe.

The State Government will provide recurrent funding for the provision of trauma informed, multi-disciplinary support services within the centre. These support services will help young people to restore relationships with their family, engage with school and other youth services, and access alternative options for longer term wellbeing when restoration with their family is unachievable.

Action #15 – Explore new models for medium term supported accommodation options for under 16's.

Young people under 16 often have higher support needs due to their developmental maturity and lower levels of independence. While there is an increasing amount of accommodation options becoming available for young people 16 or over, there is a lack of supported medium term supported accommodation options for young people under 16.

Action 19 within the *Affordable Housing Action Plan* shows the commitment of Housing Tasmania to explore innovative models for homeless young people under the age of 16.

> *"If you show up to a Shelter drunk or on drugs you get locked out [of shelters], this forces young people to find other, usually unsafe accommodation"*
>
> Young person in community consultations

Action #16 – Investigate opportunities to enhance outreach housing and support options for young people living in rural and remote areas.

For young people living in rural and remote areas of Tasmania, accessing housing and support services is often more difficult due to a lack of outreach and satellite offices for these services. This is particularly true for young people in these areas who experience instances of family breakdown or tension and as a result find themselves homeless or at risk of homelessness. Reunification with family remains the primary objective for young people, and a successful outcome in this space is impacted significantly by the period of time spent estranged from family and the need for young people to move away to access support services which can often result in poor outcomes for the young person. This action will consider tailored housing and support solutions for vulnerable sub-groups where general youth services are not appropriate. This could be done through the provision of new facilities or supports, or through the expansion and diversification of existing facilities or supports where appropriate.

"There are times when I have broken into cars to sleep, or if I had nowhere to go, I would break into an empty house and stay there, but you have to leave them clean and tidy though"

15 year old known to the Youth Justice System

Action #17 – Educate and raise awareness of housing pathways for vulnerable young people.

Building upon Action 9 within the *Affordable Housing Action Plan*, the Youth at Risk implementation team will support Housing Tasmania to raise awareness and encourage early referrals from Children and Youth Services and other youth service providers to Housing Connect for vulnerable youth requiring housing support.

This action will also educate service providers and young people about Housing Connect and the prioritisation system for vulnerable young people. Fact sheets are being developed in conjunction with the CREATE Foundation to inform young people of these services including their ability to apply for housing support up to 30 weeks before exiting care.

Importantly, the strengthening of the OOHC system is being done alongside and in tandem with the redesign of our child safety system. The intersection between these recommendations, the Youth at Risk Strategy as well as Joined Up Human Services, the *Affordable Housing Strategy* and our Family Violence Action Plan will be a primary focus.

Education and Employment

The Tasmanian Government will improve the education and employment opportunities for vulnerable young Tasmanians.

The majority of Tasmanian students are engaged at school and attend regularly. However there is a significant minority who do not enjoy school, do not feel connected to school, and are dissatisfied with their school.

Students who are disengaged from education are at greater risk of leaving school, unemployment, low income, social exclusion, risky health behaviours and criminal behaviour.[28]

Often disengagement from school begins with unexplained student absences. Changes being introduced under the *Education Act 2016* will assist families and schools to address reasons for unexplained student non-attendance through compulsory conciliation conferences. A range of factors may contribute to a child or young person becoming disengaged, or at risk of disengaging from school. These include:

- 'Family and community factors such as poverty, parental unemployment and/or low educational attainment, homelessness, out-of-home care, Aboriginal status, refugee background, family breakdown and domestic violence.

- Personal factors such as physical or mental health issues, disability, behavioural issues, offending behaviour, contact with youth justice, substance misuse and learning difficulties.

- School-related factors such as negative relationships with teachers or peers, unsupportive school culture, limited subject options and lack of student participation in decision making.'[29]

A major theme from stakeholder consultations was the need for additional alternative education options for disengaged students. Consultations also highlighted the lack of transition programs available to re-engage and provide pathways back into mainstream education for disengaged young people.

Moving from school to the workforce is a key life transition point for young people. Low skill levels and a lack of work experience can make it difficult for young people to enter the workforce.[30]

Young people in Tasmania make up a large proportion of the unemployed. The youth unemployment rate in Tasmania is the second highest across all Australian jurisdictions.[31]

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[28]Hancock, K and Zubrick, S (2015) *Children and young people at risk of disengagement from school,* Telethon Kids Institute, Western Australia.
[29]Victorian Government, Positive Pathways for Victoria's vulnerable young people: Vulnerable Youth Framework.
[30]Carvalho, Patrick (2015) *Youth unemployment in Australia,* Centre for Independent Studies.
[31]Ibid.

Action #18 – Improving employment opportunities for young people at risk in Tasmania.

Meaningful employment opportunities provide young people with a pathway out of disadvantage. The State Government will partner with communities and industry to increase labour market participation and productivity at a statewide, regional and community level. The employment partnership will formalise existing and new collaboration between key players from business, industry, the three tiers of government and the community. Access to apprenticeships and traineeships are essential for getting young at risk Tasmanians into the workforce and on a skilled career pathway. This action will make it easier and more cost effective for Tasmanian employers of all sizes to take on more apprentices and trainees.

The State Government will consider opportunities to increase the support for employers of school-based apprentices to create further pathways into employment for young Tasmanians.

The State will also consider opportunities to incentivise and support employers, small and large, to expand their use of apprentices and trainees and create a more productive and rewarding training experience for young people.

Action #19 – Improve service coordination for complex young people and their families, including consideration of ways to prioritise services for parents whose issues impact on their child's education.

Young people have the best chance of academic success if they are supported and nurtured at home. Problem's that impact on a young person's home life have significant adverse effects on that young person's education.

This action recognises the importance of service coordination for young people and their families, which will be realised through:

- The prioritisation of Child Wellbeing Plans based on vulnerability.

- Prioritised service delivery for parents whose issues are impacting on their child's education.

- Clear pathways for Student Wellbeing Teams to link young people at risk into relevant government and non-government programs and services.

> *"I only found out about an alternative program like ASPIRE as I was ready to walk out the door, I should have been told about this much sooner"*
>
> Aboriginal young person

Action #20 – Increase capacity in student re-engagement programs (targeting youth most at risk).

Engagement and retention are critical in determining a student's educational outcomes. Once students become disengaged, research shows it is difficult for them to catch up.[32]

A major theme from stakeholder consultations was the need for additional alternative educational options for disengaged students, including transition programs to re-engage and provide pathways back into mainstream education.

This action will support Tasmanian children and young people to access education and learning by building upon DoE's successful student re engagement programs (targeting youth most at risk).

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[32]http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/pages/disengagedrisk.aspx

Health and Wellbeing

Experimenting and risk taking behaviour are considered to be part of normal adolescent development. There is now a large body of evidence showing that the part of the brain responsible for regulating behaviour is not fully developed until a young person reaches their mid-20s.[33]

Young people are particularly vulnerable to a number of health conditions and harms related to risk taking behaviours. For young people the biggest health risk factors are alcohol, illicit drugs, sexually transmissible disease, obesity and mental illness.[34]

In addition there are particular groups of marginalised young people who are at an increased risk of poor health outcomes due to other vulnerabilities. These include Aboriginal and LGBTIQ youth, young people in OOHC, youth detention, young people living with a disability and young people who live in extreme poverty.

> The Tasmanian Government will improve the health and wellbeing of our most vulnerable young people.

Young people in OOHC are known to be a highly vulnerable group who often experience traumatic life events; these young people have increased physical, mental and social health needs and often have limited access to resources.[35]

Young people are generally inexperienced in accessing health services and are not always capable of identifying appropriate health services. This is compounded by the fact that many mainstream health services are inaccessible and present young people with multiple barriers.[36]

Youth focussed health services, need to provide a service that is flexible, developmentally appropriate and specific to the health needs of young people.

Health risks in young people not only impact their current health but also their longer term health and wellbeing. Adolescence is an opportune time to prevent and provide support for the emergence of health disorders to ensure young people are receiving the support they need as they transition into adulthood.

[33]National Institute of Mental Health, 2001. *Teenage brain: a work in progress*. NIH publication no. 01-4929. NIMH.
[34]Australian Youth Development Index. 2016 report. http://www.youthacton.org.au/australian_ydi
[35]Royal Australasian College of Physicians (2006), *Health of Children in "Out-Of-Home" Care - Paediatric Policy*.
[36]DHHS, Primary Health Services and Population Health, *Youth Health Service Framework 2008–2011*.

Action #21 – Support and strengthen access to holistic youth focused mental health services for young people.

Mental illness is one of the most common conditions within childhood and adolescence and can have a large impact on a young person's educational performance, overall development and relationships.

Consultation with Tasmanian health professionals and the youth service sector raised the issue of the absence of a dedicated child and adolescent mental health inpatient unit in Tasmania. Currently, if a young person requires admission for mental health issues they are admitted to either a paediatric ward or an adult mental health unit.

The Government is committed to addressing this gap through the development of adolescent mental health facilities at the RHH and LGH.

Suicide prevention and education initiatives are also a key commitment of the Government as shown by the range of suicide prevention initiatives outlined within the Rethink Mental Health and the Youth Suicide Prevention Plans. This includes the commencement of an Early Intervention Referral Service that will provide intensive support and follow up for young people aged 15 years and over who have been referred following a suicide attempt, as well as education and training for their families and carers.

This action will consider opportunities to work with the Tasmanian Health Service to strengthen and support both inpatient and outpatient mental health services for young people.

Action #22 – Improve consistency in adolescent health services in Tasmania.

The Tasmanian Youth Health Service currently offers young people aged 12–24 years free health and wellbeing services including support and information, health promotion, group programs and referrals to other services. Youth Health Services exist in the South, North and North West but have varied models of operation and inconsistencies in their service delivery.

> "It feels like you have to be 'proper messed up' before you can go to a service"
>
> LGBTI young person

This initiative will see the implementation team work with the THS to consider ways of delivering a more consistent adolescent health service to young people in Tasmania.

Action #23 – Strengthen access to holistic youth focused alcohol and drug treatment options.

Harmful drug and alcohol use may include alcohol and licit drugs, such as pharmaceuticals used for non-medicinal purposes, and illicit drugs. Though substance use is not always harmful to health, some drugs are particularly harmful to adolescent brain development and there is a strong association between substance use and other health issues. While protective factors such as strong family relationships, feeling supported, a sense of belonging, and other factors, can prevent harmful drug use, young people should be empowered to make their own informed decisions about the risks associated with substance use.[37]

The development of the Alcohol and Other Drug Services System Framework being undertaken by the DHHS will consider other relevant youth stakeholder groups to ensure the framework is consistent with and complements the YaR Strategy and other initiatives for vulnerable young people, while continuing to adopt a family focussed approach to address the holistic needs of young people with alcohol and drug issues.

> *"Almost everyone I know smokes dope"*
>
> Young person
> Glenorchy Youth
> Taskforce

Action #24 – Prioritise Access to Assertive Family Supports.

This action recognises that some families require access to more timely supports than others. *Strong Families, Safe Kids* has allocated $1.5 million over two years to purchase additional intensive family support services for families in crisis. This action will prioritise access to Assertive Family Support Services for those children, young people and families that have a history of trauma, disability and/or extreme poverty.

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[37](*Healthy, Safe and Thriving*: National Strategic Framework for Child and Youth Health, 2015, COAG Health Council).

Inclusive Communities

Inclusive practices are everyone's responsibility. The safety and wellbeing of young people in Tasmania must be a shared responsibility across families, communities, Governments and the non-government sector. Strategies must be well-targeted but developed with an understanding of the local context for young people.

Nationally there is a move to build and foster Australian communities to become more resilient to counteract the effects of radicalisation and violent extremism.[38]

The Tasmanian Government will create safe and inclusive communities for young people.

Research shows this can be achieved by giving everyone within a community (including youth at risk) the opportunity to be involved, engaged and have their say thereby increasing community tolerance, and enhancing relationships and a sense of belonging for marginalised groups within a community.

The National Strategy for Young Australians highlights the importance of community for young people. For young people to feel empowered to participate within their community they need to feel a sense of belonging and be provided with opportunities to contribute.[39]

Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012) show the high levels of disadvantage across Tasmanian communities which can cause barriers to social inclusion.[40] These include:

- High levels of dependence on government welfare.

- High proportion of 15–19 year olds not fully engaged in education or work (15.3% compared to 14.8% nationally).

- High proportion of children under 15 years in lone parent families (24.5% compared to 19% nationally).

- Low proportion of people with non-school qualifications (59% compared to 63.2% nationally).

- High proportions of the population with a long term health condition (67%) disability (24%) or mental health condition (23%).

- High proportion of people living in rural and regional areas.

There is strong evidence that Collective Impact Strategies assist in breaking down the barriers to solving complex social problems. These strategies target complex issues through: a common agenda, shared data collection and measuring results, a plan of action and mutually reinforcing activities, regular communication and a backbone organisation to support the strategies.

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[38]www.livingsafetogether.gov.au
[39]Australian Government, National Strategy for Young Australians, 2010.
[40]Australian Bureau of Statistics, State and Territory Statistical Indicators, 2012.

Burnie Works is a collective impact framework designed to address long term and entrenched issues in the local community. In 2015 Burnie Works was named as the most promising early-stage collective impact initiative in Australia. The success of Burnie Works reiterate the importance of providing local communities with the opportunity to address local youth issues through collective impact and place based initiatives. More needs to be done to empower and support these communities to address the issues impacting on their vulnerable young people.

Action #25 – Work with local communities who are currently undertaking collective impact initiatives, and seek to identify opportunities to promote and develop place based and collective impact initiatives in communities of greatest need.

Collective Impact is a framework which uses a structured approach to working across organisational boundaries and with local communities to achieve significant and long lasting change.

This action will see the Tasmanian Government working with priority communities to consider opportunities to develop local strategies for reducing risk for young people. This could be through the development of collective impact initiatives or through the promotion of collaborative interventions that build on existing local programs and infrastructure.

Action #26 – Work with all levels of government to develop a range of innovative consultative mechanisms and more inclusive practices targeted towards Youth at Risk in Tasmania.

This Department of Health and Human Services will work with key stakeholder groups across the government and non-government sectors to encourage innovative ways to engage and listen to young people who are at greatest risk.

Information generated through this process will provide government and non-government service providers with a better understanding of the needs of vulnerable young people across Tasmanian communities. This will enable relevant services and supports to be inclusive and targeted to meet the needs of vulnerable young people.

"Boredom creates stupid actions"

Young person in Community Consultations

Enablers

Overarching enablers allow services to work collaboratively and more effectively across organisational boundaries to address complex problems.

In order to begin solving the problems of 'Youth at Risk' it is important that there is a common understanding across the service system of what we mean by the wellbeing of young people, how young people at risk will be identified and the levels of interventions that may be applied depending on the number and complexity of vulnerabilities experienced.

Research tells us that early identification of risk factors and earlier intervention in life can give young people better life outcomes. For effective intervention to occur, systems must be in place to quickly identify and respond to periods of vulnerability to prevent the escalation of issues faced by individual young people.

The Tasmanian Government will establish system wide overarching enablers to support the youth service sector.

A key theme that emerged during consultations with stakeholders was the need for early identification and intervention for vulnerable young people. Stakeholders noted that if identification of problems and appropriate intervention had of occurred early in the lives of many of these youth who are now considered 'at risk', their issues may have been avoided.

Children and Youth Services engaged TasCOSS to undertake a mapping exercise of the programs and services available for young people at risk in Tasmania. This information was presented in the form of a register of programs and services.

While many service providers could clearly describe the program or service they deliver, there was a number of inconsistencies in the data collected from service providers especially in the areas of:

- Service or Program Restrictions – the majority of providers did not identify any 'complexity' based restrictions, for example, only two providers acknowledged that if a client's needs were beyond scope they would refer to a more appropriate service.

- Capacity – only 24 per cent of programs or services identified any capacity limits.

- Outcome Measurements – only a small percentage of providers could detail how they measure client outcomes.

The use of consistent purchasing frameworks and service agreements for the youth sector, including the use of common outcome measures, will assist the sector to provide responsive, accountable services that meet the needs of young people and are delivered in locations where they are most required.

Action #27 – Explore the use of single case management for young people with complex needs by building upon the Joined Up Human Services Lead Support Coordination pilot.

Young people who have experienced multiple traumatic life experiences were unanimous in their support for a single case management model. A common comment made by young people was *"If I need to tell my story more than once, it all gets too hard and chances are I won't seek help"*.

This observation has been reinforced by practitioners that work with young people who believe that young people will only engage with a service if they have a trusting relationship with the person that is trying to promote engagement.

This action will be achieved through the evaluation of the 'Lead Support Coordination Service' through the Joined Up Human Services project. This service is being used as a tool for case coordination with the intent of establishing a single case management model.

Action #28 – Work with TasCOSS to support the ongoing development of the *findhelptas* website.

"Young people don't seek help because they can't be bothered with all the crap, they don't want to tell their story multiple times"

Aboriginal young person

There is currently a lack of awareness across the sector (and from young people) regarding the programs and services that are available to young people at risk.

TasCOSS currently manage www.findhelptas.com.au which is a publically accessible website that provides the general public and those working in and with the sector, access to an up-to-date listing of available services.

This action will be achieved by allowing TasCOSS to utilise data obtained through their mapping exercise in this register to update the findhelptas website.

Action #29 – Work with relevant Agencies and service providers to develop a consistent approach to purchasing services for young people at risk which reflects the outcomes developed through the child and youth wellbeing framework.

In the absence of clear linkages between the services purchased by government and a coherent outcomes framework, it is difficult to be sure that the service system is well targeted and meets the priority needs of young people or their families.

The current approach to purchasing services across all levels of government can result in duplication of programs or services, or development of programs or services that do not strengthen the service system.

This action will ensure a consistent approach to purchasing services and programs for young people at risk which reflects the outcomes developed through the child and youth wellbeing framework.

Action #30 –

Improve the service system to ensure all services and programs are flexible, responsive, inclusive, accountable and meet the needs of young people.

The mapping exercise conducted during the development of the Youth at Risk Strategy identified a broad range of services and programs for young people at risk. However it also highlighted the difficulties in building a comprehensive picture of services available for young people. For example, many organisations did not identify any capacity limits to their services, and there were large differences in approach to, and maturity associated with measuring client outcomes. In addition, there was the many providers that indicated they serviced multiple local government areas, however, many of these providers only operated from large population zones (major cities), providing little or no outreach services to ensure that they were truly accessible in regional and rural areas.

"Outreach is important, if services and programs don't reach out to young people, young people won't engage"

Aboriginal young person

It is important that services for young people are accessible to those who most need them, and are effective and able to deliver the best outcomes for young people. In order to achieve this, services need to be designed using the best available evidence and need to be flexible in their service delivery to capture those young people who would most benefit from their interventions.

Programs and services that operate across the youth service system must be flexible, responsive, inclusive, accountable and must meet the needs of young people.

A common language for articulating outcomes will greatly enhance the ability of services to collaborate to deliver better outcomes for young people in Tasmania.

This action will involve:

- The development of a robust outcomes monitoring and reporting framework

- The review of all service agreements in collaboration with service providers prior to expiry to align, over time, the service reporting with the common outcomes reporting framework

- Seeking input from young people and their families when developing programs or services

- Analysing the cost and benefits of intensive family and youth support programs such as Multi-Systemic Therapy and Functional Family Therapy.

> "Services need
> to understand where
> a young person is coming
> from, first impressions count.
> If a young person has a negative
> first impression they probably
> won't try the service again"
>
> Young person Clarence Youth
> Advisory Group

Action #31 – Consider co-funding models and contributions to support the capacity of the service system to respond to young people with complex needs.

Service providers indicated that the ability to provide appropriate services can be constrained due to the number of young clients presenting with increasing complexities. These complex cases require collaborative, holistic interventions involving a number of service providers. This action will investigate co-funding models to support the capacity of the service system to respond collaboratively to the complex needs of vulnerable young people.

Action #32 – Provide opportunities for cross sectoral training and skill development to the youth service sector.

This action will consider cross-sectoral training opportunities that will enhance consistency across the youth service sector and will look at targeting areas of greatest need. It will include providing opportunities for cross-sectoral job sharing and training (including leaders) and will build upon the joint training calendar being implemented within *Strong Families, Safe Kids*.

Input will be sought from key stakeholder groups across the Government and non-government sector and partnerships will be developed with the University of Tasmania and TAFE, to ensure graduates entering professions within the youth sector are adequately skilled in areas that impact on young people at risk, for example, trauma informed care.

Action #33 – Establish a cross government information sharing group to improve information sharing across the children and youth sector.

Stakeholder feedback received during the consultation process identified information and data sharing across key stakeholder groups as a significant impediment to the current service system. It was suggested that there are artificial barriers between government and non-government, with general consensus that sharing of information and data needs to be across the whole of the youth sector and that until barriers are overcome there will continue to be an ad-hoc and uncoordinated service system.

This action will be achieved through the establishment of a cross-government group that clearly understands best practice and the appropriate authority to share information. The group will support:

- The development of a Child Wellbeing database (refer to Action #34);

- The promotion of a positive information sharing culture across the government and non-government sectors;

- Ongoing responsibility for the shared resources for information sharing; and

- Establishment of priorities for system development.

Action #34 – Develop a Child Wellbeing database to increase awareness and ownership of youth issues at the community level.

While many communities have anecdotal evidence regarding the main risks or vulnerabilities that impact on young people in their communities. There is a lack of publically accessible data to support this anecdotal evidence.

This action will be delivered through the development of a Child Wellbeing database that will identify the needs of children and young people across Tasmanian communities and guide service development. This will assist to increase awareness and ownership of issues for children and young people at a community level. The database will be integrated with work being progressed in *Strong Families, Safe Kids* to share information on the wellbeing of children in Tasmania.

Delivering Outcomes for Young People

The Youth at Risk Strategy will better align the service system to meet the needs of vulnerable young Tasmanians. Once implemented, there will be a wide range of improved population and programmatic outcomes for young people, their families, the community and service systems.

Specifically, the actions within this Strategy will align with many of the population outcomes outlined in the Child Wellbeing Framework and will deliver the following program outcomes which are aligned with the following Strategic Objectives:

Strategic Objectives	Will be achieved	Program Outcomes	Actions
1. Earlier Identification of Youth at Risk	Through a common understanding and assessment of risk across Government and non-government services.	Increased understanding of wellbeing as it relates to young people and the term 'Youth at Risk' across the Tasmanian community.	Action 1
2. Enhancing Statutory Services	By building upon existing reforms and ensuring adequate planning and accountability for the safety and protection of vulnerable young people.	Young people in Tasmania are supported and encouraged to reach their full potential.	Actions 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12
3. Integrating Service Systems	By building an integrated cross sectorial service system that is place based and provides universal youth focused services to all young people and more targeted supports to those in greatest need.	Young people in Tasmania have access to appropriate, timely and fit for purpose services and supports.	Actions 13, 18, 24, 25, 27 and 32
4. Improving Services	By providing flexible and inclusive services that are evidence based and youth focussed.	Young people in Tasmania are meaningfully involved in the design and evaluation of programs and services that have an impact on them.	Actions 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 30 and 31
5. Continuous Improvements through Evidence, Evaluation and Information Sharing	By ensuring that the young person and their 'best interests' are at the centre of all data sharing; and that the service system for young people is supported by a well trained and agile workforce, is outcomes focused and robustly evaluated.	Improved outcomes for young people in Tasmania through increased data sharing and better understanding of the service system.	Actions 2, 28, 29, 33 and 34

Governance and Implementation

A small project team will be created to develop and oversee an implementation plan (including a robust evaluation framework) for the Youth at Risk Strategy. The implementation team will be located within the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

The proposed governance structure for the project will be closely linked with governance arrangements for the *Strong Families, Safe Kids*, the Out of Home Care Strategic Plan and *Safe Homes, Safe Families*.

Summary of Actions

Building Strong Foundations

The Youth at Risk Strategy will build a strong foundation for the Youth at Risk service system.

ACTION AREA 1

Action #1	Develop a vulnerability assessment tool, which will be piloted by Student Wellbeing Teams, to identify children and young people showing signs of risk at the earliest opportunity.
Action #2	Build on the Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework through the development of agreed outcomes.

Safety and Supports

Providing timely and appropriate safety and supports for young people at risk in our community.

ACTION AREA 2

Action #3	Investigate an integrated and flexible therapeutic custodial youth justice system.
Action #4	Provide ongoing support for young people on bail and youth transitioning out of juvenile detention.
Action #5	Consider providing a statutory basis to the specialised youth justice court.
Action #6	Investigate the potential role of Youth Court Duty Officer positions to provide greater support for young people engaged in the Youth Justice Court.
Action #7	Review and improve the quality of transition planning and case planning across the child safety and youth justice systems, and adherence to national data reporting standards.
Action #8	Provide targeted support for young people in OOHC.
Action #9	Enhance support for carers in the OOHC system.
Action #10	Establish independent oversight of, and advocacy for, children and young people in the OOHC system.
Action #11	Develop a Regulatory and Quality Framework for OOHC that meets the needs of vulnerable youth.
Action #12	Enhance the ability of the Child Safety Service to respond to the specific needs of young people.
Action #13	Develop a referral map of services and programs for young people which will provide clear pathways and referral options for young people.

Homelessness and Housing

Increasing awareness and creating alternative pathways within the homelessness and housing system for young people at risk.

ACTION AREA 3

Action #14	Provide trauma informed, multi-disciplinary support services within the Youth at Risk Response Centre.
Action #15	Explore new models for medium term supported accommodation options for under 16's.
Action #16	Investigate opportunities to enhance outreach housing and support options for young people living in rural and remote areas.
Action #17	Educate and raise awareness of housing pathways for vulnerable young people.

Education and Employment

Improving the education and employment opportunities for vulnerable young Tasmanians.

ACTION AREA 4

Action #18	Improving employment opportunities for young people at risk in Tasmania.
Action #19	Improve service coordination for complex young people and their families, including considering ways to prioritise help for parents whose issues impact on their child's education.
Action #20	Increase capacity in student re engagement programs (targeting youth most at risk).

Health and Wellbeing

Improving the health and wellbeing of our most vulnerable young people.

ACTION AREA 5

Action #21	Support and strengthen access to holistic youth focused mental health services for young people
Action #22	Improve consistency in adolescent health services in Tasmania.
Action #23	Strengthen access to holistic youth focused alcohol and drug treatment options.
Action #24	Prioritise access to Assertive Family Supports.

Inclusive Communities

Creating safe and inclusive communities for young people.

ACTION AREA 6

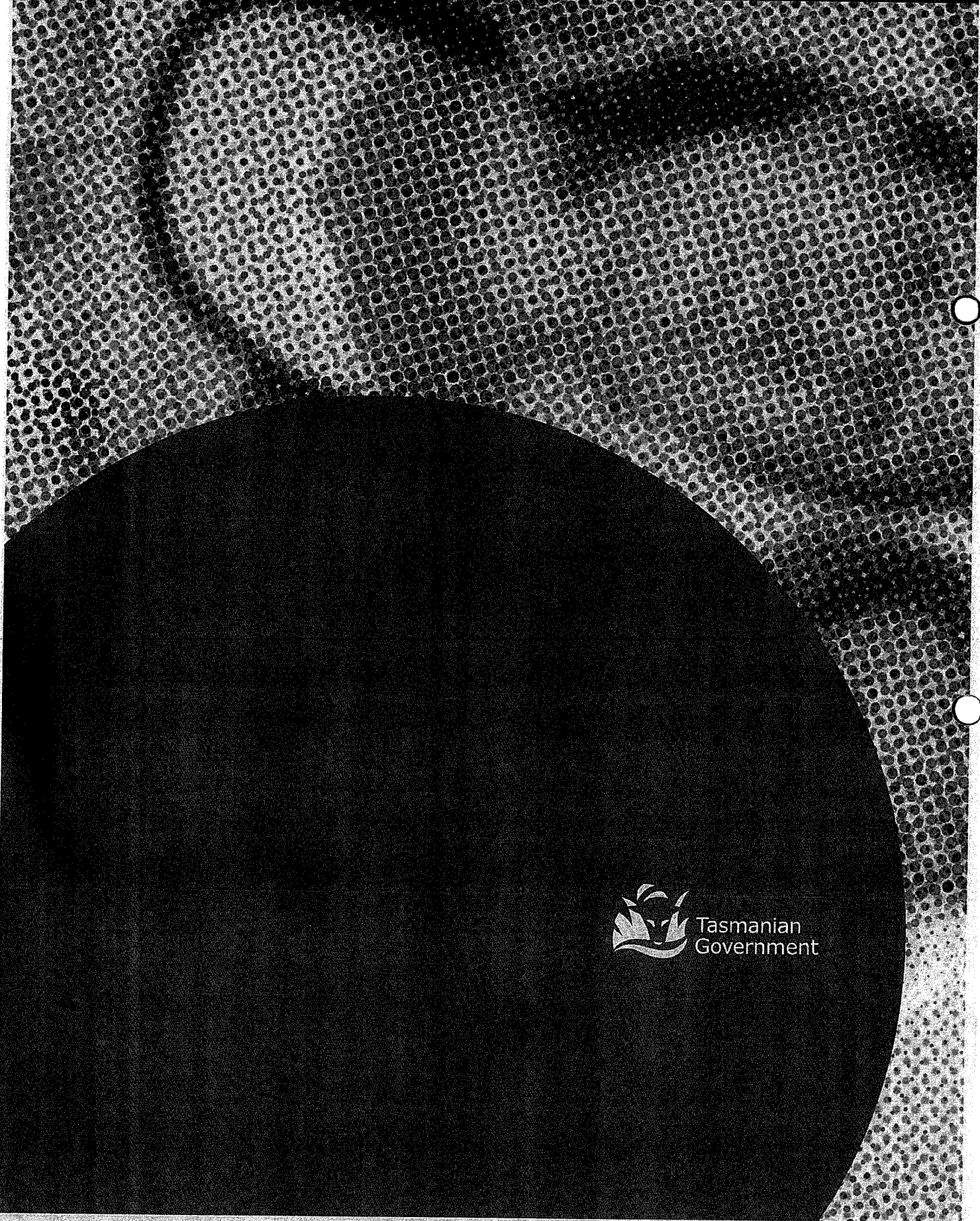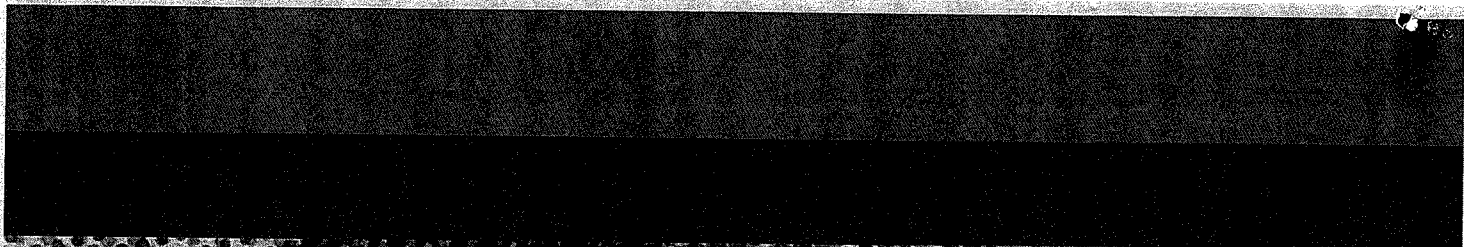|	
Action #25	Work with local communities who are currently undertaking collective impact initiatives, and seek to identify opportunities to promote and develop place based and collective impact initiatives in communities of greatest need.
Action #26	Work with all levels of government to develop a range of innovative consultative mechanisms and more inclusive practices targeted towards Youth at Risk in Tasmania.

Enablers

Establishing system wide overarching enablers.

ACTION AREA 7

Action #27	Explore the use of single case management for young people with complex needs by building upon the Joined Up Human Services Lead Support Coordination pilot.
Action #28	Work with TasCOSS to support the ongoing development of the *findhelptas* website.
Action #29	Work with relevant Agencies and service providers to develop a consistent approach to purchasing services for young people at risk which reflects the outcomes developed through the Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework.
Action #30	Improve the service system to ensure all services and programs are flexible, responsive, inclusive, accountable and meet the needs of young people.
Action #31	Consider co-funding models and contributions to support the capacity of the service system to respond to young people with complex needs.
Action #32	Provide opportunities for cross sectoral training and skill development to the youth service sector.
Action #33	Establish a cross government information sharing group to improve information sharing across the children and youth sector.
Action #34	Develop a Child Wellbeing database to increase awareness and ownership of issues for children and young people at the community level.

Tasmanian
Government