



Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc.

Measuring What Matters

February 2023



**INTEGRITY
COMPASSION
INFLUENCE**

About TasCOSS

TasCOSS' vision is for one Tasmania, free of poverty and inequality where everyone has the same opportunity. Our mission is two-fold: to act as the peak body for the community services industry in Tasmania; and to challenge and change the systems, attitudes and behaviours that create poverty, inequality and exclusion.

Our membership includes individuals and organisations active in the provision of community services to Tasmanians on low incomes or living in vulnerable circumstances. TasCOSS represents the interests of our members and their service users to government, regulators, the media and the public. Through our advocacy and policy development, we draw attention to the causes of poverty and disadvantage, and promote the adoption of effective solutions to address these issues.

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Introduction

TasCOSS welcomes the Australian Government's interest in developing a wellbeing approach and commitment to measuring what matters. We also support the development of a framework and indicators to drive investment in wellbeing in ways that make a real difference to Australians who aren't currently sharing in the benefits of our prosperity.

From our consultations with Tasmanians, TasCOSS is aware of widespread community concern that economic growth or prosperity is not being fairly shared, and that the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting cost of living crisis has only widened the gap between rich and poor.

One-in-eight Australians, and one-in-six children are living in poverty. A person in the highest 20% income group has **six times as much income** as a person in the lowest 20% income group. And the average wealth of a household in the highest 20% wealth group has over **90 times the wealth** of the lowest 20% wealth group.¹

Traditional indicators used by governments to measure economic growth and prosperity may present positive data, however, the harsh reality for tens of thousands of Tasmanians experiencing poverty and disadvantage is that they are not sharing in the benefits of economic growth and feel less optimistic about the future, which by extension is trapping them in poverty.

This should not be an acceptable outcome for a wealthy and prosperous country such as Australia.

Overview

Our people and their wellbeing must be the central goal of government, our economy and society. International research shows that investing in wellbeing produces better outcomes for society and the economy.² Examples of this include:

- **Education** — making children happier makes them learn better;
- **Health** — your wellbeing predicts your subsequent longevity as well as a medical diagnosis does;
- **Productivity** — greater wellbeing increases productivity; and
- **Family/social cohesion** — happy people create more stable families, and happy people are more pro-social.³

In this submission, TasCOSS advocates for a wellbeing economy supported by a Wellbeing Framework, budgeting and whole-of-government policy making that addresses inequality and wellbeing outcomes. TasCOSS considers that a Wellbeing Framework must be informed by genuine and extensive community consultation in order to understand what matters to Australians and shape the framework elements,

¹ ACOSS, [Research and Insights into Poverty and Inequality in Australia](#), accessed 31 January 2023.

² See for example: OECD, [The Economy of Wellbeing: Creating opportunities for people's wellbeing and economic growth](#), SDD Working Paper No.102.

³ Besley, T & Bucelli, I 2022, [Wellbeing: Alternative Policy Perspectives](#), London: LSE Press.

measures and indicators. We set out TasCOSS' priorities that a Wellbeing Framework should address and the key issues to consider in measuring what matters.

An Economy of Wellbeing

To ensure Australia and our communities are resilient through change, build sustainability into our systems and improve the wellbeing of our people, we need to transform the focus of our economy.

According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), a wellbeing economy is one that:

1. Expands the opportunities available to people for improving their lives along the dimensions that matter most to them;
2. Ensures that these opportunities translate into wellbeing outcomes for all segments of the population, especially those on the lowest incomes;
3. Reduces inequalities; and
4. Fosters environmental and social sustainability.⁴

Achieving all four of these objectives would see us create an economy of wellbeing in which every Australian has the basics for a good life and the foundations are laid for individuals, communities and the entire nation to better withstand future crises, whether it be health, economic or environmental.

To achieve these objectives and deliver a wellbeing economy, we must:

- **Draw on the experiences of individuals and governments around the world, including those in the global Wellbeing Economy Alliance.**⁵ Examples abound of innovative approaches to wellbeing that lend themselves to the national context.⁶
- **Be single-minded in our focus on addressing inequalities in wellbeing outcomes.** Any approach that continues to serve those already better off would not be a wellbeing economy but rather a variation on the status quo.
- **Assess and evaluate our progress.** This will help us better understand the causal relationships between action and outcomes as well as the barriers and accelerators of change.
- **Align government programs and initiatives with emerging collaborative, place-based approaches to support and empower communities to drive their own wellbeing outcomes.**

⁴ Martin, N 2019, *The Economy of Wellbeing: Creating opportunities for people's wellbeing and economic growth*, OECD, no.102, p.8.

⁵ [Wellbeing Economy Alliance](#).

⁶ For example, see: [Amsterdam, Netherlands — Measuring a Wellbeing Economy](#); [Barking and Dagenham, UK — Public Service Transformation Programme](#); [Guelph, Canada — Strategy Design for a Wellbeing Economy Food System](#).

Developing a Wellbeing Framework

A Wellbeing Framework must prioritise the needs of those experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage. It must be embedded in government, decision-making and policy making processes, so that investments, policies and service delivery are directed to reducing inequality and improving the wellbeing of individuals, communities and the nation.

TasCOSS' *A Good Life* Framework⁷

TasCOSS' vision is of one Tasmania, free of poverty and inequality where everyone has the same opportunity. But we have a long way to go to achieve this vision, with many Tasmanians telling us they are not living, they are simply existing.

TasCOSS believes that adopting a wellbeing approach to government policy and spending will dramatically improve the opportunities for all Tasmanians, and all Australians, to have what they tell us is important to them — to live “a good life”.

In developing our *A Good Life* in Tasmania framework, we explored how wellbeing is assessed and measured elsewhere. Meaningful and in-depth community consultation was a key feature of the following national and international indices and frameworks we considered:

- Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Outcomes Framework
- ACT Wellbeing Framework
- Australian Unity Personal Wellbeing Index
- National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People's Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing
- New Zealand Living Standards Framework
- UK Measures of National Wellbeing
- Scottish National Performance Framework
- OECD Better Life Index

Most importantly, we sought to meet with and listen to Tasmanians across our state, to hear about what matters most to them. In particular, we drew on the experiences and opinions of Tasmanians on low incomes, in recognition of the importance of wellbeing indicators and policies to prioritise outcomes for those who are in circumstances of vulnerability. We wanted to understand what it is they need to live a good life in Tasmania, and in particular, what does a good life look like for Tasmanians on low incomes, what are the basics of a good life, and what makes a good life hard to achieve?

In addition to our consultations with individuals and communities around Tasmania, we considered a range of wellbeing frameworks and a comparison with the results of surveys and interviews done by

⁷ TasCOSS 2018, [A Good Life: A Wellbeing Framework for Tasmania](#), attached.

other organisations seeking to understand similar wellbeing priorities and concerns. Taken together, they revealed nine key elements of a good life in Tasmania:

- A healthy mind and body;
- A place to call home;
- Being able to afford the basics;
- Feeling safe;
- Learning for life;
- Getting where you need to go;
- Feeling valued, included and heard;
- Knowing you're not alone; and
- Hope for the future.

TasCOSS prioritises these domains in our policy and advocacy work and ensures that the voices of people with lived experience of low incomes and disadvantage are represented to decision-makers, in order to shape policy responses and solutions to achieve a good life for Tasmanians.

Recommendation: *Extensive and meaningful consultation is undertaken with communities, through accessible and inclusive forms of engagement that ensures equitable participation by priority populations, people experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage, and people with lived experience of living on low incomes.*

Key Issues

Fit-for-Purpose Framework

The key issue for consideration and addressing, as noted in the consultation paper,⁸ is the limitations of the OECD Framework, and other frameworks developed in different jurisdictions, for the Australian context and our national priorities. The economic, environmental, social and political contexts of a place influence the wellbeing standards and expectations of its people.

We consider the OECD Framework is only a starting point for understanding Australia's quality of life and measuring progress. As the OECD Framework is not tailored to Australia's circumstances, it will not necessarily adequately capture important aspects of the Australian context and may overlook some of our national priorities.

Just as the development of TasCOSS' *A Good Life* framework revealed nine key domains identified as priority areas for Tasmanians, it is important that wellbeing domains, outcomes, indicators and data for

⁸ Commonwealth of Australia 2022, Budget October 2022-23, Budget Paper No. 1, [Statement 4: Measuring What Matters](#).

a national framework reflect what Australians want and need for the wellbeing of themselves, their families and their communities.

TasCOSS also believes the Wellbeing Framework should be developed to prioritise those population groups in our communities who have the most significant needs, or who are currently unable to access what they need to improve their health and wellbeing.

We strongly encourage the development of a framework which will support all Australians, but is particularly focussed on recognising and addressing the needs of priority population groups, including indigenous people and communities, and those who are currently marginalised through circumstances such as lack of sufficient income, age, race/ethnicity or social exclusion/isolation.

Recommendations: *The OECD Framework is adapted, or a fit-for-purpose framework is developed, to capture: the different needs of priority populations; variations in national place-based outcomes; and the specific characteristics of Australia's economy.*

Recognise the right of indigenous peoples to self-determination, and that the wellbeing of their communities necessitates Aboriginal community-led drafting and implementation of the appropriate legislative, policy and other frameworks to achieve this.

Australians will benefit from a Wellbeing Framework that: provides a nationally-consistent approach across government to understanding and addressing wellbeing; enables better and more consistent evaluation of progress against policy objectives and outcomes; highlights the interactions between different policy levers and how they impact priority cohorts to improve wellbeing; and adopts a place-based approach that reflects the needs, wants and aspirations of the people it affects.

Aims of a Wellbeing Framework

The Wellbeing Framework must influence government decision-making and policy development in order to reduce poverty and inequality across the country, in particular for priority populations.

1. Reduce Poverty as a Priority

Freedom from poverty is a key determinant of wellbeing. Therefore, the highest priority of a Wellbeing Framework must be to reduce poverty.

The United Nations' first Sustainable Development Goal is to end poverty in all its forms everywhere.⁹ This goal is underpinned by targets and indicators that could easily be adapted for Australia. For example, we could set a target of halving the number of people living in poverty by 2030. Unfortunately, Australia currently has no national definition of poverty, nor a plan to reduce it.

⁹ United Nations, [Sustainable Development Goals](#).

The Wellbeing Framework must be an effective tool for reducing poverty in communities across the country. This will require the Wellbeing Framework to include a poverty reduction goal, targets and relevant indicators, commencing with developing an agreed national definition of poverty (in dialogue with academic experts, people directly affected by poverty, advocates, and other relevant parties).

2. A Focus on Equity and Priority Populations

Putting wellbeing at the heart of government policy making will improve whole-of-government decision-making and drive equity across different population groups.

Statistical measures or economic indicators (such as Gross Domestic Product) do not adequately capture living standards, social outcomes, prosperity, opportunity, equity or changes in people's and certain groups' wellbeing. Nor do these measures consider the flow of benefits between the wealthiest or the poorest in society, and therefore do not tell us whether economic or other benefits are being experienced evenly across the population or disproportionately by some population groups.

Similarly, access to a range of wellbeing activities — jobs, education, health care and social support, can reveal sharp inequalities in different locations across the country.

Policy interventions can address inequality and are most effective when evidence-based. An important aspect of a Wellbeing Framework must be to examine differences in wellbeing outcomes across different population groups, including Aboriginal, women, disability, culturally and linguistically diverse, elderly, youth, low income, less educated, long-term unemployed, single-parent households and homeless cohorts.

3. Improve the Wellbeing of Australians

The Wellbeing Framework must be a mechanism for driving progress, not just for measuring it. This can be achieved by setting high level wellbeing goals, informed by a participatory community consultation process, which reflects the priorities and values of the community. The measurement of wellbeing through useful indicators then provides a mechanism to track progress, rather than being an end in and of itself.

Recommendations: ***Wellbeing measures and indicators are developed in consultation with communities, experts, other stakeholders and individuals with lived experience.***

Government departments should be tasked with improving each wellbeing measure/indicator and report annually to Parliament on the progress of the wellbeing of Australians.

4. Influence Government Policy and Communities

The Wellbeing Framework, goals and indicators should be aligned with major Commonwealth Government programs and initiatives and developed through collaborative, place-based approaches that empower local communities to drive their own wellbeing outcomes.

This will ensure there is a shared commitment to wellbeing programs and outcomes by communities, governments, service providers and investors, as well as shared accountability for delivering results and improving wellbeing.

The Wellbeing Framework must be embedded in government decisions, policy making and inform spending priorities in each Federal Budget.

Recommendations: *A Minister for Wellbeing should be appointed with responsibility for delivering a Wellbeing Framework, whole-of-government implementation and delivery against wellbeing indicators, and Budget priorities that all government spending must progress.*

A Wellbeing Budget that adequately spends on social infrastructure and services that sustain wellbeing, including sustainable investment in community services organisations that support Australians in times of need.

Conclusion

TasCOSS supports the Australian Government's commitment to measuring what matters and the development of a framework to better understand our economy, community and more informed policy making.

TasCOSS advocates for a wellbeing economy supported by a Wellbeing Framework that is embedded in government, decision-making, policy development and spending priorities to address inequality and improve wellbeing outcomes for all Australians.

The Wellbeing Framework must be informed by genuine and extensive community consultation, to understand what matters to Australians in order to shape the framework elements, measures and indicators. It must prioritise the needs of those experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage by:

- Reducing poverty;
- Focussing on equity and priority populations;
- Improving wellbeing; and
- Influencing government and communities.

Recommendations

TasCOSS makes a number of recommendations for a wellbeing economy, guiding the development of a Wellbeing Framework and measuring what matters to Australians:

- 1. Extensive and meaningful consultation is undertaken with communities, through accessible and inclusive forms of engagement that ensures equitable participation by priority populations, people experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage, and people with lived experience of living on low incomes.**
- 2. The OECD Framework is adapted, or a fit-for-purpose framework is developed, to capture: the different needs of priority populations; variations in national place-based outcomes; and the specific characteristics of Australia's economy.**
- 3. Recognise the right of indigenous peoples to self-determination, and that the wellbeing of their communities necessitates Aboriginal community-led drafting and implementation of the appropriate legislative, policy and other frameworks to achieve this.**
- 4. Wellbeing measures and indicators are developed in consultation with communities, experts, other stakeholders and individuals with lived experience.**
- 5. Government departments should be tasked with improving each wellbeing measure/indicator and report annually to Parliament on the progress of the wellbeing of Australians.**
- 6. A Minister for Wellbeing should be appointed with responsibility for delivering a Wellbeing Framework, whole-of-government implementation and delivery against wellbeing indicators, and Budget priorities that all government spending must progress.**
- 7. A Wellbeing Budget that adequately spends on social infrastructure and services that sustain wellbeing, including sustainable investment in community services organisations that support Australians in times of need.**

A Good Life: A Wellbeing Framework for Tasmania



What is “A Good Life”?

Every Tasmanian should have the opportunity for a good life — the opportunity to do more than spend each day just getting by. But with the rising cost of living and housing and health challenges increasing in Tasmania, what does a good life look like for Tasmanians on low incomes? What are the basics of a good life in the 21st century, and what makes a good life hard to achieve?

In 2018, the Tasmanian Council of Social Service (TasCOSS) conducted consultations around the question “What do you need for a good life?” in three southern Tasmanian communities (Kingston, Gagebrook and Dodges Ferry). These consultations were informed by the 2016-17 Voices of Our Regions consultations conducted by TasCOSS via face-to-face consultations in nine communities across the state (Smithton, Shorewell Park, Queenstown/Rosebery, George Town, Ravenswood, West Moonah, Geeveston, Clarendon Vale and New Norfolk), as well as an online statewide survey.

Together, [A Good Life](#) and *Voices of Our Regions* consultations gathered the views of 338 people across the state. We supplemented these voices with responses to surveys by other organisations targeting, for example, younger and older Tasmanians, Tasmanians living with mental health issues, Tasmanians with disability, as well as with concerns outlined in other Council of Social Service documents.

Taken together, they reveal nine domains of a good life in Tasmania. We have drawn on these voices to add descriptors to show what each domain includes. We encourage the adoption of this framework, including by developing indicators and targets, to help drive wellbeing outcomes for all Tasmanians.



A healthy mind and body

Goal: All Tasmanians have the support they need to live healthy lives.

Throughout our consultations, one phrase emerged again and again: ‘Health is everything.’ Respondents emphasised the value of good health and the importance of good health care that treats the whole person.

“We value our health above all else. Growing older is hard enough without ill health.”

“If you have good mental health, anything is possible.”

But Tasmanian health outcomes are poor in relation to national averages and in recent years, Tasmanians on low incomes have increasingly struggled to get the primary medical, dental and mental health care they need. Residents of Tasmania’s most disadvantaged communities also face a range of challenges and barriers that make it harder for them to value, let alone take control of their own health.

Having support to live healthy lives means:

- All Tasmanians are supported to proactively prevent ill-health and to promote good health and wellbeing.
- All Tasmanians can get affordable, timely, person-centred, whole-of-life-oriented primary, secondary, allied and dental health care.
- All Tasmanians can get affordable, timely, person-centred, whole-of-life-oriented mental health care.



A place to call home

Goal: All Tasmanians have affordable, safe, appropriate housing.

Participants in [A Good Life](#) research spoke of the pleasure that they take in their homes and the security that a safe home brings. But they also spoke of the anxiety associated with watching rents and house prices go up, the stress of trying to find an appropriate place in a tight housing market, and the stresses on families as people are crowded together.

“I feel a level of fear now, in my mid-forties, that I have never felt before. I feel like I’m priced out of the market.”

“We shouldn’t have to be living with relatives.”

In recent years, Tasmanians on low incomes have faced exceptional difficulties in finding either a home to buy or a secure, affordable rental. The supply of social housing has not kept up with demand, resulting in ever-growing waitlists for social housing. Meanwhile, the number of homeless Tasmanians has grown.

Having affordable, safe, appropriate housing means:

- All Tasmanians have access to safe, appropriate, energy efficient and well-maintained homes regardless of their economic and social circumstances.
- Tasmania’s private rental market is affordable and fair to tenants on low incomes.
- All Tasmanians have access to safe accommodation in a crisis.
- Tasmania’s land use planning system and building codes promote the development of affordable, universal-design, socially connected, transit-oriented, energy efficient housing.



Being able to afford the basics

Goal: All Tasmanians can afford the basics of life.

Participants in [A Good Life](#) consultations described the corrosive effects of financial stress as the one of the biggest barriers to a good life. When the essentials are unaffordable, people said stress levels begin to rise, making it harder to cope with other stressors as well as to appreciate what you have. Respondents also spoke of the anxiety associated with insecure or casual employment.

“Financial stress leads to major anxiety. It’s mentally draining. There’s no need for luxuries, but just no stress.”

“I feel safe in my community, but I don’t have financial stability due to contract work.”

In recent years, Tasmanians have faced sweeping increases in the cost of living, with rising prices significantly outstripping increases in incomes. Meanwhile, thousands of Tasmanians have struggled to get into employment that would lift their incomes above subsistence levels.

Being able to afford the basics means:

- No Tasmanian lives in poverty.
- More local jobs created for local people, and more local people trained for local jobs.
- All Tasmanians have access to affordable energy and water.
- All Tasmanians have access to affordable telecommunications.
- All Tasmanians can eat three healthy meals a day.
- All Tasmanians on low incomes receive adequate levels of concessions.
- All Tasmanians can afford items essential to their wellbeing.



Feeling safe

Goal: All Tasmanians live in safety, supported by a criminal justice system that promotes social justice.

Fear, respondents said, has no place in a good life. While Tasmania is a safe place overall, many Tasmanians feel unsafe inside and outside the home some or all of the time. Women, children, older Tasmanians and Tasmanians with disability are particularly vulnerable to feeling unsafe. Everyone deserves to feel safe – even people caught up in the justice system, which is short on therapeutic and culturally appropriate approaches to rehabilitation.

“Safety underpins everything else. If you’re not safe, you don’t have a healthy mind – you’re always worried, always stressed. If you don’t feel safe at home because of violence, your home is worthless. If you don’t feel safe at school, [you can’t get an education].”

“You need to feel safe in order to connect.”

Feeling safe means:

- All Tasmanians live free from violence and abuse inside and outside the home at all stages of life.
- All Tasmanians have access to affordable, inclusive legal services and systems.
- Tasmania’s policing, courts and prisons are trauma-informed and focussed on prevention, diversion and rehabilitation.



Learning for life

Goal: All Tasmanians can learn what they need to thrive across their lives.

A good, broad-ranging education, Tasmanians told us, leads to a better life across the board. Literacy, numeracy, digital competence and life skills, ranging from cooking to budgeting to effective communication, lead to increased employment opportunities; better ability to look after your health; better relationships; and greater ability to make your income stretch as far as it can. All people of all ages deserve an equal chance to learn in ways that takes their needs into account.

“Hard as it was to improve our education in our 30s, we are now seeing the benefit of having done so and wish young people could only understand how important education is to quality of life.”

“[Tasmania needs] more flexible learning options for children to cater for different learning styles.”

Lifelong learning includes formal education through:

- Early learning;
- Schools;
- University;
- Vocational education and training; and
- Training and activities by community sector organisations.

Significant lifelong learning also takes place in informal environments, including adult education, libraries, from peers, at home and in families.

Being able to learn to thrive across life means:

- All Tasmanians are supported to access education and training across their life course.
- Tasmanian education systems enact principles of inclusion, equity, affordability and accessibility.
- Tasmanian education environments and systems help all Tasmanians gain the academic, digital, practical and social skills, and confidence, to navigate:
 - Daily living;
 - Education and training;
 - Workplaces; and
 - Relationships.



Getting where you need to go

Goal: All Tasmanians can get where they need and want to go, when they need and want to.

In the modern world, having your own transport equates to freedom for many people. As many participants in [A Good Life](#) consultations pointed out, when you don't have a car and are reliant on public transport, it is a frustrating struggle to get to employment, education, health services, other supports, shops, socialising and Tasmania's natural beauty. Some people give up accessing some, or all, of these things as a consequence. But getting where you need to go extends beyond transport: the built environment can act as a significant barrier to Tasmanians with limited mobility or disability.

"[I need] reliable, affordable access to supermarkets and playgrounds."

"We have great fishing and beaches — if you can get to them — but I don't have a car."

"Only one of the three disability parking spots in [my town] actually accommodates a wheelchair user."

Being able to get where you need to go means:

- All Tasmanians can access timely, affordable alternatives to the private car.
- Driver licensing, vehicle registration and ownership are accessible and affordable for all Tasmanians.
- The Tasmanian built environment is accessible to all Tasmanians.



Feeling valued, included and heard

Goal: All Tasmanians are treated equally, inclusively and with respect and have a voice in decisions that affect them.

Many of the comments that emerged in [A Good Life](#) consultations were filled with pain at being considered to be worth less than other Tasmanians. Respondents described:

- *Feeling looked down on.* Stigma and prejudice, both subtle and overt, were common experiences for many respondents.
- *Feeling left out.* Many respondents described barriers to participation in life in Tasmania.
- *Feeling overlooked and unheard.* Respondents complained that they felt invisible to the people, organisations and bureaucracies that were making the decisions that would affect their lives. Some people felt anxious and powerless as a result; others felt frustrated that good ideas were being ignored.

“People look at us [residents of a broad-acre public housing estate] like we’re scum.”

“I wish that others would understand disability a little bit more, [rather] than just discriminating against us and not including me and my family in the community.”

“If we want to be more innovative and inclusive we need to open [decision-making] to people from all backgrounds.”

Behind these experiences of stigma, discrimination and marginalisation lie the attitudes of individuals as well as structural inequalities, like racism and gender inequalities. These can take the form of material inequalities (i.e. levels of income or home ownership), inequalities in social outcomes (i.e. health, education levels, employment), inequalities in personal relationships (i.e. burden of care for children, disproportionate financial impacts of divorce), and can even drive violence.

Feeling valued, included and heard means:

- All Tasmanians live free of discrimination and stigma.
- Justice, rights, and respect for Tasmanian Aboriginal people.
- A Tasmania without legal and structural inequalities.
- All Tasmanians have a voice in decisions that affect them.



Knowing you're not alone

Goal: All Tasmanians can connect with and receive support from their community in ways that work for them.

Most participants in [A Good Life](#) consultations felt that relationships, both intimate and social, were crucial to their wellbeing and to their ability to thrive.

"Knowing someone who believes in you to flourish."

Respondents observed that material necessities and social relationships are often inseparable. Some people spoke of how people help each other out with tasks; some spoke of sharing items bought in bulk to lower costs. But some also pointed out that material comforts can lose their meaning without social connection: even if you have enough food, if you're lonely, you may not feel like eating.

"With so many people in the world, no one should have to be alone."

Being connected, participants suggested, requires three things: people who persevere to build or maintain a connection; a strong, caring community; and help from the professionals when more support is required than friends and family or the general community can give.

"Learn to be kind to each other, be a good friend."

"The good community feel: we all come together when the going gets tough, we know where to go, who to talk to. All the community networking helps our family."

Combining strengthened social connection with other initiatives can lead to a virtuous spiral that addresses multiple issues simultaneously. For example, helping people build relationship skills while creating new social housing modes such as co-housing, can not only help address immediate personal and broader social issues (i.e. housing, family conflict), but also can help ward off social isolation as people age.

Knowing you're not alone means:

- All Tasmanians have the support they need to build healthy connections inside and outside the home.
- All Tasmanian communities are supported to create strong, inclusive, local connections.
- All Tasmanians can depend on person-centred, place-based community services.



Hope for the future

Goal: All Tasmanians can face the challenges of the future with confidence.

While the problems of the present were sometimes the most pressing, participants in [A Good Life](#) consultations were thinking in the long-term as well, and hoping for future-oriented, whole-of-life approaches to support individuals as well as to address problems facing Tasmania as a whole.

“We all need to be thinking of the future more.”

Three key areas emerged from our consultations:

Looking ahead over life stages

Participants emphasised the importance of a longer-term vision in relation to two groups living through periods of dramatic life changes: young people, as they transition through the crucial developmental stages from birth through to independence, and older people facing the challenges of age.

“Communities should be building supports for people ageing in place.”

Looking ahead to a changing economy

Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, participants in TasCOSS consultations were already worried about the structure and diversity of Tasmania’s economy and future work opportunities.

“What worries me most: lack of employment opportunities for my daughter when she grows up. It’s bad enough now, so I hate to think what it will be like in 15-20 years’ time.”

Looking ahead to prevent and respond to climate change

As the evidence for the acceleration of global heating and of its emerging impacts builds, climate change and a healthy environment are now significant concerns for older and younger Tasmanians alike.

“[The most important thing for children] must be significant response to climate change as this is their future.”

Having hope for the future means:

- All Tasmanians are supported through life’s challenging transitions.
- All Tasmanians are supported through changes in Tasmania’s economy to secure stable work at liveable wages.
- All Tasmanians are supported to manage the impacts of climate change.
- All Tasmanians enjoy clean air and water, and healthy homes.