

Partnership Agreement

between **DHHS, DPAC** and
the **Community Sector**
Tasmania

2012–2015



A joint initiative of the:
Tasmanian Government
Tasmanian Community Sector Peaks' Network



Acknowledgements

Many people from the community sector and the government have been a part of the journey associated with developing this Partnership Agreement and are acknowledged for a range of contributions, including providing input when consulted, facilitating and supporting the process, and assisting with drafting and editing.

Members of the Partnership Agreement Working Group were drawn from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC), and the Tasmanian Community Sector Peaks' Network. They are acknowledged and thanked for their contribution in developing this document.

Foreword

The Tasmanian Government strongly values the work that the community sector undertakes to achieve positive outcomes for individuals, families and those most vulnerable members of our communities.

Community sector organisations, individually and collectively, are working towards a more equitable and supportive community. This Partnership Agreement recognises that the best way to achieve this is for the Government and community organisations to work together.

It is a clear demonstration of the collaborative and cooperative relationship that exists between the Government and Tasmanian community service organisations. It confirms the significance of the wide range of programs and services that the community sector delivers statewide.

The Partnership Agreement has been developed in recognition of the mutual reliance between the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and the independent service delivery organisations they fund.

It recognises the importance of a strong relationship to ensure effective public policy and best service outcomes for all Tasmanians. It acknowledges the respective strengths of both partners.

Priority action areas have been identified that relate to the shared commitment of the Tasmanian Government and of community sector organisations to build better relationships based on collaboration and respect.

The Government is committed to this Partnership Agreement and working with the community sector into the future.

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Message from the Premier



A strong partnership with the community sector is critical to achieving the Tasmanian Government's vision to help more people move out of disadvantage by encouraging resilience over reliance while providing an essential safety net to our most vulnerable Tasmanians.

The best way to address disadvantage is to provide people with a good education and an opportunity for a job, which is what our long term plan is all about. Our plan requires government and the community sector to work in a different way, hand-in-hand, with a common agenda, open communication and a more collaborative partnership than ever before.

A renewed focus on outcomes will drive our new partnership approach.

We're freeing up the community sector to spend its time on helping Tasmanians rather than responding to unnecessary bureaucratic red tape and compliance reporting. Together, the sector and government are co-designing a more joined up human services support system. This will move away from the traditional 'welfare' approach to a person-centred, 'hand-up' approach. The new human services support system will work with individuals and families on their strengths, their goals and getting results.

This new partnership approach will help meet my Government's commitment to better employment, education, and health outcomes for Tasmanians. More importantly, it will provide change for a brighter future for all Tasmanians.

As a sign of good faith and in recognition of the critical role of the community sector in supporting Tasmanians, I have committed to countersigning this Agreement. I look forward to the great achievements that together we will achieve for the Tasmanian community.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Will Hodgman".

Will Hodgman MP

Premier of Tasmania



Message from the Peaks' Network Chair



The commitment to the Partnership Agreement between the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Community Sector is an important acknowledgement of the vital role each partner plays in the delivery of health and human services, and the development of communities across Tasmania.

Our commitment to forming a working relationship, based on mutual respect and open and honest communication lies at the heart of this agreement and, like all relationships, it will benefit from reflection and renewal.

The roles of both government and the community sector in supporting the development of a strong civil society will continue to evolve. The community sector provides a direct link to Tasmanians from every corner of our State that enhances genuine citizen engagement as we navigate a path through the economic and social challenges we face.

With the formalisation of this partnership we have created an opportunity to work through difficult and complex issues. Through our unique and independent contributions, the community sector is able to provide government with our expertise and knowledge of the implications of changes to policy and practice as we work collectively to achieve our shared outcomes.

Cooperation is not necessarily a natural state within our social structures, however through the Partnership Agreement we have come to understand and appreciate that through the connectedness of government and community, effective and sustainable solutions can be found.

The Tasmanian Community Sector Peaks Network looks forward to working with the Government to create a Tasmania where the spirit of the Partnership Agreement guides our interaction and the decisions we make.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jann Smith".

Jann Smith

Chair (Tasmanian Community Sector Peaks Network)

The Partnership Agreement

Statement of Commitment

The Tasmanian Partnership Agreement commits parties to contribute to and uphold principles and expectations for working together to ensure better outcomes for Tasmanians. The Agreement is based on the understanding that an independent, diverse non-government sector is an essential component of a democratic, socially-inclusive and just society.

The community sector and government agencies cannot achieve their respective goals without constructive working relations built on mutual understanding, respect and cooperation.

The Partnership Agreement is a statement of understanding about the relationship between government agencies and the community sector. It provides a framework for relations between the community sector and the government by articulating the principles of effective communication and partnership.

It is intended to be a living document, maintaining relevance as connections develop and evolve. It aims to continue to improve this working relationship for the benefit of people and communities in Tasmania.

The Partnership Agreement is a guiding framework for strengthening relationships. Initially, a Partnership Agreement will be formed between community sector organisations, and DHHS and DPAC. It is hoped in the future other community sector organisations and other government agencies will choose to adopt the Partnership Agreement principles and values.

This Partnership Agreement will not preclude other and/or existing ways that community sector organisations interact with government in cases where there are issues of concern or opportunities for improvement.

Purpose

The purpose of the Partnership Agreement is to set out how government agencies and the community sector commit to working together to achieve a shared vision.

The Partnership Agreement promotes mutual understanding and guides community sector and government agency representatives to adopt processes and behaviour that value the role, contribution, perspectives and expertise of both sectors.

The Partnership Agreement guides the ongoing dialogue and collaboration between government agencies and the community sector, and provides a blueprint for a strong and productive relationship.

The Agreement requires real commitment from government agencies and the community sector to make a difference. Both sectors recognise the Agreement is not a legal document and does not have implications for funding. However, the Agreement will support collaborative future planning, and represents a clear undertaking by both groups to strengthen the way government agencies and the sector work together to identify and respond to community needs.

Vision Statement

The working relationship between Tasmanian government agencies and the community sector is honest, open, collaborative, fair, equitable, and resilient for the benefit of all Tasmanians.

The Partnership Agreement

Shared Values

The parties to this Agreement will uphold the following values when working together towards their shared vision:

- A commitment to honest and responsible relationships**

Integrity, trust, fairness, honest communication and processes, and accountability to the relationship.

- Leadership**

Respect, good governance, building strong working relationships and improving engagement in planning and policy.

- Community participation and engagement**

The processes of planning, policy development and decision-making reflect a commitment to this value.

- Valuing the distinct and complementary roles of each party**

- Recognising sector diversity**

The sector's diversity is a strength that positions it to respond to diverse community needs through a range of viewpoints, contributions, service approaches, and different types and sizes of services.

- Recognising the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people**

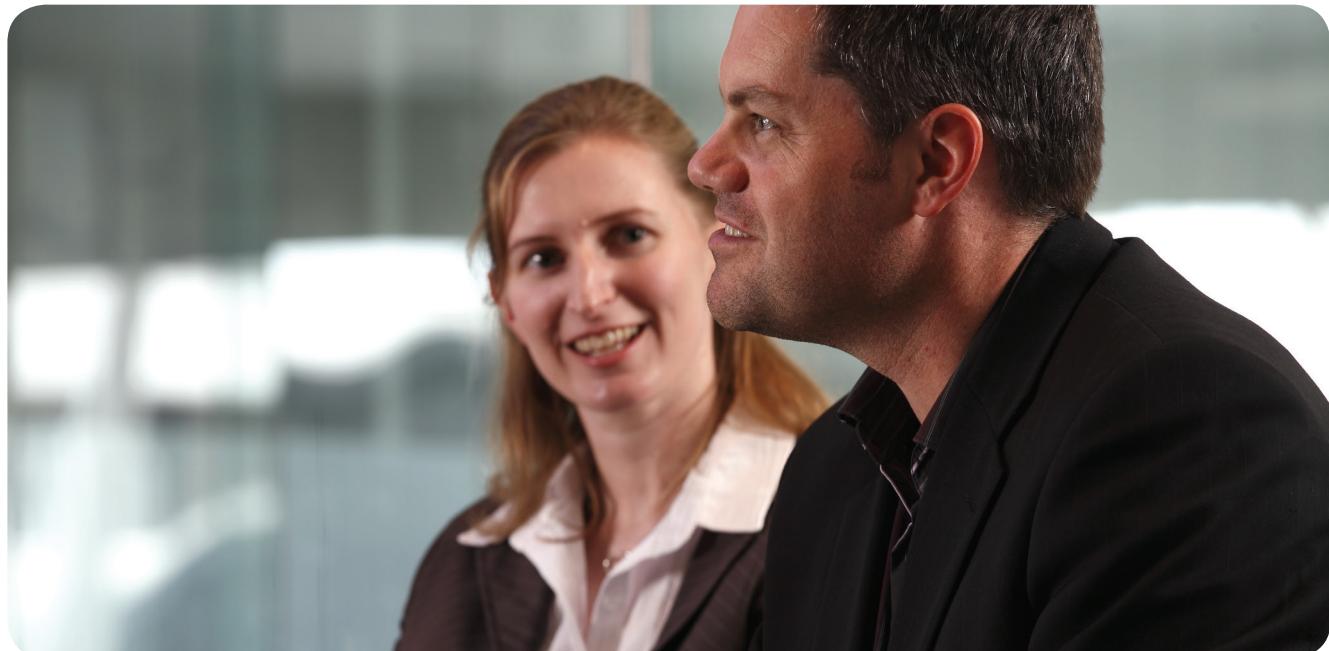
- Acknowledging cultural diversity**

- Supporting equality of opportunity**

Enabling the parties to exercise their rights by ensuring processes are in place to support coordinated and appropriate service delivery to all people.

- Acting from mutual respect**

Acknowledging the capacity and capabilities of each party.



Principles for Working Together

The parties to this Agreement will work together to achieve their shared vision according to the following principles:

Independence

Acknowledgement of the independent and distinct roles each party plays, while recognising the interdependence of the community sector and the government.

Collaboration, communication and consultation

Collaboration on issues of mutual interest.

The development and maintenance of structures that facilitate active and robust consultation, and timeliness in the sharing of information on matters of mutual interest.

Community participation in planning, policy development and other decision-making processes.

Active support for each party's capacity to develop, be innovative and respond to emerging needs.

Recognition of Diversity

Flexibility, awareness and sensitivity in all aspects of our work.

Evidence-based Policy and Practice

Recognition of the need to collect, use and share relevant information to create a strong evidence-base for the planning and delivery of effective community services.

Accountability to the Partnership

An obligation on each party to work and communicate with other parties in the spirit of this Agreement.



The Partnership Agreement



The Role and Contribution of the Community Sector

The Tasmanian community sector is crucial to the health and wellbeing of Tasmania and makes a significant contribution to the Tasmanian economy. At the time of writing, the sector comprised over 350 organisations that employed up to 11,000 Tasmanians in paid work and thousands more as volunteers. It attracted at least \$300 million in combined private, State and Commonwealth investment.

- The community sector recognises the importance of working together to achieve positive outcomes in the community.
- The community sector will build positive relationships with communities, other service organisations and government agencies to achieve the best outcomes for Tasmania.
- The community sector understands that funding provided by government is public money. It understands that it has a responsibility to manage these funds appropriately and to provide the community with the best possible services available.
- The community sector represents a diversity of experience across a range of disciplines. It works with the community, the government and other agencies in policy development, program planning and review, research, innovation and evaluation at the state and national levels.
- The community sector actively engages consumers and carers, and the wider community in the planning, delivery and review of services. The community sector represents its community to government and policy makers.
- The community sector endeavours to make information about its services accessible and relevant to its communities.
- The community sector is independent from government and is responsible to its boards and the communities it serves. The community sector recognises this independence but also endeavours to work across any boundaries to ensure it consults widely on any initiatives that affect its communities. The community sector also recognises that government agencies are accountable to Cabinet when they implement the government's policies and programs.



The Role and Contribution of DHHS and DPAC

Government agencies are accountable to their respective Ministers and to Cabinet to implement the policies and programs of the government. Government agencies are also responsible for working collaboratively with partner organisations and communities.

All government agencies share an obligation to adopt a whole-of-government approach to achieve the outcomes the government is seeking. In the case of the Partnership Agreement this obligation is about developing strong relationships with the community sector to provide better outcomes for all Tasmanians.

In this document the government is represented by DHHS and DPAC.

DHHS and DPAC agree to recognise that community sector organisations have their own organisational missions, values, structures and accountabilities, in addition to their funding relationship with the government.

Improving communication and cooperation within and across government agencies, particularly around programs directed at specific groups in the community, is a priority for DHHS and DPAC in building stronger working relationships with the community sector.

All government agencies agree to adopt genuine consultative approaches when seeking input from the community sector into policy development and planning, and they also agree to these approaches being made early enough to make a difference.

The emphasis on reporting for outcomes means DHHS and DPAC agree to improve the evidence-base used for planning, policy development and funding decisions; they also agree to align data collection requirements within, and across, departments.

DHHS and DPAC will also work to reduce administrative duplication, compliance costs and the number of unnecessarily prescriptive funding agreements, as well as recognise organisations may have multiple funding streams.

The Partnership Agreement

Common Goals and Priorities

In line with the purpose and vision of the Partnership Agreement, the overarching goal is:

The delivery of quality services and improved outcomes to Tasmanians.

To achieve this goal, the parties to this agreement need the following conditions to be met as a matter of priority.

- A resilient and responsive community sector with ongoing capacity to meet the needs of Tasmanians.
- A secure, competent workforce in the community sector and in the government, each with the skills and expertise needed for their respective roles.
- A strong governance model in the community sector supported by ongoing investment from government and the community sector.
- An incentive to build strong, collaborative relationships by making decision-making processes and funding arrangements between both parties transparent.
- Planning based on the collection and analysis of data.
- Reports and information used to improve outcomes for Tasmanians.

These priorities will form the focus of a Partnership Agreement implementation plan containing the required actions by both parties within an agreed timeframe.



How will we know what has been achieved?

By working together to achieve these common goals, the Partnership Agreement aims to create practical improvements in the relationship between DHHS and DPAC and the community sector. It aims to provide real benefits for Tasmanian communities over a three year period. These government agencies and the community sector need to demonstrate how the Partnership Agreement will have made a difference. This will require strong commitment from all parties.

The Peaks' Network and Government Strategic Forum will be responsible for governing this agreement. This group includes representatives from the two government agencies and from a range of organisations in the community sector.

A working group of the Peaks' Network and the Government Strategic Forum will develop an implementation plan giving effect to the commitments within the Partnership Agreement and creating practical change.

This plan will outline specific actions for the first two years of the Partnership Agreement, along with measurable targets. It will identify responsible agencies and organisations to lead each strategy, as well as realistic timeframes for implementation.

The Peaks' Network and Government Strategic Forum will oversee progress on the implementation plan as carried out by the relevant organisations and agencies. It will also resolve barriers to implementation and identify opportunities, including links with other cross-sectoral projects. This forum will resolve any disputes in the implementation of the Partnership Agreement.

Both sectors are accountable for their performance against the Partnership Agreement commitments and implementation plan.

The Peaks' Network and Government Strategic Forum will receive regular progress updates from the working group on the advancement of Partnership Agreement goals and related activities outlined in the implementation plan.

An annual report will also be released outlining key achievements against the plan. This report will be provided to the relevant Tasmanian Government Ministers.

The Peaks' Network and Government Strategic Forum will commission an independent review and evaluation process at the end of two years to assess the effectiveness of the Partnership Agreement and its implementation, and to identify areas for improvement and future directions. The findings of the review will be made public.

The Partnership Agreement

Endorsement

This commitment is made on behalf of DHHS and DPAC by the respective departmental secretaries and by the community sector peak organisations as signed hereunder.



Michael Pervan

Acting Secretary, Department of Health
and Human Services



Greg Johannes

Secretary, Department of Premier
and Cabinet



Jann Smith

Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs
Council Tasmania



Sue Leitch

Council on the Ageing (Tasmania) Inc.



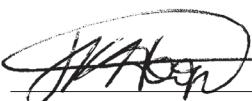
Pattie Chugg

Shelter Tasmania



Tony Reidy

Tasmanian Council of Social Service



John Hooper

Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania



Elida Meadows

Mental Health Council of Tasmania



Adrienne Picone

Volunteering Tasmania



Darren Mathewson

Aged and Community Services Tasmania



Anna Reynolds

Multicultural Council of Tasmania



Joanna Siejka

Youth Network of Tasmania



Jenny Allford

Pregnancy Counselling and Support (Tas) Inc.



David Clements

National Disability Services



Helen Pollard

South Eastern Community Care



Peter Stoltz

Hospice Volunteers



Joe Towns

Care Assess



Carinda Rue

Womensport and Recreation Tasmania

Appendices

Appendix I – Glossary of Terms

Collaboration

The essential features of collaboration include:

- agencies working across traditional portfolio boundaries
- developing an integrated approach to a complex and cross-cutting issue and
- sharing responsibility for outcomes, including the risks and rewards associated with the work undertaken.

Community Sector

For the purpose of this Partnership Agreement the community sector is considered to be those community service organisations that have a funding arrangement with either DHHS or with DPAC.

In the future, it is hoped this agreement may be expanded to incorporate other government agencies and community sector organisations.

Partnership

The term Partnership describes two or more organisations that 'make a commitment to work together on something that concerns both; to develop a shared sense of purpose and a shared agenda; and to generate joint action towards agreed targets'.

The community sector and government have distinct and complementary roles to play in the delivery of public policy and services, in social planning and in building healthy communities for people in Tasmania.

The relationship between the two sectors is significant because they share many goals and values but are independent in many roles and functions.

The community sector and the government cannot achieve their respective goals without constructive working relations built on mutual understanding, respect and cooperation.

Even within their distinct roles and accountabilities, there is a strong interface between the community sector and government agencies.

Partnership Agreement

DHHS, DPAC and the community sector are jointly committed to establishing a working relationship based on mutual respect, and open and honest communication. The overriding purpose of this relationship is to provide a range of quality services to Tasmanians.

The Partnership Agreement is the formalising of the relationship and contains agreed values and principles.

Party or Parties

In the Partnership Agreement parties refers to the DHHS, DPAC and the Community Sector organisations that have endorsed this agreement.





Appendix 2 – Partnership Agreements across Australia

National Compact

<http://www.nationalcompact.gov.au/compact>

<http://www.nationalcompact.gov.au/about-us/history#consultation>

ACT Social Compact

<http://www.actcoss.org.au/publications/SocialCompactFINAL.pdf>

NSW Partnership Agreement

Working Together for NSW

http://www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/file/0020/228350/WorkingTogetherforNSW.pdf

Queensland Compact

<http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/resources/communityservices/about/corporate-plans/queensland-compact/queensland-compact.pdf>

South Australia Partnership Agreement

<http://www.dfc.sa.gov.au/pub/tabid/238/itemid/744/default.aspx>

Victorian Partnership Agreement

First Partnership Agreement (2002)

http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/160523/partnership-agreement.pdf

<http://www.vcoss.org.au/what-we-do/community-sector/human-services.htm>

Western Australia EAC Summary Report

<http://www.dpc.wa.gov.au/Publications/EconomicAuditReport/Pages/Default.aspx>



COMMUNITY SECTOR PEAKS' NETWORK



The Community Sector Peaks' Network is a collaboration between various Tasmanian community sector peak bodies. The network aims to support and advocate for the sector, ensuring it has a strong voice in policy development and delivery.

Key members of the network include:

- COTA Tasmania (For older Australians)
- Inter-Multicultural Council of Tasmania
- TasCOSS (Tasmanian Council of Social Service)
- Shelter TAS
- Aged & Community Services Tasmania
- National Disability Services Tasmania
- Mental Health Council of Tasmania
- Youth Network of Tasmania (Ynot)
- Alcohol, Tobacco & other Drugs Council Tas Inc. (atdc)
- volunteering tasmania
- Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania

