

## FACT SHEET

# About Housing Connect Reform

*Housing Connect is Tasmania's entry point to housing assistance and support and is delivered by Tasmanian community sector agencies.*

## About Housing Connect

People in need of housing assistance can get information about their housing and assistance options, apply for assistance and be referred to support or emergency accommodation at the Housing Connect front door services.

The front door services are provided by Anglicare in the north and north west of Tasmania and Colony 47 in southern Tasmania.

Housing Connect is funded and overseen by the Department of Communities Tasmania.

The Housing Connect model was initiated as a collaborative process with a cross-sector governance led by the Housing Connect Partners Group and operational structure.

An independent chair was essential to facilitating shared leadership and shared responsibility for the introduction of the new system.

Housing Connect was implemented in 2013 with the intention to review and mature the system design and operations after several years.

## Background

The Tasmanian Government is committed to improving housing affordability and helping people most in need into safe and secure accommodation.

During 2018–19, the Brotherhood of St Laurence Research and Policy Centre was engaged to review and provide recommendations to improve the way the Housing Connect system enables Tasmanians in housing crisis to build their capabilities and opportunities to find and keep a safe and affordable home and live a good life.

The review reflected on the range of structural, community, familial and individual level issues effecting homelessness and emphasised the root cause of homelessness in Australia is income poverty and disadvantage.

Changing poverty and disadvantage is possible through more effective and efficient government policy decisions and service models, and community action to deliver a sophisticated supply and demand approach.



It requires action to increase housing supply that can meet a range of household types, life stages and significant events.

Equally, it requires reducing demand by building capabilities, networks and resources and connecting people into their communities so that more people have the capacity to live independently and have a good life.

The Housing Connect reform project will inform housing supply under the Tasmanian Government's Affordable Housing Strategy 2015–2025.

The Housing Connect reform project will also drive new and improved ways of increasing access and providing support that will be a game changer for Tasmanians with low incomes needing housing assistance.

## Overview of the reform project

These recommendations were endorsed by the Housing Connect Partners Group in 2019 and form the basis of the three-year reform project (2019–2022).

The Housing Connect Reform Steering Committee was established in 2019 to oversee the reform project. The membership of the steering committee comprises the existing partner's group, representatives from crisis accommodation providers statewide, the Department of Communities Tasmania and an independent chairperson.

The Housing Connect reform project has been co- designed and implemented in partnership by the sector and the Department of Communities Tasmania and has four phases:

1. Service system design (2020) – high level design
2. Foundational model (2021) – operational framework
3. Establishment model (2022) – first stage implementation
4. Full model (2023) – full implementation.

Within these phases are four key delivery milestones outlined below.

1. Co-design and delivery of Housing Connect design principles (2019).
2. Co-design and delivery of Housing Connect service system design (2020).
3. Determine funding allocations for new Housing Connect service system design (2021).
4. Co-design and delivery of Housing Connect practice framework (2022).



## **Housing Connect reform governance**

### **Steering Committee**

The steering committee is responsible for strategic decision making and is independently chaired.

Membership includes Tracy Matthews (Chair), Ros Atkinson, Jed Donoghue, Jane Gaetani-Black, Dee Healey, Noel Mundy, Janet Saunders, Jessemy Stone, John Stubley, Danny Sutton and Ben Wilson.

### **Partners Group**

The partners group provides operational advice to the steering committee and implements strategic reform decisions within Housing Connect services.

Membership includes Tracy Matthews (Chair), Jed Donoghue, Noel Mundy, John Stubley, Danny Sutton and Ben Wilson.

### **Community of Practice**

Provides operational advice to the partners group and to the Department of Communities Tasmania and supervises practice for consistency and continual improvement.

Membership includes representatives from specialist homelessness support services, social housing providers, peak bodies and project staff from the Department of Communities Tasmania.

### **Housing Policy and Programs, Department of Communities Tasmania**

Manages the social housing system – sets policy, administers funding, provides program management.

Director Housing Policy and Programs, Jessemy Stone.