



# CatholicCare Tasmania



**PESRAC COVID-19 Submission**





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# CatholicCare Tasmania



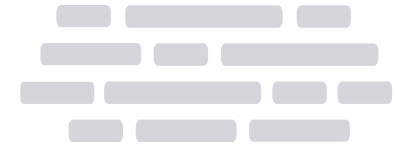
**CatholicCare Tasmania (CCT)** is the primary social services agency of the Catholic Church in Tasmania, with a mission to foster a love for the poor and the vulnerable, a spirit of mercy and compassion for all. CCT delivers a wide range of support programs for individuals, families and communities. With offices in New Town, Launceston, Burnie and Devonport and outreach services across the state, CCT services are available for people of all backgrounds, beliefs and circumstances.

CCT is celebrating its 60th anniversary in 2020. From its humble beginnings in 1960 the organisation has grown to become an employer of over 400 staff, with 53 Volunteers, providing services to over 13,000 Tasmanians in 2020.

CCT offers a variety of programs and projects across key areas; Children, Young people, Family, Housing, Multicultural services, Counselling, Emergency relief & Early Learning and Care.

These diverse services work towards improving the wellbeing of individuals, families and communities, with a particular preference for those experiencing disadvantage.

# Centacare Evolve Housing



**Centacare Evolve Housing (CEH)** is the housing arm of CCT and is a Tier 1 Community Housing Provider. CEH provides state-wide services in tenancy, maintenance and community wellbeing. CEH also manages CCT's housing programs including rapid rehousing and affordable housing.

In the last financial year CEH housed over 1000 new tenants bringing the number of people living in dwellings managed by CEH to 4167. In a 2019 Social Return on Investment study, UTAS identified that every \$1 invested in CEH social housing gave a \$4.30 return in social value.

CEH has a significant new build construction program with 400 new homes in the pipeline for construction.

# St Joseph Affordable Homes



**St Joseph's Affordable Homes (SJAH)** is a building and construction social enterprise launched by the Archdiocese of Hobart in July 2020, during the pandemic. It exists to deliver social and affordable homes and provide substantial employment opportunities and wellbeing supports for young Tasmanians.

SJAH utilises the extensive affordable and social housing construction programs of CCT and CEH to provide apprenticeship, employment and mentoring support services for young Tasmanians and their families. SJAH has over 100 new homes in the pipeline for construction in the next 12 months, with potential to scale up and with current builds, SJAH aims to employ 15-20 apprentices over a two year period.



## Overview



The consequences of COVID-19 are evident in the diverse range of data collected through CatholicCare Tasmania (CCT) and its associated entities, Centacare Evolve Housing and St Joseph Affordable Homes.

To understand the impact of COVID-19 on over 13,000 clients, staff and the community, CCT has completed three social impact reports, which form the basis of our response to PESRAC's recommendations:

1. COVID-19 INSIGHTS I: client and community data from April – June 2020
2. STAFF COVID INSIGHTS: whole of organisation staff survey in July 2020
3. COVID-19 INSIGHTS II: comparing client and community data from April – Sept 2020 vs April – Sept 2020 (Appendix A)

Key negative consequences of COVID-19 identified through the reports include:

- **Financial issues** are the main reason for people presenting across all our services
- **COVID 19** is the second highest reason for people presenting
- **Family violence** has increased as the reason for people seeking services
- **Unemployment concerns** have increased in a number of programs across the business

Further to the negative impacts of COVID-19, our research identified areas where improved outcomes have been enabled. These findings represent potential areas for enhanced funding and targeted initiatives. Findings include:

- Greater state-wide demand for services such as emergency relief have been met through outreach models which include leveraging partnerships for service delivery
- Opportunities to support building and construction opportunities to increase affordable housing options as well as encourage local procurement and job stimulus
- Increasing social and affordable housing tenants, enabled through the completion of new builds
- Increasing provision of Employee Assistance Program support, in particular to professionals more acutely impacted by COVID-19 such as teachers
- Increasing demand for school counselling and integrated wrap around and allied health supports, such as Psychologists
- Increasing use of online support, such as; web form submissions, facebook messenger, telephone counselling
- Increased efficiencies with online and telephone counselling
- Improved internal capacity through the Social Impact Unit to better understand the outcomes of our work, and inform the distribution of resources and the focus of programs
- Increased engagement in employment related services

Since the start of COVID-19 CCT committed to keep services operating and has continued to deliver all services, adjusting specific aspects of service delivery to meet the needs of clients and employees. A range of adaptations and new initiatives implemented since the pandemic have been incorporated into ongoing service delivery. Client numbers across the entire organisation have increased by 6%, with the greatest increases in CEH tenancies due to new build completions. Throughout COVID-19, CCT was able to sustain ongoing employment for all staff including casuals, at their pre-COVID work arrangements.

Aligned to the recommendations, CCT supports government to work with organisations to develop and continue strategies that ensure all people have access to opportunities and supports enabling them to thrive. CCT encourages government to focus on initiatives which specifically target cohorts of the population who are experiencing the impacts of COVID-19 more acutely, such as people living in areas of entrenched disadvantage, people who already faced employment issues prior to the pandemic, people in financial stress and those who are victims of family and domestic violence. CCT recognises significant value in government stimulus which encourages organisations to proactively employ and train, engage in social procurement and foster social enterprise initiatives.



## Response to Recommendations (Contract Modification & Flexibility)



**Recommendation 12. The State Government should immediately modify contracts with community service providers, where performance has met expectations, to extend their duration to provide appropriate funding certainty.**

CCT supports the swift uptake of this recommendation. In July 2020 CCT received 3 amendments to existing contracts to counteract or stabilise their services due to the effects of the pandemic. These extensions have enabled CCT to effectively respond to client needs.

The extensions were:

- 'SafeChoices' a program providing practical support for those experiencing family violence
- 'Temporary Emergency COVID-19 Funding Relief for Temporary Visa Holders'
- 'Therapeutic Residential Care' program for Children 11-17 years

Further information on the use and effects of this funding can be seen in response to Recommendation #57. CCT has observed programs increase in client numbers, in particular 'Family Support - Reunification Service - Pathway Home and the Child & Family Preservation Services (FA-00002824 & FA-00002862) have had an 18% increase in the number of appointments booked for the same period in the previous year. As of November 2020, they have an unassisted waitlist of referrals, representing an additional 28% of their client case load that they are unable to meet due to their current contract and resourcing limitations.

The *Temporary Emergency COVID-19 Funding Relief for Temporary Visa Holders* (D20/20840) funds received are nearly exhausted and CCT are concerned for this vulnerable client group, who remain impacted by the pandemic.

CCT proposes that adjustments need to be considered for the Federally funded *Emergency Relief Assistance Program* (1-METLHF), given the 48% increase in the dollar amount spent and a 23% increase in the number of people requesting assistance between April to September in 2020.



**Recommendation 13. Contracts should provide flexibility in the nature of service delivery, reflecting new models developed during COVID-19**

CCT supports the recommendation for contracts to incorporate flexibility to allow for variations in service delivery where efficiencies can be made without effecting the quality or social impact outcomes of the service provision, or where improved client outcomes have been demonstrated.

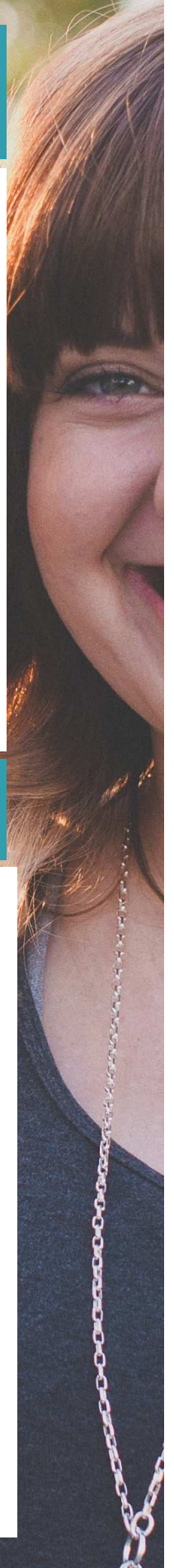
Some CCT service delivery models were forced to change during lockdown. Prior to the pandemic almost all of CCT services & programs involved face to face contact. Due to the critical nature of our services many programs continued face to face delivery. Including AK Young Women's Shelter, Therapeutic Residential Care, Housing Connect, Emergency Relief and Early Learning & Care. The principal to keep all services operating where possible and practical is demonstrated in that CEH was the only social community housing provider to keep their office open for face to face service.

All other essential programs had to be carried out remotely, either online or by telephone, by employees working from home. This did present many difficulties, one of which was working in a population that has up to 22% of Tasmanians not having internet access to their dwellings (ABS 2016 Census).

During the pandemic, CEH moved to a task based approach for tenancy management from a portfolio management model. CEH acknowledge the efficiencies and strengths in this model for tenants in isolation.

Family Programs were able to increase their caseload by 18% to meet some of the additional demand, due to the cessation of group education and efficiencies gained due to reduced or no travel time to see clients.

Housing Connect adopted and trialled a successful volunteer lead tenancy program during the lockdown, responding to the need presented. The success of this program has seen CEH also take up the concept by commencing a lead tenancy program in a development in Claremont in December 2020.





## Construction & Apprenticeships



### Recommendations

15. Group training organisations, labour hire firms, and other job matching services should be funded to support recruitment, mentoring and rotation of apprentices, trainees and short-term workers across employers that cannot currently commit to long-term employment contracts.

28. The State Government should carefully manage the roll-out of its 'Construction Blitz' program. The flow of housing construction should be scheduled to deliver the intended stimulatory effect without overheating the industry.

42. The State Government should rigorously monitor and enforce apprentice requirements for government building and construction works as required in the Building and Construction Training Policy.

44. The roll-out of the affordable housing stimulus as part of the 'Construction Blitz' program should contain apprenticeship requirements on a similar basis to those that apply to the Government's own construction program.

CCT agree with the above four recommendations.

Social enterprise *St Joseph Affordable Homes*, through *CCT* and *CEH*, are significant contributors in Tasmania to the construction of social and affordable housing.

222 dwellings were constructed in FY 2020, and 97 dwelling completed 30 June – 31 Oct 2020 in the midst of the pandemic.

Currently, the entities have 218 builds in the pipeline, with over 100 of these to be built by *SJAH* social enterprise, increasing employment and apprenticeship opportunities in building and construction as well as growing the much needed social housing portfolio.

*CCT* and *CEH* are currently tendering for a portion of the 'Community Housing Growth Program' which if successful will greatly boost the economy with both employment outcomes and improved social outcomes through increasing the amount of quality affordable housing options.





## Construction & Apprenticeships Continued

CCT acknowledge that the construction industry is facing its own sustainability crisis with an ageing workforce, skills shortages and lower apprenticeship numbers. We have addressed this internally by creating SJAH, a building and construction social enterprise. This has amplified the already successful CEH program *Build Up Tassie* by creating real jobs through apprenticeships in SJAH and other industry partners. *Build Up Tassie* is a work-ready and pre-apprenticeship program for young people in the building and construction industry which works across all our housing entities. We have evidence collected over 3 years to demonstrate that the *Build Up Tassie* model successfully creates a pipeline of young people who are work ready, and have enhanced social and life skills.

With the creation of SJAH social enterprise, the employment and social outcomes of *Build Up Tassie* have been significantly enhanced with over double the amount of employment outcomes including apprenticeships, attendance rates for participants increasing from 52% to 96%. Further to this our experience has shown that since COVID-19 and with the new model embedded into SJAH, there is a significant increase in demand for placements. The number of expressions of interest (EOI) doubling from 2019 to 2020.

Should CEH be successful in securing the EOI on the 'Community Housing Growth Program' (CHGP), as well as meeting the contractual agreement of the new contracts it is our position that the program will also deliver;

- 35 New FTE positions supporting the construction industry
- 400 employment and training outcomes through the *Build Up Tassie* Employment program
- 161,184 training hours provided through compliance with Skills Training and apprenticeship policy
- Creation of a designated training hub / new project build for work experience and apprenticeships in the construction industry
- Increased trade capabilities to address in part future requirements and demand

Key stakeholders and industry partners include all levels of government, Tasmania Building Group Apprenticeship Scheme, Trade Training Centres, Tasmanian Building, Construction Training Board and Skills Tasmania.

Careful scheduling and timing of projects will be paramount to the success of the CHGP as CEH has the proven track record and resource to roll out of the program of this scale in a timely manner.





## Volunteering



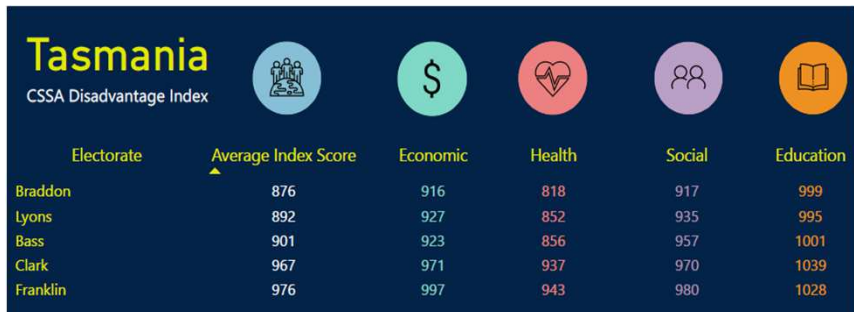
Recommendation 33. The State Government should engage with Volunteering Tasmania to develop support measures to enable organisations to retain and attract volunteers.

CCT were forced to close many volunteering services during the Tasmanian lockdown, due to the age of the majority of the volunteers being in the high risk category. Since re-opening to volunteers CCT has seen a decline in their volunteering numbers, which can be linked to change in volunteer circumstances. Since the pandemic, CCT has initiated 3 new volunteer services to increase the support to programs and services across CCT. Any assistance to engage Volunteering Tasmania would be welcomed as a key stakeholder in this sector.



## Sharing the Data

Recommendation 50. The State Government should prioritise work, including shared data capability, to identify, engage and support vulnerable cohorts that may have ongoing disproportionate adverse impacts.



CCT has a dedicated Social Impact Unit, specifically established to monitor and review program outcomes and evaluate services to better understand our organisation’s contribution to change and social impact. The team is made up of thought leaders, data and business analyst and researchers dedicated to finding new and improved ways of supporting vulnerable cohorts and working in an integrated manner both internally and with external partners to facilitate generational change. The Social Impact Unit works closely with programs to support the organisation to identify specific trends, gaps and potential for service and community improvements.

In 2018 CCT partnered with Catholic Social Services Australia, Australian National University and other Catholic agencies to develop the “Mapping the Potential” project which investigated how Australians experience disadvantage. The project has provided CCT with a much richer understanding of disadvantage and how we can have a positive impact on it. The report identifies areas of persistent communal disadvantage in Australia broken into 4 key drivers: economics, health, social and education. Above is a snapshot of the disadvantage indicator for each of the electorates in Tasmania, noting that the national average is 1000. Tasmania has the lowest national average of any state in Australia, with Braddon being the most disadvantaged electorate in 3 of the 4 domains. This is of significance in relation to the health implications of COVID-19, where Tasmania is most affected, notably in Braddon.

Behind this high-level data, CCT is able to drill down to suburb level. CCT uses this data organisation wide in their strategic planning and welcomes engagement with the state government on harnessing its potential. “Mapping the Potential” helps us, and can assist PESRAC, to target innovation and investment to where it is needed most. In the press, it is reported at federal electorate level to minimise negative stigma of suburbs.





Recommendation 57. The State Government should quickly review how the additional COVID-19 government funding for mental health; family violence and emergency food relief has been used and the outcomes delivered

## Measuring Social Impact - A Targeted Response

Data is collected from every program and service provided by CCT, measuring and reporting on various aspects of the program, including the social impact outcomes. CCT welcomes the sharing of this data where appropriate, and supports this recommendation with examples of some recent funding received which demonstrate enhanced outcomes.

\$124,000 (FA-0002774) was provided to CCT's *SafeChoices*, a program providing practical support for anyone experiencing family violence, focusing on early intervention, safety, exit planning, information and referrals. These funds were used to create a new full-time position (July 2020 – June 2021) for a Specialist Family Violence Counsellor, which allowed for people experiencing violence to access support without waiting 9-10 weeks for services. The need for this position was verified through CCT data that showed an increase of 38% in appointments booked from the same period the year before.

\$225,000 (D20/20840) *Temporary Emergency COVID-19 Funding Relief for Temporary Visa Holders* was provided for distribution by CCT. Between July and September 2020, 316 families received assistance, the average amount of assistance was \$355. 76% of all recipients were on either student or temporary graduate visas, a young client group CCT has not seen in significant numbers before, showing a significant amount of vulnerability and area of concern.

\$480,000 (FA-00002760) was received for the Therapeutic Residential Care program for young people aged 11-17 years, to keep a Crisis Care House open that was otherwise due to close in July 2020. As exiting opportunities out of this program have not increased, the need to keep this funding ongoing is critical to the wellbeing and support of young people in this home.

*For further information please refer to Appendix A*



## Funding & Planning



Recommendation 58. Monitoring and rapid contingency planning should be undertaken to ascertain if further additional funding is needed across these important community impact areas.



CCT has been closely monitoring their services and the changes due to COVID-19, as outlined in Appendix A. CCT encourages government to put in place plans to ensure community and social service needs can be met and employment levels can be maintained, and even increased.

Table 1.1 Significant CCT State contracts due to expire in June 2021

Program Name	Funding Agreement	Program Funds	FTE	Head Count
Out of Home Care Services - Residential Care types	FA-00002821	\$7,278,981	58	90
AK Young Women's Refuge	FA-000002516	\$794,167	5	10
Safe Haven Hub	DOC/19/22038	\$300,000	2	3
Family Support -Reunification Service - Pathway Home	FA-00002824	\$745,994	5	5
Supported Independent Living Outreach for Young People	FA-00002670	\$235,000	1	2
Child and Family Services - Preservation Service	FA-00002862	\$165,000	1	2
Integrated Family Support - Georgetown & Launceston	FA-00002160	\$174,386	2	3
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$9,693,528</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>115</b>

CCT welcomes ongoing and early discussions with the government regarding the continuation of these contracts to ensure continuity of quality care, program stability and employee job security, noting that some of these contract negotiations are currently in progress.

CCT would also like to highlight that both *Emergency Relief Assistance* funds (1-METLHF & D20/20840) are required to be distributed by CCT without any administrative on-costs being deducted from these funds. To maintain the viability of these important services CCT would like to discuss the incorporation of an administrative fee to cover staffing the program.

*SafeChoices* clients have benefited from the COVID-19 enhanced funding with the addition of a further 1FTE specialised Family Violence Counsellor. We would like to see this full-time role on a ongoing basis, with the addition of a part time project coordinator (.5FTE) to promote, monitor and evaluate a new online family violence training course for those experiencing violence.

Integrated Family Support (FA-00002160) is currently running over the capacity of its contract, with demand for counselling increasing CCT would like to see an additional 20% of the contract added to the program to cover its cost and maintain viability.



Recommendation 60. Where digital service delivery has delivered improved outcomes from a client perspective, those changes should be maintained.

One area we have seen improvements or efficiencies in service delivery is in the duration of CCT *Counselling* and *SafeChoices* appointments.

In the counselling department the average appointment time decreased by 12% from 92 minutes to 81 minutes. *SafeChoices* had a decrease of 17%, with appointments going from 58 minutes to 48.

Family programs were also able to increase their caseloads by 18% due to less travel time required to visit clients and the cessation of group education sessions.

CCT agree with this recommendation as it will enable efficiencies and also meet the needs of clients who are unable to attend appointments in person.



# COMPASSION. CARE. TOGETHER.

This submission to PESRAC has been developed by CCT's Social Impact Unit, a dedicated team with specialist skills in evaluation and impact measurement, systems analysis and research, social entrepreneurship, strategic and philanthropic partnerships, advocacy and communications.

The Social Impact Unit is tasked to support CCT and associated Catholic entities to understand the individual and combined outcomes and impact of our services, in a rapidly changing and diverse community.

The Unit is founded on a Social Impact Approach which is based on leveraging partnerships to enable and create change. This approach allows us to deliver the best return on the funds available through linking resources internally as well as in the broader community, and designing innovative and collaborative solutions to complex problems.

The Social Impact Approach aims to improve outcomes across seven wellbeing domains. CCT's Social Impact Approach, recently researched through The University of Tasmania is aligned to the Tasmanian Government's Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework.

The Social Impact Unit supports the organisation to measure, understand and translate the impact of our mission to serve Tasmanians in need.





**For further information**

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