

Tasmania 20-Year Preventive Health Strategy Exposure Draft

Summary of yourtown's advocacy submission 2026



What is it about?

yourtown provided a submission to the Tasmanian Department of Health on the exposure draft of Tasmania's 20-year Preventive Health Strategy. Drawing on frontline service delivery, Kids Helpline data and insights from Your Voice 2025, the submission focuses on how the Strategy can better translate its ambition into practice for children and young people. The submission highlights the importance of youth mental health, digital inclusion, education engagement, community-based prevention and cross-system integration across health, education, housing, justice and community services. It provides practical recommendations to strengthen prevention infrastructure, implementation and accountability over the long term.

Why is it important?

The Strategy represents a critical opportunity to shift Tasmania's health system from reactive treatment to upstream prevention. Without sustained resourcing, clear accountability and meaningful youth and community leadership, there is a risk that responsibility for prevention is shifted without the support required to succeed. **yourtown's** submission is important because it brings credible frontline evidence and young people's lived experiences into the policy process. It demonstrates that prevention is most effective when systems are connected, equity is embedded in decision-making, and children and young people can access timely, age-appropriate support before issues escalate to crisis point. Strengthening these elements will improve long-term health outcomes, reduce pressure on acute services and deliver more equitable outcomes for Tasmanian communities.

Some of yourtown's key messages:

1. Treat prevention as core public infrastructure

Prevention must be resourced and governed as essential public infrastructure, rather than relying on individual or community empowerment alone. Sustained investment, workforce capability and system coordination are required to deliver durable, population-level health outcomes over the life of the Strategy.

2. Position children and young people as a priority preventive health population

Early life experiences fundamentally shape lifelong health, wellbeing and equity. The Strategy should consistently prioritise children and young people across all pillars, recognising the long-term health impacts of mental distress, domestic and family violence, education disengagement, housing instability and justice involvement.

3. Embed community and youth leadership through co-design

Effective prevention depends on lived-experience leadership. Co-design and human-centred approaches should be embedded as standard practice in governance, planning, implementation and evaluation, supported by sustained multi-year investment, place-based investment and clear accountability.

4. Strengthen digital safety, counselling and after-hours support

Digital support is essential prevention infrastructure, particularly for young people in regional and outer regional Tasmania and those seeking help outside business hours. Digital counselling, crisis pathways, online safety education and coordinated digital and in-person models must be embedded as core components of the preventive health system.

5. Prioritise school engagement as a preventive health issue

Disengagement from education is a key driver of poor lifelong health outcomes. Prevention efforts should focus on creating safe and supportive learning environments, early identification of learning needs, literacy support, flexible delivery models and strong re-engagement pathways linked to mental health and employment outcomes.

6. Address domestic and family violence and youth justice as prevention priorities

Children and young people must be recognised as victim-survivors of domestic and family violence in their own right. Youth justice, diversion and rehabilitation should be positioned as preventive health responses that address underlying drivers such as trauma, housing instability, school disengagement and lack of social connection.

7. Strengthen accountability, equity and implementation

The Strategy's long-term vision must be matched by clear accountability for delivery, equity-weighted prioritisation, sustained multi-year funding, workforce readiness and transparent measurement and reporting to translate intent into system-wide change.



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