

Submission from the Tasmanian Government

House of Representatives Standing
Committee on Family, Community,
Housing and Youth Inquiry into
Homelessness Legislation

Submission No. 93

(homelessness legislation)

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Tasmania
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Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Tasmania's Approach to Homelessness.....	3
2.1 Housing Innovations Unit.....	3
2.2 Social Inclusion Unit.....	3
2.3 The Haggerty Report.....	4
2.4 The Tasmanian Homelessness Plan.....	4
2.5 Homelessness National Partnership – Implementation Plan.....	4
2.6 Refoprm of the Tasmanian Human Services System.....	5
2.7 Specialist Homelessness Services in Tasmania.....	6
3. Response to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference.....	7
3.1 The principles that should underpin the provision of services to Australians who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.....	7
3.2 The scope of any legislation with respect to related government initiatives in the areas of social inclusion and rights.....	9
3.3 The role of legislation in improving the quality of services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness..	11
3.4 The effectiveness of existing legislation and regulations governing homelessness services in Australia and overseas.....	12
3.5 The applicability of existing legislative and regulatory models used in other community service systems, such as disability services, aged care and child care, to the homelessness sector..	13

I. Introduction

The Tasmanian Government welcomes the opportunity to provide input into the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth Inquiry into Homelessness Legislation (the Inquiry).

Addressing homelessness is a major priority for the Tasmanian Government. The Government has established a benchmark figure for primary homelessness and is committed to halving the number of people who are sleeping rough by the end of 2010 and leading significant reform in the provision of services to assist people in Tasmania who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The Government is also committed to a comprehensive social inclusion strategy and implementing specific actions in response to the four core outputs from the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPH).

Given the establishment of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations (IGA), it is unclear why homelessness legislation is required to underpin the response to homelessness, which is being actively progressed by all jurisdictions, through the National Affordable Housing Agreement and Homelessness NP, and, more importantly, what it will seek to achieve.

The *Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994* (SAAP Act) had a very clear purpose in formalising the relationship between the Commonwealth and states and territories to make provision for financial assistance to provide transitional supported accommodation and related support services, to assist individuals who are homeless.

Significant structural reform undertaken through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has seen the development of a new national framework to underpin housing affordability and homelessness responses in Australia. These reforms are delivered through the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) and National Partnership Agreements on Homelessness, Social Housing and Remote Indigenous Housing (NPs).

In light of the reforms under the IGA, the rationale for Commonwealth legislation to underpin the delivery of homelessness services no longer exists as the funding relationship and national homelessness policy approach is now enshrined in the IGA framework, especially the NAHA and NPs. In Tasmania's view, new Commonwealth homelessness legislation is unnecessary and inconsistent with the IGA approach.

Tasmania supports strategies that address the underlying causes of homelessness, focusing on prevention and early intervention and the integration of support services. This aligns with the intent in the White Paper on Homelessness for a client-focused policy framework providing seamless services to prevent and support homelessness and the key priority reform identified in the NAHA – the integration of homelessness services with mainstream services, such as employment, health, education and drug and alcohol support. The policy framework has been established through the NAHA and Homelessness NP and the priority for Tasmania is to focus its efforts and resources on implementing that policy and service system reforms.

The restructuring of Tasmania's service delivery system since 2000 has improved client outcomes by increasing the flexibility and integration of support services. Effort will now be directed at improving linkages between homelessness and mainstream services.

The Tasmanian Government notes that the Homelessness Working Group is currently undertaking work towards the development of a Homelessness Service Charter to support quality service delivery across the Commonwealth and states and territories.

To assist the Inquiry in understanding Tasmania's approach to homelessness an overview of the specific reforms being undertaken in the State is provided. These include:

- the establishment of a Housing Innovations Unit (HIU) within the Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), with a focus on delivering a range of affordable housing options through State and national programs;
- the establishment of a Social Inclusion Unit (SIU) within the Tasmanian Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC);
- delivery of a commissioned report by internationally recognised housing consultant Roseanne Haggerty;
- the development of the Tasmanian Homelessness Plan (THP);
- the development of the Tasmanian Homelessness Implementation Plan, in response to the four core outputs from the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness;
- the introduction of reforms to service delivery for homeless people; and
- the provision of specialist homelessness services in Tasmania.

The submission also addresses the Inquiry's terms of reference.

2. Tasmania's Approach to Homelessness

Addressing homelessness is a major priority for the Tasmanian Government. On Census night 2006, 385 people experienced primary homelessness in Tasmania.¹ The Government has committed to halving the number of people who are sleeping rough by the end of 2010. The Government has also committed \$60 million in additional funding for improved affordable housing options, to be administered by a new HIU. Other key components of the Government's approach to tackling homelessness include the development of a social inclusion strategy and Tasmanian Homelessness Plan; progressing initiatives under the Homelessness National Partnership Agreement; broad reform of the human services system; and the delivery of specialist homelessness services.

2.1 Housing Innovations Unit

The HIU is responsible for driving the delivery of innovative approaches to increasing the supply and condition of social and affordable housing in the Tasmanian community.

Over the five-year period from 2008 to 2012, the HIU will lead a broad housing reform agenda that will encompass an extensive program of activities focused on:

- construction of new homes for social housing;
- affordable home ownership programs;
- private rental assistance;
- reducing homelessness; and
- land development for social and affordable housing.

These reforms have been made possible through substantial State and Commonwealth investment into housing, including the Commonwealth Government's Nation Building – Economic Stimulus Plan, the Tasmanian Government's Housing Fund, the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) and the National Rental Affordability Scheme. Total government investment for new supply of social and affordable housing in Tasmania may reach as much as \$200 million over this period of time.

To achieve its broad housing reform objectives, the HIU is working closely with Housing Tasmania (which is also in the DHHS) and in partnership with other government, non-government and private sector organisations.

2.2 Social Inclusion Unit

In 2008 the Government established an SIU within DPAC and appointed a Social Inclusion Commissioner, as part of its commitment to building a 'clever, kind and connected' Tasmania.

¹ Chamberlain C. and MacKenzie D. (2009) *Counting the homeless 2006: Tasmania* Cat. No. HOU 208. Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

The SIU and the Commissioner are currently developing a social inclusion strategy designed to provide opportunities for all Tasmanians to participate in the social, economic and civic life of the State. It will look at new ways for the Government to work together and with other partners to tackle the barriers faced by socially excluded people. The SIU is also working closely with Housing Tasmania to develop the THP.

2.3 The Haggerty Report

In March 2008, the Tasmanian Government commissioned internationally recognised housing consultant, Rosanne Haggerty, to provide a report on new ways to reduce homelessness in Tasmania. The report draws attention to Tasmania's successful incorporation of services for people who are homeless into individual neighbourhoods. The report recommendations have informed the development of the THP and Tasmania's Implementation Plan under the Homelessness NP.

2.4 The Tasmanian Homelessness Plan

Tasmania is currently developing the THP, which will provide an evidence-based structure for a whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach to reduce and prevent homelessness in Tasmania. Informed by the recommendations of the Haggerty Report, the THP is being developed collaboratively by the SIU and Housing Tasmania.

A key tenet of the Plan is that homelessness is a whole-of-government and whole-of-community issue and it seeks to ensure homelessness is prevented, wherever possible. Where individuals experience homelessness, the THP aims to ensure they are assisted to move quickly into long-term housing and stabilise connections with education, employment and the community. The Plan will include initiatives that seek to lever activity by mainstream services in identifying and responding effectively to individual and structural causes of homelessness.

2.5 Homelessness National Partnership – Implementation Plan

Tasmania's Homelessness Implementation Plan (HIP) outlines the State's initiatives under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness (NPH). Under the HIP \$18.9 million in Commonwealth and State funding has been allocated over five years to reduce homelessness in Tasmania. The HIP has six core initiatives:

1. Same House Different Landlord program – to enable people experiencing homelessness to move directly into 100 units of long-term accommodation, supported by specialist intervention tenancy services.
2. Dedicated homelessness facilities - Five specific-purpose facilities will be acquired around the State for homeless people over the next two years, supported by specialist intervention tenancy services. Two of the facilities will be developed in Hobart, two in Launceston and one in Devonport. One of the facilities will be based on the Common Ground model utilising funding under the *A Place to Call Home* program and one will be developed specifically for young people.
3. Specialist intervention tenancy services – the establishment of a multidisciplinary team of specialist tenancy support and professional practitioners to provide assistance to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness:

4. Service coordination and improvement initiatives – that will focus on improving service coordination and engagement of mainstream services to ensure a seamless pathway through social housing. This project aims to create an evidence-based, best practice model through the development of:
 - improved quality and standards;
 - improved performance information;
 - linkages with mainstream services;
 - integration with Tasmanian DHHS reforms;
 - a common assessment framework and practices; and
 - a property register and allocations framework.
5. The Tasmanian Homelessness Plan (THP)
6. Workforce capacity audit and development plan – focused on identifying the training and development needs of the sector and with the aim of implementing strategies to foster continuous quality improvement in the context of the changing needs of clients and a more robust and integrated service system.

2.6 Reform of the Tasmanian Human Services System

These initiatives will significantly build on Tasmania's progressive human services system which has undergone substantial reform in recent years in an effort to improve the coordination and integration of services at a local level. Initiatives to achieve a more connected service system include:

- Reform of the human services system through the introduction of a Gateway Model that brings family support, child protection, youth justice and disability services together through a lead non-government organisation at a local level.
- The creation of eight Child and Family Centres providing comprehensive, integrated programs that combine parent support, nurturing, care, nutrition, and stimulation in the early childhood years at the local level.
- Development of Integrated Care Centres to bring together primary health services and step down acute services in dispersed areas.
- Increased funding to mental health and drug and alcohol services to increase service capacity, integration and partnerships with the community sector in order to provide expanded community based clinical recovery, rehabilitation and supported accommodation.

Another major Tasmanian Government reform has been the implementation of the *Safe At Home* initiative, enabling a stronger and integrated response to family violence within the State and supporting the overall response to the prevention of homelessness.

Safe at Home is enabled by the provisions of the *Family Violence Act 2004* and is a pro-arrest, pro-prosecution response to family violence that integrates and extends the range of services available to support victims and children. The strategy includes a family violence response and referral line, legal aid, family violence offender intervention program, victim counselling and support services and brokerage of accommodation for perpetrators of family violence.

2.7 Specialist Homelessness Services in Tasmania

Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) provide the primary response to homelessness in Tasmania. The services are funded under the NAHA with over \$16.5 million allocated for the 2009-10 financial year.

The service system delivers 34 specialist services across the State, including:

- case planning and support;
- immediate emergency accommodation;
- supervised supported accommodation for young people;
- transitional support; and
- adolescent community placements.

The integration of services within each region and their modular nature have been crucial in providing increased flexibility and better services to clients. Brokerage funds also provide an increased level of flexibility and innovation in the provision of support and helps reduce pressure on the existing network of homeless shelters.

The service system is based on the Integrated Continuum of Support (ICOS) model, which features:

- an integrated service system;
- a clearly defined set of service types detailing service specifications and functions;
- the separation of support from the provision of accommodation enabling support to be flexible and follow the client; and
- an equitable funding rationale based on input unit-costs and proportional regional funding based on regional populations.

In recent years the homeless service system has undergone substantial reform; although there are notable pressure points which remain within the system. These pressure points are consistent with those identified across Australia in the Australian Government's White Paper on Homelessness *The Road Home* and they have contributed significantly to new initiatives to reduce homelessness in Tasmania.

3. The Inquiry's Terms of Reference

3.1: The principles that should underpin the provision of services to Australians who are homeless or at risk of homelessness

The Australian Government's White Paper on Homelessness provides a clear message that homelessness is everyone's responsibility. The Tasmanian Government endorses this view and supports greater service integration. Action outside the immediate boundaries of homelessness service provision is required if improvements are to be made in the areas of prevention, early intervention and addressing the broader social and economic factors that cause homelessness.

Strong coordination within and between government, business and non-government organisations is vital in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of service provision for homeless people. Other principles critical to success are awareness, access (service appropriateness, location and opening hours), participation and support (including mentoring) and evidence-based practice.

A number of key principles underpin the Tasmanian Government's approach to service delivery and policy development on homelessness. These derive from national and state policies, programs and initiatives and include:

3.1.1 Principles of the Tasmanian Homelessness Plan

The THP, which seeks to provide a whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach to reduce and prevent homelessness in Tasmania, is guided by six principles:

1. People

- Hope and self determination; and
- Whole-of-life.

This principle acknowledges the importance of keeping the individual at the centre of intervention and considering all aspects of an individual's life when providing assistance.

2. Partnerships

- Whole-of-government; and
- Whole-of-community.

This principle recognises that homelessness is everybody's responsibility and that the response requires all community sectors, including business, not-for-profit, religious, education, healthcare and government, to work together. Moreover, it accepts that ending homelessness will require the delivery of a broad range of government services, involving the integration and coordination of service delivery and resources across government agencies.

3. Leadership

- Solve, don't manage homelessness; and
- Political, business and community.

This principle acknowledges that homelessness must be solved rather than managed. It also recognises the importance of jurisdictional leadership which draws on political, business and community solutions, in order to achieve this objective.

4. Innovation

- Practical and creative responses; and
- Community owned solutions

This principle recognises that responses to homelessness require practical, creative and community-owned solutions.

5. Inclusion

- Connect to family and community; and
- Social, economic and civil life

This principle is based on the understanding that social, economic and democratic inclusion is central to solving homelessness. Social connections, including to family and community, positively affect individuals and assist in prevention, early intervention and stopping the cycle of chronic homelessness.

6. Evidence

- Research and data; and
- Communicating results.

This principle acknowledges that in order to be effective the response to homelessness must be evidence-based and focused on effectively communicating results.

3.1.2 Principles of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program V

The delivery of homelessness services in Tasmania continues to be guided by the principles adopted by the Australian Government and state and territory governments for the implementation of the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) V. These principles are:

- shared commitment;
- cultural appropriateness;
- service responsiveness and flexibility;
- service accessibility;
- protection and promotion of client rights and dignities;
- maximising client independence and resilience; and
- an efficient and effective service system.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994 (Commonwealth) Preamble

The current SAAP Act is premised upon an explicit human rights approach. The Preamble identifies Australia's international obligations, includes a 'rights discourse' and establishes important principles around the provision of homelessness services in Australia.

3.2: The scope of any legislation with respect to related government initiatives in the areas of social inclusion and rights

In the areas of social inclusion and rights, the Tasmanian Government believes that the most meaningful way to assist homeless individuals is through implementing effective, fair and equitable policies for access to services and service delivery.

3.2.1 Social Inclusion

The Australian Government's emphasis on social inclusion is welcome, and consistent with the Tasmanian Government's approach.

The Tasmanian Government is committed to a social inclusion agenda to better serve Tasmanians who experience deep and persistent social disadvantage. It has established SIU, appointed a Social Inclusion Commissioner and is developing a social inclusion strategy.

The Commissioner will provide a strong voice for socially excluded and disadvantaged Tasmanians and lead Tasmania's social inclusion agenda. The Commissioner will work with the Premier, Tasmanian and Australian Governments, local government, community and business sectors to generate approaches to social inclusion that deliver practical results for Tasmanians.

The SIU will support the Social Inclusion Commissioner by undertaking research, analysing data, facilitating cross-agency and cross-sectoral cooperation, and leading community engagement and consultation to develop evidence-based policy and create whole-of-community responses to complex social issues.

3.2.2 Social Inclusion Strategy

A social inclusion strategy is being developed which will provide opportunities for all Tasmanians to participate in the social, economic and civic life of the State. The strategy needs to be supported by a system that helps people to access support services, education and job opportunities, as well as social and community networks. It will look at new ways for the Government to work together to tackle the barriers faced by socially excluded people. The strategy will try to strengthen and build connections in communities so they can be socially inclusive and outline 10 principles for social inclusion, with recommended strategic priorities and policy directions including:

1. Security: getting the basics right
2. Dignity: living with dignity, de-stigmatisation and anti-discrimination, accepting difference
3. Respect: capacity building not welfare

4. Hope: importance of families and maintaining personal relationships, personal networks
5. Belonging: connection and social and community networks, social participation and social capital
6. Opportunity: breaking down the barriers, access and opportunity
7. Community: creating the communities of the future, urban, regional and rural, future demands, thinking ahead, importance of research and evidence, robust and informed policy making and careful decision making
8. Responsibility: everybody's responsibility including individual responsibility – and building community capacity and building individual capacity and life skills, building relationships and supportive networks based on trust
9. Innovation: doing things differently, Child and Family Centres, Learning and Information Network Centres, Gateways, person focused, citizen centred, silo-less services, place based, community tailored responses
10. Equity: ensuring that the gradient between advantage and disadvantage doesn't increase in Tasmania.

3.2.3 Indigenous Disadvantage

The Tasmanian Government is a signatory to the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing. This includes a commitment to social inclusion and responding to Indigenous disadvantage. Initiatives at a local level will assist in addressing overcrowding, homelessness, poor housing condition and severe housing shortage in remote Indigenous communities. Activities in these areas are critical to meet COAG's targets to address indigenous disadvantage.

3.2.4 Housing rights

The existing Preamble to the SAAP Act signals the importance of redressing social inequality, reducing poverty and its consequences in Australia. The Act identifies homeless individuals as among the most disadvantaged and marginalised in society and details principles underpinning an appropriate response to homelessness that is based on respect for client dignity, enhancing self-esteem, sensitivity to social and economic circumstances and respect for cultural backgrounds and beliefs. The Act articulates the covenants and conventions through which Australia recognises the rights of all citizens.

The Preamble to the *Housing Assistance Act 1996* identifies housing and shelter as a basic human need, recognises that social and economic disadvantage influence housing outcomes, that individuals are often discriminated against in their efforts to achieve housing and that housing is among the range of factors which affects quality of life.

3.3: The role of legislation in improving the quality of services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness

The Tasmanian Government is committed to continuous quality improvement in the delivery of homelessness-related services and is guided by the following standards and safety frameworks:

3.3.1 Quality Improvement Council-endorsed Health and Community Services Core Module

Over a three-year period until June 2009, the Tasmanian Government conducted a service development review of all SAAP services in Tasmania. A mapping exercise linking the Tasmanian SAAP Service Standards against the nationally accredited Quality Improvement Council (QIC) Health and Community Services Core Module, identified good alignment, with the exception of two SAAP specific standards. The two SAAP standards, unique to the delivery of SAAP in Tasmania, were subsequently included with the core 15 standards to guide quality homeless service delivery in the State.

An external evaluation of this quality improvement process in Tasmania recommended an incremental approach to the introduction and assessment of standards. The evaluation also recommended the recognition of opportunities for sector-wide training in risk management and the potential to develop sector-wide policies and protocols in some situations.

Since July 2009, the 17 standards, under the QIC endorsed Health and Community Services Core Module, have been incorporated into a new Tasmanian DHHS Quality and Safety Framework for government-funded community sector organisations. The standards framework incorporates generic standards, based on various legislative requirements and governance and accountability standards, which apply to every organisation.

Compliance with the new Quality and Safety Framework is regulated through a robust new Tasmanian Community Services Funding Agreement, covering State Government funding to homelessness service providers. The Tasmanian Government works very closely with organisations to provide support and generate capacity to comply with standards.

3.3.2 National Regulatory Framework

The current focus of the National Regulatory Framework (NRF) is the community housing sector. Housing ministers have committed to the introduction of a national regulatory system for not-for-profit social housing growth providers to enhance the sector's capacity to operate across jurisdictions and provide an Australia-wide system of assessment and controls.

The intentions behind the NRF are to promote robust operations and make it possible for providers to operate flexibly across multiple jurisdictions where appropriate. It will also reduce the total cost to government in administering regulatory systems. A major driver for regulating the not-for-profit sector is to furnish a level of reassurance for banks and lenders that the system is being delivered to agreed standards and monitored by government. Once in place, the regulatory system will improve the security and confidence of lenders to provide finance for developments. In turn, organisations will have greater capacity and ability to leverage from assets and expand their portfolio.

3.3.3 National Community Housing Standards

National Community Housing Standards (NCHS) are a common set of national standards for community housing that include a system to assess and accredit community housing providers. An advantage of the standards is that they can be used by provider organisations to achieve continuous quality improvement. The NCHS Manual is currently being reviewed.

The provision of social housing and the operating environment of community housing providers have evolved over recent years and a contemporary set of standards that more clearly reflect these changes would be welcomed, especially trends and issues at a national level including the emergence of organisations operating at a significantly increased scale in a number of jurisdictions. Such standards would complement existing state and territory regulatory requirements for community housing and the proposed national regulatory framework for not-for-profit growth providers.

3.3.4 National reform

The provision of quality homelessness services is a priority for the Australian Government, as identified in the White Paper on Homelessness.

The Tasmanian Government notes that the Homelessness Working Group has agreed to commence activity to develop a service charter for the homelessness sector to ensure the delivery of quality innovative services that focus on outcomes and treat clients with dignity and respect. Jurisdictions have not, however, agreed to the introduction of a nationally-based accreditation system to support these standards.

Tasmania supports strategies that generate best practice affordable models for service delivery across the sector, define service outcomes, encourage skilled and qualified staff and provide career paths, encouraging national consistency and quality of services and allow for continuous service improvement and partnerships. These models must be responsive to local circumstances, integrated within existing policy and service systems and focus on outcomes rather than restrictive inputs or a 'one-size-fits-all' mandated regulatory approach.

3.4: The effectiveness of existing legislation and regulations governing homelessness services in Australia and overseas.

Legislation governing homelessness in Australia and overseas includes:

3.4.1 The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program Act 1994

The SAAP Act establishes the SAAP National Coordination and Development Committee to ensure strong governance of the homelessness service response and representation from each jurisdiction. The Act also established the national data collection system, national research program and evaluation of program performance. The research and evaluation programs provide quality feedback and direction for policy and program areas. They are well resourced and make possible independent evaluation of the program.

There have been ongoing issues in relation to SAAP V in defining target groups and service delivery models within the data sets. The current SAAP Act does not provide comprehensive or mutually exclusive definitions for special needs target groups, which has implications for measuring housing outcomes and developing robust, high-quality data. Target groups would be best defined within service agreements at the local operational level to allow a flexible response to the changing profile of homeless people in Australia.

3.4.2 Residential Tenancy Act 1997 (Tasmania)

Tasmania is the only Australian jurisdiction where tenancy legislation does not permit a landlord to terminate a periodic tenancy agreement 'without grounds or fault'. This provides some protection against unfair termination and potential homelessness for tenants in the event that they are unable to locate suitable and affordable alternative housing. Under this Act, a landlord is required to provide reasonable grounds for termination, such as serious breach of the agreement or sale of premises where there is no fixed term.

3.4.3 International legislation

In the United Kingdom (UK) housing authorities have a statutory responsibility to assist the homeless and are required to rehouse families and other defined groups of homeless people.² The legal definitions of homelessness and 'priority need' give greater protection to families and those with dependents; persons aged 16 and 17; persons aged 18 to 21 leaving care, as well as individuals fleeing violence and exiting state institutions. While the UK legislation imposes statutory obligations on service providers, the narrow definition of the homeless population excludes most homeless people, who do not have dependants, from a statutory right to be housed.

3.5: The applicability of existing legislative and regulatory models used in other community service systems, such as disability services, aged care and child care, to the homelessness sector

There is a range of existing legislative and regulatory models for delivering human services. Legislation and standards that apply to disability services offer perhaps the most prominent example in this regard.

3.5.1 Disability Services Act 1986 (Commonwealth)

The *Disability Services Act* defines its target group as persons with a disability that:

- (a) is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, sensory or physical impairment or a combination of such impairments;
- (b) is permanent or likely to be permanent; and
- (c) results in:
 - (i) a substantially reduced capacity of the person for communication, learning or mobility; and
 - (ii) the need for ongoing support services.

² Greenhalgh, E.; Miller, A.; Mead, E.; Jerome, K. and Minnery, J. (2004) *Recent International and National Approaches to Homelessness*. Queensland: Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Queensland Research Centre.

The disability service response is delivered in the context of permanent disability and in Tasmania, entails a life-long service 'package'. Moreover, sensory or physical impairment, requiring the provision of personal and physical services, necessitates robust and highly monitored service standards.

Importantly, service standards are not embedded in the legislation, but the legislation includes provision for the Minister to determine service standards in terms of eligibility, disability employment standards and rehabilitation program standards.

3.5.2 Disability Services Standards

The Disability Services Standards are disability employment standards that guide quality service delivery in the disability sector and define the obligations of Australian Government employment service providers funded under the *Disability Services Act*. The standards contain principles of best practice in working with people with a disability, which could be applied to other sectors including homelessness, and include:

- service access;
- individual needs;
- decision-making and choice;
- privacy, dignity and confidentiality;
- participation and integration;
- valued status;
- complaints and disputes;
- service management;
- employment conditions;
- service recipient training and support;
- staff recruitment, employment and training; and
- protection of human rights and freedom from abuse.

The Disability Services Standards are generic and articulate a comprehensive framework for the delivery of quality disability services, funded under the *Disability Services Act*.



House Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth

Committee activities (inquiries and reports)

Inquiry into homelessness legislation

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Terms of Reference

"The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth shall inquire into and report on the content of homelessness legislation.

The Committee will make inquiries into the principles and service standards that could be incorporated in such legislation, building on the strengths of existing legislation, particularly the *Supported Accommodation Assistance Act 1994*.

The Committee shall give particular consideration to:

1. The principles that should underpin the provision of services to Australians who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
2. The scope of any legislation with respect to related government initiatives in the areas of social inclusion and rights.
3. The role of legislation in improving the quality of services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
4. The effectiveness of existing legislation and regulations governing homelessness services in Australia and overseas.
5. The applicability of existing legislative and regulatory models used in other community service systems, such as disability services, aged care and child care, to the homelessness sector."

[Top](#)

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