



CHILD AND YOUTH WELLBEING STRATEGY SUBMISSION 2021

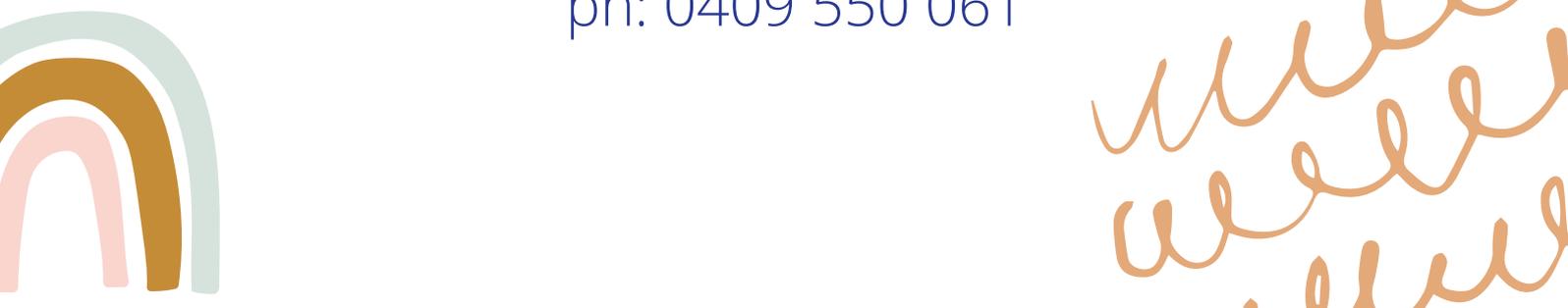


FAMILIES
Tasmania

SUPPORT • ADVOCACY • WELLBEING

(FORMERLY CHILD HEALTH ASSOCIATION TASMANIA - CHAT)

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INTRODUCTION

Families Tasmania (formally the Child Health Association Tasmania) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy consultation and wishes to commend the Tasmanian Government for valuing the importance of the early years and committing to developing a comprehensive, long term whole of Government Child and Youth Wellbeing strategy.

At Families Tasmania our vision is that all families are connected, supported and empowered to build healthy lives. We do this through advocacy, education, community connections and support programs. We have a focus on positive partnerships and collaborations to ensure efficient and effective service provision and work from an evidenced based platform for program facilitation and resource development.

Families Tasmania offers a wide range of resources, connections and opportunities for families to engage with useful tools to support healthy, happy lives. Across Tasmania we offer parenting programs, community events, online support networks and information pathways, workshops, and skills building for families.

WELLBEING DOMAINS:

Families Tasmania services align with the domains of the child and youth wellbeing framework in the following ways:

BEING LOVED AND SAFE

- Facilitation of evidenced based parenting programs Bringing up Great Kids, BUGK First 1000 Days, 123 Magic and Emotion Coaching, Parent Child Mother Goose
- Support families by providing access to evidenced based resources and information sessions that build their fundamental parenting skills – includes affordable Infant and Child First Aid information sessions and parent skill workshops on topical issues.
- Promote connection and community to build capacity of parents to inform and support their expectations of child development and behaviour, in secure and safe settings.

HAVING MATERIAL BASICS

- Supporting and championing a move to community food security for families through the provision of information and support to build fundamental food skills and foster resilience (Family Food Patch program).
- Developed Kitchen ABC123 resource to support the development of key food skills, knowledge and confidence in families and communities. We also champion the use of accessible, seasonal local produce.
- Local pop up community activation events with free food giveaways from the Well Fed Tasmania Food truck, supporting access to nutritious food and helpful resources.
- Promote and role model interactive play and skill building ideas, using freely available, everyday resources.

BEING HEALTHY

- Our Family Food Patch program aims to improve the health and wellbeing of Tasmanian children and families through promotion of eating well and being active. Using peer education, Family Food Patch empowers families and local communities by building and mobilising skills in children's nutrition, physical activity and community action.
- Focus on overall family wellbeing and active play through various programs including Family Walking Groups, Stretch and Sing (movement and mindfulness) and facilitation of groups such as the Westbury Play Gym.



- Families Tasmania are members of the Breastfeeding Coalition and a partner of Australian Breastfeeding Association
- Co-founders of the Tasmanian Healthy Families Food Coalition and Healthy Kids Coalition
- Partnered with Oral Health Services Tasmania to develop oral health resources Building Healthy Smiles, and oral health key messages postcards.
- Developed Being Active Matters booklet and posters and activity postcards

LEARNING

- Communities for Children community partner for the facilitation of evidence based programs across the state
- Supports the Child and Family Learning Centres and Neighbourhood Houses to deliver various programs in their settings and provide resources to families, including food literacy Kitchen ABC123 toolkit
- Families Tasmania offer a wide range of parenting workshops, information sessions and guest speaker topics using quality, evidence-based and up-to-date information. Topics include; parenting your baby or toddler; family food and eating; development and behaviour; toileting; sleep; parent wellness; parenting skills and active play ideas.
- Practical application of Plain English and visual language strategies in our communications, including online information, printed materials and verbal presentations

PARTICIPATING

- Families Tasmania is a universally accessible organisation. Our focus is on positive collaborations that fill gaps in service provisions for families across the state with little or no cost to participants, including adjunct care where feasible - a focus on removing as many barriers to participation and engagement as possible.
- Facilitate safe, moderated online forums and online engagement opportunities for parents with a focus on providing access to appropriate referral pathways and connections for isolated parents
- The Haven: The Haven is a free, safe family drop in space in Hobart – parents are welcome to drop in for a cuppa or participate in a number of events run at the Haven weekly.
- Our Well Fed Tasmania Food Truck/Community Mobile Kitchen allows us to reach regional and rural communities across Tasmania, extending our reach and allowing us to provide services and supports to isolated families

HAVING A POSITIVE SENSE OF CULTURE AND IDENTITY

- Working collaboratively with Migrant Resource Centre on cross-cultural recipes and plain language training resources
- Offering services in a broad range of socio-economic population areas
- Inclusive approach and welcoming of all definitions of family
- Collaborating with a wide variety of CALD community organisations, including Save the Children, Migrant Resources Centre, Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation and aboriginal Child and Family Centres.

RESPONSES TO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

4. IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE EXISTING DOMAINS OF THE CHILD AND YOUTH WELLBEING FRAMEWORK WHAT SHOULD BE OUR UNIFYING VISION FOR THE CHILD AND YOUTH WELLBEING STRATEGY?

A vision should be something that all Tasmanians can understand, visualise, relate to their circumstances and aspire to. Families Tasmania are excited to see the responses to the strategy consultation, particularly the postcard to the premier campaign, incorporated into a unifying vision.

Suggestion: 'That all Tasmanian Families are connected, supported and empowered to reach their full potential'

12. GIVEN THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FIRST 1,000 DAYS WHAT IS THE PROGRAM YOU WOULD PUT IN PLACE AS YOUR HIGHEST PRIORITY TO SUPPORT CHILDREN UP TO 2 YEARS AND/OR FAMILIES? & 13. WHY HAVE YOU IDENTIFIED THIS AS A PRIORITY?

- Extension of parent support groups - statewide

Respondents to a recent stakeholder audit commissioned by Families Tasmania (then Child Health Association Tasmania – CHAT) made it abundantly clear that they would like access to more parent groups, particularly in regional areas and that there appears to be a gap for parents with children aged 6 – 18 months. Families identified the early stages of parenting as one of the most isolating and stressful time of their life (greatly exacerbated in 2020 by isolation incurred due to the pandemic). Participants acknowledged the benefits of the Child Health and Parenting (CHaPS) new parent groups but commented that they were too structured and time prohibitive. CHaPS groups are limited to new parents only, who attend within the first months of their child's life. This appears to preclude those who have moved areas post-birth and wish to engage with other parents in the community, parents who have birthed before and those with a child over six months.

In each interview, conducted by an independent consultant, parents called for the facilitation of more universally accessible parent groups that provide scope for parents in the community to meet in a casual environment to connect and discuss family health matters in a non-judgemental, safe and highly supportive way. It is suggested that these groups are hosted by Families Tasmania staff and volunteers, using an evidence-based framework for information provision and provide access to evidence informed resources. Groups could be facilitated in community settings such as halls, Community Houses and Child and Family Learning Centres. Families Tasmania could create a framework for facilitation of sessions and potentially train volunteers to lead ongoing sessions to reduce reliance on paid workforce. These sessions would be targeted to parents with Children up to 18 months and would provide a referral pathway to other programs such as Launch into Learning and Playgroup, as parents indicated that they sometimes felt uncomfortable attending these sessions when their children were not yet mobile.

Outcomes would include:

- Fostering connections: Parent to child, parent to parent and family to community. Creating a strong foundation for healthy development.
- Building resilience of families by increasing their parenting capacity and confidence through the building of fundamental parenting skills. Families Tasmania staff are accredited facilitators in evidence based programs: Parent Child Mother Goose, Bringing Up Great Kids, Bringing Up Great Kids first 1000 days, 123 Magic and Emotion Coaching

- Creating referral pathways into programs such as Launch into Learning and Playgroups, provides support for parents with younger children.
- Soft entry point to other child health specific services e.g. Oral Health Services
- Building community capacity and supports volunteer engagement

- Community Food Security - Food Literacy Project Officers

Through our community training and engagement across a wide variety of settings we have identified that there is a fundamental gap in knowledge and confidence in selecting, preparing and cooking produce and making healthy choices. With the increased reliance on Emergency Food Relief services for families experiencing food insecurity (due to the COVID pandemic), there is an opportunity to harness and expand the collateral of the FFP program and use it to build capacity of service providers and families to move towards a community-based food security model by resourcing regional Food Literacy Project Officers (FLPO).

Targeting service providers and families, FLPO's would have the tools and existing networks to build capacity in community through the provision of hands on food literacy workshops, information sessions and the promotion and distribution of our evidenced based resources, including:

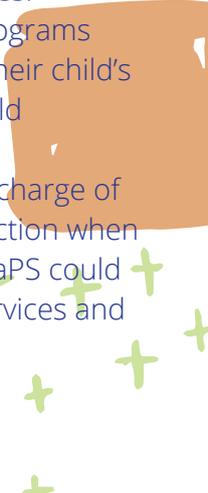
- Well Fed Tasmanian Food Truck/Community Mobile Kitchen
- Kitchen ABC123 Food Literacy Tool Kit
- FFP lesson plans
- Food skills activity sheets
- Recipe film clips and instructional videos; including the use of fresh, tinned and frozen produce to promote an accessible and affordable healthy diet

Outcomes would include:

- Capacity building to enable services providers to support families to make the best use of emergency relief provisions, and build a foundation for future food security creating positive sustainable lifestyle changes
- Improved food literacy in community volunteer organisations
- Build resilience for individuals and families facing food insecurity, developing food literacy skills to facilitate a shift to food security and boosted mental wellbeing
- Development of further evidenced based resources to support facilitation and engagement, using a variety of platforms including film, print and social media to ensure a broad reach and inclusive accessibility

WITH REFERENCE TO EXISTING LOVED AND SAFE INITIATIVES AND WITH YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF OTHER PROGRAMS:

14. WHICH TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES DO YOU THINK WORK BEST AND WHY?

- Families Tasmania (Formally Child Health Association Tasmania – CHAT): offers a wide range of resources, connections and opportunities for families to engage with useful tools to support healthy, happy lives.
 - Parenting programs – delivered in friendly, community settings, these evidence based parenting programs such as Bringing Up Great Kids, 123 Magic and Emotion Coaching support parents to understand their child's development, build resilience to support them through difficult times and build stronger parent/child relationships – integral for a child's healthy development.
 - CHaPS: access to a universal child health and parenting service enables parents and carers to take charge of their child's wellbeing by providing opportunities for them to understand their development, take action when intervention is required and be supported to develop parenting skills. However, we believe that CHaPS could take a more client centred approach and focus on wholistic care with collaborations outside the services and an understanding that parenting is not 'one size fits all'.
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15. IF ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES ARE REQUIRED TO ENSURE TASMANIAN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE LOVED AND SAFE WHAT WOULD THEY BE AND WHY?

- Additional support for new parents – we believe there is a gap for services for families with babies 6 – 18 months, parents who have two or more children and parents in regional areas accessing suitable parent groups.

16. ARE YOU ABLE TO IDENTIFY ANY BARRIERS TO TASMANIAN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ACCESSING INITIATIVES AIMED AT ENSURING THEY ARE LOVED AND SAFE?

- There may be limited understanding of where to go to access services initially, particularly if families find themselves in financial/housing stress for the first time.
- Anecdotally we have heard that there seems to be a drop off in engagement for CHaPS services once initial home visits are completed. We believe CHaPS need to have a more accessible and collaborative approach to overall family wellbeing.

17. HOW DO YOU SUGGEST THESE BARRIERS ARE ADDRESSED?

- Functional Peak Body for Child and Family Wellbeing organisations that focuses on information provision, advocacy, evidence informed approaches, collaboration across services for information sharing and professional development.
- Central repository of resources, referral pathways and services accessible by families.

WITH REFERENCE TO EXISTING MATERIAL BASICS INITIATIVES AND WITH YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF OTHER PROGRAMS:

18. WHICH TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES DO YOU THINK WORK BEST AND WHY?

- No interest loan scheme (NILS) supports families to take control of their financial wellbeing and supports access to material basics required to function in life.
- Family Food Patch supports and champions a move to community food security for families through the provision of information and support to build fundamental food skills and foster resilience, through a peer education model.
- School Food Plans and School Lunch Pilot Program: we must do all that we can to ensure children have access to healthy, nutritious food as this boosts education participation and eases stressors at home.

19. IF ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES ARE REQUIRED TO ENSURE TASMANIAN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE MATERIAL BASICS WHAT WOULD THEY BE AND WHY?

- Focus on a move from emergency relief reliance to community food security with Food Literacy Project Officers. Build resilience for families facing food insecurity by developing food literacy skills to facilitate a shift to food security and boosted mental wellbeing. This initiative could be led by Families Tasmania through our Family Food Patch program (as above).
- Build fundamental food skills for youth as they transition towards independence.

20. ARE YOU ABLE TO IDENTIFY ANY BARRIERS TO TASMANIAN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ACCESSING INITIATIVES AIMED AT ENSURING THEY HAVE MATERIAL BASICS?

- There may be limited understanding of where to go to access services initially, particularly if families find themselves in financial/housing stress for the first time.



21. HOW DO YOU SUGGEST THESE BARRIERS ARE ADDRESSED?

- Central repository of resources, referral pathways and services accessible by families so there is clear advice of where to go to access services quickly.
- High level communication network across government departments to ensure streamlined data collection and transparency for all funded programs and initiatives.

WITH REFERENCE TO EXISTING HEALTH INITIATIVES AND WITH YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF OTHER PROGRAMS:

22. WHICH TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES DO YOU THINK WORK BEST AND WHY?

- Families Tasmania (Formally Child Health Association Tasmania – CHAT): offers a wide range of resources, connections and opportunities for families to engage with useful tools to support healthy, happy lives.
- Family Food Patch (a program of Families Tasmania) – improves the health and wellbeing of families by creating a network of motivated Family Food Educators. Builds and mobilised skills in children's nutrition, physical activity and community action, reducing the barriers to healthy eating habits that set families up for life.
- Setting based initiatives like Move Well Eat Well and the Tasmanian School Canteen Association that are embedded in school and childcare settings with common frameworks for healthy and wellbeing.

23. IF ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES ARE REQUIRED TO ENSURE TASMANIAN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE HEALTHY WHAT WOULD THEY BE AND WHY?

- Focus on a move from emergency relief reliance to community food security with Food Literacy Project Officers. Build resilience for families facing food insecurity by developing food literacy skills to facilitate a shift to food security and boosted mental wellbeing. This initiative could be led by Families Tasmania through our Family Food Patch program (as above).
- Removal of advertising from sports setting and communities for food and drink that has low nutritional value.
- Consistent mandatory policy across all childhood settings for the provision of healthy food and drink.
- Reduce barriers for participation in sport and recreation activities.
- Ensuring a Health/Wellbeing in all policies approach is embedded across departments, including built environments

24. ARE YOU ABLE TO IDENTIFY ANY BARRIERS TO TASMANIAN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ACCESSING INITIATIVES AIMED AT ENSURING THEY ARE HEALTHY?

- There is a lack of knowledge of services. The DHS Healthy Kids Toolkit website is a fantastic concept that hasn't quite hit the mark. This could be scaled up and promoted as a central repository for information, resources and support, used across government sectors, community organisations and individuals.
- Low literacy (including food and health literacy)
- Financial and transport barriers for participation in sports.

25. HOW DO YOU SUGGEST THESE BARRIERS ARE ADDRESSED?

- High level communication network across government departments to ensure streamlined data collection and transparency for all funded programs and initiatives. Ensuring different departments have knowledge of each other and resourcing.
 - Education and personal development opportunities for key community workers across childhood settings, including School Health Nurses.
 - Community mapping of services and resources in a given vicinity (potentially through LGA's) – translated via communication platforms to children/families and childhood settings.
 - Ensure communication tools are low literacy and visual
 - Subsidise travel, club fees and equipment purchases
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WITH REFERENCE TO EXISTING PARTICIPATING INITIATIVES AND WITH YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF OTHER PROGRAMS:

30. WHICH TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES DO YOU THINK WORK BEST AND WHY?

- Families Tasmania provides a universally accessible services for families to participate and build their fundamental parenting skills, attend events or information sessions and access educational resources aimed at creating healthy lifestyles.

31. IF ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES ARE REQUIRED TO ENSURE TASMANIAN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE PARTICIPATING WHAT WOULD THEY BE AND WHY?

- Ability to quickly find support when interventions are required. Respondents to a recent stakeholder audit indicated that they are often unaware of where to go for support and seek advice through forums such as Families Tasmania's online forum, and parents interviewed cited a need for a centralised point of information for parenting in Tasmania. It is possible that the Healthy Kids Toolkit could be extended to include this.

PUTTING CHILD AND YOUTH WELLBEING AT THE HEART OF POLICY

38. WHAT ARE YOUR SUGGESTIONS FOR SHORT-TERM (1-2 YEAR) STRUCTURES TO IMPLEMENT A WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT LONG-TERM CHILD AND YOUTH WELLBEING STRATEGY?

- Wellbeing in all policies approach: Like a Health in all Policies approach (Health in All Policies is an approach to public policies across sectors that systematically takes into account the health implications of decisions, seeks synergies, and avoids harmful health impacts in order to improve population health and health equity). We believe that a Wellbeing in all Policies approach could be applied to Government and Budget decision making in Tasmania, where all major policy decisions are required to meet a set of Wellbeing Indicators and criteria – similar to the New Zealand model, although we recognise the difficulties of applying this to a state based system where services are also funded by the Commonwealth.
- Equity of access: there needs to be a focus on ensuring connections for children and families in regional areas. Mobile capacity building organisations, digital connectedness as well as place-based responses.
- Equity of access: support for those with low functional literacy skills and those from CALD communities.

39. WHAT ARE YOUR SUGGESTIONS FOR LONGER TERM (3 YEARS +) STRUCTURES TO SUPPORT A WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT LONG TERM CHILD AND YOUTH WELLBEING STRATEGY?

- As above
- Security and extended longevity of program funding for Community Sector organisations. This would enable job security, for organisations to feel most comfortable to invest in professional development of their staff and implement longer term strategies.
- Co-designed solutions: commissioning processes to include consumer and sector feedback, and be guided by sector based knowledge and community strengths.

40. THE NEW ZEALAND CHILD AND YOUTH WELLBEING STRATEGY COVERS ALL CHILDREN UNDER 18, YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN IN STATE CARE UNTIL 21 AND A SEPARATE GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE UNTIL 25. GIVEN THIS, HOW WOULD YOU PRIORITISE THE GROUP OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE UNDER 25 COVERED BY THIS STRATEGY?

- It is clear that we need to prioritise support for families with children in the First 1000 days, as the key developmental stage to shape a healthy and prosperous future. Equity of access and supports should be prioritised for all families with children in this age bracket and considerations should be given to regional and remote families.
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KNOWING WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

HOW DO WE KNOW WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE?

42. WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO MEASURE AGAINST THE TASMANIAN CHILD AND YOUTH WELLBEING FRAMEWORK DOMAINS/OUTCOMES AND WHY?

- Connections – parent to child, parent to parent, family to community: supports positive development and builds resilience for prosperous life outcomes (loved and safe)
- Ability to access choices and make a positive change when required – this empowers children and families to take control of their Wellbeing. (Material basics)
- Access to healthy food and the ability and capacity to select and prepare nourishing food for families. Sets foundations for life long healthy behaviours and boosts mental wellbeing (being healthy)

43. WHAT OUTCOME METHODOLOGIES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED (EG SYSTEM AND/OR CITIZEN/CLIENT DEFINED, STRENGTHS BASED OR OTHER)?

- Co-designed output measures, that focus on quality data collection of outcomes, using a Theory of Change approach.
- Cross-sectoral data collections that are aligned to a central point and aggregated from there. All funded programs, across all sectors, meet a set of wellbeing indicators. The commissioning process requires funded organisation to work with funding agreement managers to demonstrate what their specific program data will contribute.
- Data collection processes are streamlined across all sectors and funded programs all report in a similar way – so data may be effectively aggregated and contribute to developing a wellbeing picture for all children and young people aged up to 25.

44. ARE THERE SIGNIFICANT DATA GAPS? WHAT OPTIONS DO WE HAVE TO ADDRESS THEM?

- Commissioning/funding processes need be clear and transparent and have capacity for data collection with a focus on outcomes, not outputs.
- All state funded programs seem to have different data collection requirements, data is not shared across departments and there is therefore little way to create a full picture.

45. IN CONSIDERING A DATA/INFORMATION STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE:

46. ARE THESE BUILDING BLOCKS/JIGSAW PIECES RIGHT?

- From an organisational point of view, with programs funded from differed departments, there is a high level of frustrations in the fact that departments do not share information and data and we feel that reporting is often duplicated. There is a need for cross-department collaboration, a central data point, and for all funded program to have reporting requirements structured to meet a set of wellbeing indicators.

THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE THIS SUBMISSION. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT US AT ANYTIME.

Please Note: We have made this submission under our new name - Families Tasmania. The name change, though now formalised and legal, will be officially launched to the public on April 21. Our organisation is referenced throughout the discussion paper as the CHild Health Association of Tasmania (CHAT).

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