



everyone's family

Tasmania's Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy

Department of Premier and Cabinet

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Contact

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Overview of The Smith Family

The Smith Family is a national charity founded in 1922 to improve the lives of disadvantaged children in Australia. Our vision is a better future for young Australians in need. Our mission is to create opportunities for them by providing long-term support for their participation in education. This mission is founded on the belief that every child deserves a chance to thrive and create a better future for themselves. The Smith Family works with vulnerable children, young people and their families, who experience multiple and compounding challenges in life, with the aim of supporting these young Tasmanians to achieve educationally.

The Smith Family takes a place-based approach and is currently working in over 90 communities across every state and territory. This includes Bridgewater/Gagebrook, Chigwell/Claremont, North East Launceston and Burnie/Wynyard in Tasmania. In FY21, The Smith Family supported more than 210,000 children, young people, parents, carers and community professionals across Australia, including over 170,000 children and young people through our programs. This includes over 56,000 financially disadvantaged children on our long-term educational scholarship program, *Learning for Life*.

In FY21, our programs supported over 8,300 students in Tasmania, including over 2,300 on *Learning for Life*. We work in partnership with 28 primary and secondary schools and colleges to deliver these programs.

1. Introduction

The Smith Family welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of the Tasmanian Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy. We commend the Tasmanian Government for seeking to strengthen its policy development and program delivery for children and young people and in turn, improve their long-term wellbeing and life outcomes. We are encouraged by the Premier's leadership to better ensure Tasmania is a great place for children and young people.

In this submission we primarily focus on children and young people growing up in poverty. Poverty and disadvantage prevent children and young people from thriving in their daily lives and reaching their full potential. Significant proportions of Tasmanians, including children, are living in poverty. Poverty can have a deep and lasting impact on a young person's educational outcomes, from their early years to the end of formal schooling. It can impact school attendance, engagement with learning and young people's ability and confidence to pursue post-school pathways.

A range of data identifies the need for a stronger focus on the outcomes being achieved by Tasmanian children and young people. The Australian Early Development Census shows that approximately one in five Tasmanian children were developmentally vulnerable on one or more key domains in 2018.¹ In 2019, the Apparent Year 10 to Year 12 Retention Rate in Tasmania was 74.3 percent, meaning a quarter of the cohort are not completing Year 12.² Around 62 percent of 24 year old Tasmanians are fully engaged in employment, education

¹ Australian Early Development Census, [Data Explorer](#), 2018.

² Productivity Commission 2020 [Report of Government Services 2020](#).

and/or training, meaning 38 percent are not fully engaged.³ A University of Tasmania study estimated that youth unemployment was approximately 13.8 per cent in April 2020⁴, a level relatively unchanged since 2012.⁵ These statistics highlight the educational and employment challenges faced by young Tasmanians, in particular those from disadvantaged backgrounds. These statistics and a range of other data highlight the value of developing the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy.

The Smith Family makes the following recommendations regarding the Strategy:

- The Tasmanian Government adopt key elements of The Nest regarding the support required for children living in poverty and disadvantage.
- That the Strategy articulate the role of the whole community in improving child and youth wellbeing, as stated in the Discussion Paper.
- That the Strategy commit to early and sustained intervention in the lives of children and young people not just over the first 1000 days, but until a young person is 25 years old.
- That the Strategy explicitly identify children and young people living in poverty as a cohort with specific needs, given the intersection of economic, health, disability, social and relationship issues in their lives.
- That digital inclusion, and specifically the digital needs of disadvantaged children and young people, is explicitly incorporated in relevant domains of the Strategy.
- That the Tasmanian Government use the Strategy to commit to improving its approach to funding and delivering programs in communities, to ensure disadvantaged children and young people can equitably access effective support wherever they live.
- That an iterative approach be adopted to developing performance indicators to evaluate the Strategy.
- That the Tasmanian Government create effective governance arrangements to deliver the Strategy by leveraging the state's smaller geography and population, and the close connections between government, civil society and business.

We elaborate on these points below.

2. Embedding a child-centric approach by leveraging The Nest

The Smith Family supports the Tasmanian Government building the Strategy on work already done for the Tasmanian Child Youth Wellbeing Framework (the Framework). In particular, we commend the Tasmanian Government for seeking to adopt an ecological approach that aligns with The Nest, developed by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY). The Nest offers a holistic approach that recognises improving child wellbeing requires an understanding of multiple life domains and how they intersect with one another. It places children and young people at the centre of service delivery and supports aimed at improving their wellbeing. It prioritises early and sustained intervention in the lives of vulnerable children, in a way that meets their individual needs. The Smith

³ Lamb, S., Huo, S., Walstab, A., Wade, A., Maire, Q., Doecke, E., Jackson, J. & Endekov, Z. (2020). Educational opportunity in Australia 2020: Who succeeds and who misses out. Centre for International Research on Education Systems, Victoria University, for the Mitchell Institute: Melbourne.

⁴ Vespignani, J. & Yanotti, M., *COVID-19 and Tasmanian Youth Unemployment: A Policy Recommendation*, https://www.utas.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/1341098/2020-07_Vespignani_Yanotti.pdf p 6; Commissioner for Children and Young People Tasmania, *Investing in the Wellbeing of Tasmania's Children and Young People*, February 2020, p4.

⁵ Commissioner for Children and Young People Tasmania, *Investing in the Wellbeing of Tasmania's Children and Young People*, February 2020, p4.

Family believes that these key elements articulated in The Nest are highly suitable for adoption by the Strategy. The Smith Family notes too that the Nest has recently been refreshed to ensure it remains relevant and recommends that recent changes are incorporated into the Tasmanian Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy.

The Nest also outlines the profound impact poverty, inequality and disadvantage can have on children's wellbeing.⁶ It acknowledges the influence of economic hardship, joblessness, material deprivation and social exclusion on a child's development, and how certain groups – such as Indigenous children or children in remote areas - are especially vulnerable to long-term poor outcomes. The Nest recognises that improving child wellbeing requires tackling underlying inequalities and inequities in the community, and addressing economic barriers associated with poverty. We recommend that the Strategy embed the approach outlined in The Nest regarding the influence of disadvantage and economic hardship on the wellbeing outcomes children and young people. It will help ensure that the experiences of this vulnerable cohort are placed at the centre of policy development, investment decisions and service delivery.

3. Adopting a collective responsibility approach in the Strategy

The Smith Family supports the approach outlined in the Discussion Paper regarding the role of the whole community in improving the wellbeing of children and young people.⁷ We agree with the Discussion Paper that the responsibility to improve and protect child and youth wellbeing rests collectively with government, civic organisations, business, local communities and individuals. For children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, it is especially important for different sectors to collaborate in providing targeted and tailored support that makes a direct, positive difference in their lives.

The Smith Family recognises the impact that a whole of community approach can have in improving the educational and life outcomes of children in poverty. Our program delivery depends on the strength of our connections both within and beyond local communities. For instance, we have extensive partnerships with corporations and business associations where we leverage their knowledge, skills, experience and other resources to provide programs to disadvantaged young people. Volunteers from a diverse range of backgrounds regularly support our programs, including career mentoring or Learning Club programs, directly contributing to the educational outcomes of our students.

We recommend that the Tasmanian Government explicitly incorporate the importance of a whole of community approach in the Strategy, and adopt collective responsibility as a principle in enhancing policy development and program delivery across the state. This should be complemented by effective governance arrangements which are discussed later in this submission.

4. Ensuring a continuity of support beyond the first 1000 days

The Smith Family recommends that the Strategy commit to providing early, sustained and targeted intervention for children and young people from their early years and throughout formal education until they turn 25 years old. Whilst we recognise the importance of the first

⁶ Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth, *The Nest action agenda: Technical document*, p 42-45.

⁷ Tasmania's Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, *Discussion Paper*, p 10.

1000 days in the life of a child, ensuring continuity of support over the long-term offers the best prospects of significantly improving the wellbeing of children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Discussion Paper states that children and young people need opportunity to live their best lives.⁸ The Smith Family agrees creating opportunities is incredibly important but for disadvantaged children and young people, additional support is required. To be able to thrive, this more vulnerable cohort need sustained intervention to overcome major social and economic barriers preventing them from accessing opportunities. Given the range of factors impacting a young person's wellbeing, there is no single, short-term response that will achieve lasting improvement in the educational and life outcomes of disadvantaged children and young people.

The Smith Family acknowledges the research of Nobel economist Professor James Heckman which is cited in the Discussion Paper.⁹ This research clearly shows that sustained intervention is pivotal if disadvantaged children and young people are to thrive. The research demonstrates that the most cost-effective way of improving the educational and wellbeing outcomes of disadvantaged children is to provide targeted support, beginning early in a child's life and continuing in a balanced long-term way throughout their first two decades. This approach is far more effective than concentrating support on a particular period of young people's lives, such as preschool or adolescence. It results in increases in high school graduation and university enrolments and decreases in welfare reliance and criminal convictions. This approach is at the centre of The Smith Family's long-term educational scholarship program *Learning for Life*.

5. Acknowledging the needs of children growing up in poverty

The Smith Family recommends that the Strategy explicitly identify children growing up in poverty as a cohort with specific needs, alongside other cohorts with specific needs listed in the Discussion Paper.

Young people in poverty face multiple, complex and compounding challenges. Their families daily experience problems that make improving their circumstances incredibly difficult without additional support. For example, of those children and young people supported through The Smith Family's *Learning for Life* scholarship program across Australia:¹⁰

- All live in low-income families
- More than half live in single-parent families
- Around one in three have health or disability issues
- More than half have a parent or carer who did not complete Year 12
- More than 70 per cent of students have a parent or carer not in paid employment
- One in five students in Years 5 to 12 has attended four or more schools
- One in five students live in families who do not have a computer, or tablet connected to the internet.

⁸ Tasmania's Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, *Discussion Paper*, p 10.

⁹ Tasmania's Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, *Discussion Paper*, p 10.

¹⁰ The Smith Family, *Annual Report 2019/20*, p 5.

The Discussion Paper lists children or young people involved in the justice system, those who are carers and those who are in Out of Home Care as cohorts with specific needs.¹¹ As evidenced by the students on The Smith Family's *Learning for Life* scholarship, whilst not a homogenous group, disadvantaged children and young people are a unique cohort because of the intersection of economic, social, relationship, health and/or disability issues in their daily lives. Poverty has a major impact on their ability to access material basics, connect with their communities, navigate unforeseen crises like COVID-19, as well as affecting other people's perceptions of them.

Children and young people living in poverty have a much harder time than more advantaged peers accessing fundamental life opportunities. For example, in Tasmania, The Smith Family works with students and their families regularly lacking adequate transport options, for example inadequate access to reliable public transport, or not having access to a car or driver. Families may not be able to afford the cost of owning a car, or teenagers may not be able to afford the cost of learning to drive, hampering their efforts to become more self-sufficient. A lack of transport can have major ramifications for children and young people. Families may not be able to attend school information sessions, tertiary students may not be able to attend university campuses and young people may not be able to take up employment or apprenticeship opportunities.

Disadvantaged young people's material deprivation can negatively impact their ability to build social connections within their community and pursue extracurricular interests. For example, it is hard for disadvantaged children in Tasmania to join local sports clubs and participate in activities because of the costs associated with membership and equipment. Being part of a local sports club, and similar associations, offers young people the chance to pursue their interests, connect to others within their community, build their social networks, develop leadership and collaboration skills and develop a positive sense of identity. Yet even with the government's Ticket to Play scheme offering a voucher to help with expenses, disadvantaged young people can still struggle to participate.

Additionally, disadvantaged families are in a more insecure position than other groups to navigate the ongoing economic impact of COVID-19, including increased housing stress. There is a significant lack of affordable housing in Tasmania, with long waiting lists for rental properties and long-term housing from Housing Tasmania. Precarious living conditions make it difficult for some of the students and their families who we work with to focus on other aspects of life such as school, with some families needing to move to different areas to find somewhere suitable to live. This housing dilemma, combined with persistent rates of unemployment for parents, carers and older siblings, undermines their capacity to provide a safe, supportive home environment.

Layered onto these challenges is the stigma that is often associated with living in poverty. Young people are adept at detecting other people's negative assumptions about them due to their housing situation, the school they attend, the area or even the street in which they live. They regularly have to contend with the lower expectations of others due to their family or background. Dealing with stigma on a daily level can make it harder for young people to have the self-belief and confidence to overcome barriers, achieve at school, and create a better life for themselves.

¹¹ Tasmania's Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, *Discussion Paper*, p 54.

Given the above, The Smith Family strongly recommends that the Strategy explicitly include children and young people living in poverty as a group with specific and complex needs.

6. Incorporating digital inclusion in the Strategy

The Smith Family recommends that the Strategy explicitly incorporate digital inclusion for all children and young people as a key contributor to their wellbeing. Digital inclusion cuts across multiple domains of wellbeing. In particular, equitable access to broadband at home, as well as access to digital devices could be included in the 'Having material basics' domain, and the development of digital literacy and related skills could be included in the 'Learning' domain.

The importance of digital technology to young people in their daily lives, as well to their future livelihoods, is indisputable. However, Tasmania is the least digitally inclusive jurisdiction in the country, with a lack of digital inclusion a major challenge across the state.¹² To be able to fully engage in their education and participate in their community, all young people require access to digital devices and the internet, as well as the opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge to participate in the 21st century.

Research conducted by The Smith Family in 2018 identified that young people see a computer or other mobile device, as well as internet access at home, as essential for all young people to live a 'normal' life.¹³ The lack of a computer was seen as potentially impacting on young people's attitudes to and experiences of schooling, as well as their overall wellbeing.

With digital skills increasingly integrated into everyday teaching, learning and living, students with low digital access and skills become further disadvantaged due to an inability to complete school tasks. Disadvantaged students at significant risk of digital exclusion may disengage from school, as well as being critically unprepared to pursue post-school study, training or work. Further, having a digital device is not simply about young people consuming content at school or elsewhere, it is increasingly about them creating their own content. Those who are adept at being digital creators will have a significant advantage in further training, work and study over those who are only digital consumers.

Some Tasmanian schools already have policies in place regarding bring your own device for students.¹⁴ However, one in five of the more than 56,000 disadvantaged students on our *Learning for Life* scholarship program across Australia do not have a home computer with reliable internet access.

Digital disadvantage is a key frontier of inequality in education, and if left unaddressed, will negatively impact the ongoing educational outcomes of disadvantaged young people in Tasmania. The Smith Family therefore recommends that the Strategy incorporate the digital needs of young people and commits to supporting them to thrive in the current era with access to devices, broadband and developing the skillsets and confidence to use digital

¹² RMIT, Centre for Social Impact, Swinburne University and Roy Morgan, *Measuring Australia's Digital Divide: The Australian Digital Inclusion Index 2020*, p 16, 41.

¹³ Saunders, P., Bedford, M., Brown, Judith, Naidoo, Y., Adamson, E., *Material Deprivation and Social Exclusion Among Young Australians: A child-focussed approach*, November 2018, p 76.

¹⁴ Tasmanian Department of Education, 'Bring Your Own Technology (BYOT)'.

tools. The Strategy should acknowledge in particular the equity needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged young people, and commit to ensuring they have the same opportunities, supports and training as their more advantaged peers.

7. Improving program delivery for children and young people

The Smith Family welcomes the Tasmanian Government's commitment to improve the design, development and delivery of programs for children and young people as an integral part of the Strategy. We also acknowledge the extensive range of programs offered in Tasmania across the six domains, as outlined in the Discussion Paper. To further improve program delivery in this area, we believe that the Strategy is an opportunity to:

- Improve equity of access to services for all children and young people
- Strengthen coordination of service delivery across different levels of government
- Articulate a strengths-based approach for program delivery
- Build a better evidentiary basis for delivering services.

We expand on these points below.

The Smith Family recommends that the Strategy ensure all children and young people, regardless of where they live, have equitable access to essential services and other necessary support. In working with young Tasmanians in different localities, The Smith Family has observed that there is a 'service lottery' for low-income, disadvantaged communities with pressing social and economic needs. Depending on where a family lives, they may be able to access a range of support services, or relatively few. For example, in certain communities like Bridgewater, individuals are able to access various state and Federally funded social services, including early intervention programs for young people. However, other Tasmanian communities with a similarly acute need for support, have more limited access to suitable services. We believe the Strategy should commit to reducing the impact that geography can play in the life outcomes of children and young people, and to closing program delivery gaps across the state. All children and young people should be able to access the supports and services they need, especially vulnerable cohorts like those living in poverty.

We also recommend that the Strategy emphasise the need for better coordination of service delivery across different levels of government. The Smith Family has observed that in disadvantaged communities with an extensive range of program delivery from government and non-government providers, there is often limited coordination between providers to meet community need. In certain instances, this can lead to "competition" between providers seeking to deliver programs to the same cohort of people instead of collaboration. If the Strategy is to adopt a child-centric approach to wellbeing, then it must create the right systems and incentives to foster collaboration in service delivery, preventing service provider competition and unnecessary overlap from persisting in disadvantaged communities.

One way to improve coordination of service delivery and meet community need is for the Tasmanian Government to better include local councils in the broader service delivery framework. Local councils have an understanding of the social and economic interests of their communities, the barriers preventing children and young people thriving as well as practical opportunities for improving health and wellbeing. Councils also deliver their own activities and programs aimed at children and young people. There are many examples

where Councils do this, for example, Waratah Wynyard Council works with its community to deliver effective support for children and young people, including in early years education. The Council has developed strategies targeting this cohort, including most recently the Youth Plan (YPlan) 2019-2024 delivered jointly with Circular Head Council. The YPlan acts as a roadmap promoting the physical, mental and social wellbeing of young people aged 12 to 24 years old, across eight priority areas including reducing isolation, reducing socio-economic disadvantage, improving access to basics and empowering young people. The Council developed the Plan in consultation with its young people, so it prioritises local need, such as improving education and employment pathways.¹⁵ The Smith Family works with the Council to deliver the *Work Inspiration* program to local students, an initiative enabling them to visit a number of businesses in the area to understand both the employment opportunities as well as the requisite qualifications and skills needed in different jobs. The YPlan also lists indicators of success, and the baseline for monitoring improvement.¹⁶ Similar initiatives run by councils can be more effectively drawn into the Tasmanian Government's framework for funding and delivering programs. The Strategy is an ideal platform to embed this approach.

We recommend that the Strategy ensure a strengths-based approach to designing, delivering and evaluating programs supporting children and young people. The Smith Family believes a strengths-based approach that builds capabilities, confidence, self-sufficiency and resilience in disadvantaged children and young people is one of the most effective ways to empower them to overcome barriers. There are a range of leading programs already being delivered in Tasmania which highlight the importance of a strengths-based approach. These include The Smith Family's *Learning for Life* program and Project O, which is delivered in North-West Tasmania and engages young women who live in family violence hotspots, and builds their skillsets and sense of agency over their lives.¹⁷ The young women initially undertake agency and capability workshops where they learn skills such as public speaking, event management, self-confidence and advocacy. They then deliver public events in their own communities to change attitudes and de-normalise violence. The success of the pilot in Tasmania has led to a wider national rollout. JCP Youth is another leading example of strengths-based program delivery to vulnerable young people. The program works to build the capabilities and confidence of at-risk children and young people, including those who are, or maybe, at risk of disengaging with their education. The program offers a range of activities such as seminars building individual readiness for major school transitions, and workshops developing leadership and decision-making skills. A common element of good practice programs such as these is that they offer positive role models for vulnerable children and young people, and the opportunity to seek support and advice from people within their community.

Finally, The Smith Family recommends that the Strategy commit to improving and utilising the evidence base for designing and developing programs aimed at improving child health and wellbeing, and more clearly identify common principles that facilitate effective, place-based program delivery. Despite the best intentions of government and non-government providers, there has not been a long-term, clear improvement in addressing the social and economic needs of many disadvantaged families and communities across the state. In certain circumstances, it is unclear whether organisations and/or programs are effective in

¹⁵ Waratah Wynyard Council, *Yplan (Youth Plan) 2019-2024*, March 2019, p 17

¹⁶ Waratah Wynyard Council, *Yplan (Youth Plan) 2019-2024*, March 2019, p 26.

¹⁷ Big hART, 'Project O'.

improving the life outcomes of children and young people, and whether they deliver a positive return on investment for government and philanthropic investors. It is important that the Strategy aim to improve the overall standard of measurement and evaluation of programs aimed at improving the lives of children and young people. A more rigorous evidence base for program effectiveness will allow the Tasmanian Government to make stronger investment decisions based on a better understand of what works well in various communities. Complementing this, it is important to have the right set of performance indicators to measure the overall progress of the Strategy, as we outline below.

8. Developing indicators to measure performance

The Smith Family recommends that, in delivering the Strategy, the Tasmanian Government take an iterative approach to developing indicators for measuring health and wellbeing across the six domains. Given the comprehensive approach to child wellbeing embedded in the Framework and articulated in the Discussion Paper, there is a significant challenge to measuring performance over time. There are an extensive number of intersecting variables across the six domains to consider when formulating indicators for child wellbeing. There is also the task of accommodating the unique experiences of particularly vulnerable cohorts with specific needs, such as children and young people living in poverty. Rolling out a multitude of indicators across each domain, measuring all aspects of child wellbeing outcomes and also accommodating a variety of cohorts, may in fact make it harder to collect credible data from program delivery and to evaluate the Strategy's performance.

We suggest building an evaluation framework that can be consolidated and gradually expanded. As such, we believe it would be prudent at first to put in place a more limited set of key indicators regarding child wellbeing that are already used widely in research and policy development. For example, in the Learning domain, the Tasmanian Government could use pre-existing longitudinal data sets as it begins to deliver the Strategy and measure performance. The Australian Early Development Census would provide an understanding of which children in early childhood education are on track, vulnerable or at risk in their cognitive development prior to entering primary school. NAPLAN results will provide an understanding of student performance across Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in core capabilities. The Year 12 certification rates reported by the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority would provide an indication of Year 12 completion rates. Data collected by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on the engagement in employment and/or education of people aged 15 to 64 years old could provide an indication of post-school engagement of secondary school students.¹⁸ Drawing on these and similar data would allow the Tasmanian Government to compare performance with other states and territories. Given the Strategy is to be established for the long-term, over time the Tasmanian Government could then incorporate further indicators to measure wellbeing to complement the indicators outlined above.

9. Creating effective governance arrangements for the Strategy

Given Tasmania's smaller geography and the fact that there are approximately 160,000 children living in the state overall, the Tasmanian Government has the opportunity to be a national leader in creating tailored, flexible, collective governance for implementing and administering the Strategy. The close connections between government, civil society and

¹⁸ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Education and Work, Australia', May 2020.

business can be used to advantage in developing an approach to delivery and evaluation of the Strategy that includes all necessary stakeholders.

The Smith Family believes that a central policy agency, such as the Department of Premier and Cabinet, should be responsible for oversight and evaluation of the Strategy, and that there is no reason to create an additional department or standalone government entity. A central department can provide a whole-of-government approach to the Strategy, coordinating relevant portfolios delivering or funding programs and services for young Tasmanians. A whole-of-government approach, led by a central agency, would better allow the development and measurement of shared outcomes for the Strategy. Various departments would be collectively responsible for delivery of the Strategy, with clear accountability and reporting mechanisms into the central agency.

We recommend that the Tasmanian Government involve organisations supporting children in assessing and refining the Strategy, over time. For example, the central coordinating agency could routinely bring together key government stakeholders, alongside those in civil society and business, to discuss whether outcomes are being met, articulate the challenges impeding further progress, and to share leading practice examples from program delivery. This would align with the emphasis in the Discussion Paper on the importance of community and collective responsibility, as discussed earlier.

The Smith Family also recommends that the Tasmanian Government make explicit in the Strategy the level of financial investment it intends to commit to delivery, to ensure that there is a direct connection between funding and intended outcomes. The Tasmanian Government could incorporate both current and new funding commitments, so the allocation of resources for implementation is clear across portfolios and to stakeholders outside government.

We note that the Discussion Paper contemplates the passage of specific legislation to help enable the Strategy. The Smith Family believes that developing the right governance arrangements for delivery of the Strategy in the long-term will be key in achieving the overall aims of the Strategy. We believe embedding suitable governance measures from the outset will provide lasting value to improving the health and wellbeing outcomes of children and young people.

10. Encouraging postcards from children and young people

We commend the Tasmanian Government for seeking to hear directly from children and young people about how to best ensure their health and wellbeing. The Smith Family has encouraged the children participating in our *Learning for Life* program in Tasmania to complete individual postcards as part of the consultation process.

11. Conclusion

In developing the Strategy, Tasmania has an opportunity to create a positive, bold and child-centric policy framework facilitating the delivery of high-quality, strengths-based programs to all children and young people, with a particular focus on ensuring early and sustained intervention for vulnerable cohorts, such as those from disadvantaged backgrounds, until adulthood. The Tasmanian Government can ensure that children and young people are at the heart of relevant policy development, investment decisions and the

machinery of government. By bringing together the whole community, the Strategy offers the chance to make major inroads into longstanding, stubborn economic and social challenges that have hindered child wellbeing for decades. We would be happy to talk further with the Department on the points we have raised in this submission. In the meantime, we wish the Department well in the consultation process.