



TASSO SUBMISSION

2025-26 Budget Community Consultation

***We're in this together.
We speak as a proud voice for families within the
Tasmanian State School community to
make sure their needs and ideas are heard.***

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement of Country

Tasmanian Association of State School Organisations pays respect to the Palawa people as the Traditional Custodians and first educators of the land in beautiful Lutruwita, Tasmania.

We pay respect to elders past, present, and emerging and acknowledge their deep connection to country.

We also express our gratitude that we share this land today, our sorrow for some of the costs of that sharing, and our hope and belief that we move to a place of equity, justice, and partnership together.

Acknowledging Parents

TASSO acknowledges parents and caregivers as the first educators in their child's life. We celebrate and honour the diversity of families and recognise the vital role family and community play in supporting children and young people throughout their learning journeys.

TASSO prepared this submission with the consideration of Tasmanian state school students and their parents and caregivers in mind. We extend our appreciation to all who have shared their experiences and engaged with our organisation over the past year.

Background

Who is TASSO?

The Tasmanian Association of State School Organisations (TASSO) is the peak body representing the parents and community who form School Association within Tasmanian public schools.

Our mission is to strengthen every state school association committee in Tasmania so they can achieve the best student outcomes. We work to empower the heart of Tassie State schools – their community – by supporting School Associations.

Our work includes providing essential training, resources, and support to school committees. Most importantly, we help them meet their constitutional requirements, support office-bearers in their roles and facilitate valuable networking opportunities, so together the School Association can do great things.

We represent the School Association Committees from within Tasmania's 123 Primary Schools (Kindergarten to Grade 6), 54 High Schools (Grade 7 – 12), and 8 Colleges (Grade 11 and 12).

At TASSO, we believe in the value of government education. We are committed to making sure that state school education in Tasmania delivers the best possible education for Tassie kids. We speak as a proud voice for families to make sure their needs and ideas are heard.

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Community Consultation State Budget Submission

TASSO are asking that the state government commit to leading the nation in Education. That they commit to an equitable, inclusive, and transparent education system that benefits all Tasmanian students regardless of the school they attend. That they build a system that engages parents, attracts passionate teachers, and leads to high achieving, happy students.

Commitment to Education Funding

ASK:

That the state government commit to funding the full Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) to schools and disregard the 4% depreciation accounting loophole from bilateral agreement between Tasmania and the Commonwealth on School Reform.

WHY:

The funding recommendations from the 2011 Review of Funding for Schooling have not been fulfilled for Tasmanian students in government schools since its inception. The SRS is the base estimate that has been determined to educate 80 per cent of students to achieve above the national minimum standard in NAPLAN.

TASSO celebrate the commitment announced in October 2024 to increase funding; however, we are continuing to seek a commitment from the State Government to remove the depreciation clause and truly commit funding the full 77.5 per cent committed to in the bilateral agreement on school reform.

Until the depreciation clause is removed from education funding inequity between sectors remains. TASSO urges the state government to correct the inequity of funding disparity by increasing their commitment by 4%.

In the alternative:

- 1) A reduction in the state government recurrent funding to non-government schools of 25% or more across the board would provide similar equality *without* providing full funding to government schools.
- 2) A cap on state government recurrent funding to over-funded non-government schools who are already funded over the SRS (when contributions to school-affiliated infrastructure funds, which are typically registered charities, are included) could provide an offset to fund adequate resourcing of public education.

Such a commitment that would see all students on the pathway to being treated equitably.

Commitment to Funding the Recommendations from the Independent Education Review

ASK: \$10M over 5 years

That the state government commit to funding to ensure all recommendations from the Independent Education Review (IER) are implemented and resourced.

WHY:

Providing a pre-allocation of funds for implementation of IER recommendations will allow for implementation of changes, development and scoping of projects and initiatives without the need to compete for resources in future budget cycles.

TASSO believe that until the IER is released and an implementation plan agreed upon, that a moratorium is placed on additional capital expenditure to facilitate Year 11/12 in urban high schools, beyond essential maintenance and unrelated capital works. This may include the postponement of some existing announced projects.

That, if it is recommended by the IER, funds allocated for Year 11/12 upgrades in urban high schools be reallocated to Colleges for urgent infrastructure maintenance.

TASSO Member Services – Administration Support

ASK: \$85,000

To fund an Administration Support employee who will provide essential administrative assistance to TASSO's operations.

WHY:

Operational costs have risen significantly over the past five years, forcing TASSO to make difficult decisions between funding member services, reducing staff hours, or scaling back critical Board Meetings. Additionally, the concentration of operational knowledge within a single individual poses a significant organisational risk.

Increased funding for staffing will enable TASSO to:

- Expand research capacity, building on the organisation's value theory of change initiatives.
- Deliver more collaborative projects with school associations to better support them.
- Develop resources to enhance and strengthen the skills of school association committees.

- Creation of a complaint management referral service, and the ability to respond in a holistic and meaningful way.

TASSO Member Services – Membership Fees

ASK: \$28,500pa + indexation

To increase the school association membership fee to \$150 per school association, resulting in an annual commitment of \$28,500 — an increase of \$12,270 per annum.

WHY:

In 2019, the government committed to funding the membership fees for all School Associations to join TASSO. This commitment initially covered membership fees of approximately \$80 per school, with an annual increase of 3%.

Due to this commitment, TASSO cannot independently raise membership fees to cover growing operational costs. The additional funding is necessary to maintain TASSO's services and ensure ongoing support for School Associations without breaching the terms of the government's original agreement.

TASSO Member Services – School Association Financial Auditing Service

ASK: \$80,000

To establish a service agreement enabling TASSO to facilitate financial auditing services for all School Associations in Tasmania.

WHY:

School Associations across Tasmania are required to conduct annual audits of their finances in alignment with their School Association year and Annual General Meetings (AGMs). This requirement imposes a significant financial burden on many associations.

By offering a streamlined, independent auditing support system to all School Association Committees, this would provide significant support to the many parents and volunteers who aim to protect and provide good governance to their school community.

By investing in TASSO to facilitate this program and much needed support to our sector, this will assist in reducing financial risks to these community-based committees, managing funds raised from within their local networks.

This will also provide to government an accurate snapshot of the investment from within the community achieved through the generosity and proactiveness of volunteers to make a difference for their school, and what this investment supports.

Student Voice App

ASK:

Funding to develop a platform that enables students to report anti-social behaviour, concerns with educators, or wellbeing issues (for themselves or others) to their school in a safe, secure, and anonymous manner.

This platform could form part of a Universal Communication Tool (outlined below).

WHY:

The Student Wellbeing and Engagement Survey (SWES) data highlights that approximately one-third of students in Tasmanian state schools report lacking important adult connections at school. Currently, the only methods available for students to report concerns involve directly speaking with a teacher or emailing an educator—both of which require a significant level of trust and a sense of safety.

An anonymous reporting platform would empower students to raise concerns they might otherwise keep to themselves, creating an opportunity for schools to address issues earlier. Early intervention in cases of bullying, anti-social behaviour, or wellbeing concerns can prevent escalation and foster a safer, more supportive school environment.

By ensuring reports are monitored and acted upon, this platform would provide a critical tool for schools to proactively address student concerns, build trust, and support the overall wellbeing of the school community.

This was identified as a proactive need in a step towards addressing the significant bullying that occurs in the lives of many students. TASSO advocated for this within our [Submission for the Inquiry of Discrimination and Bullying in Tasmanian Schools](#).

Streamlining of Working with Vulnerable People and Safeguarding Systems

ASK:

Funding to integrate Safeguarding Training requirements with the Working with Vulnerable People check system.

WHY:

The administrative burden of maintaining both systems is problematic for volunteers in government schools. As such it is most sensible for the Safeguarding to be provided as an endorsement for the WWVP registration.

DECYP Complaints Process Overhaul

ASK:

That the current complaint process with DECYP be overhauled to make it more user-friendly, accessible, and simple to use. The existing method requires a high level of literacy and is not accessible for many.

WHY:

Parents and staff should have a clear and confidential way to raise complaints or concerns. The process should respect the anonymity of the complainant, ensuring they feel safe and supported in coming forward.

The current system has caused significant frustration among parents, who often feel unheard and invalidated by the education system. An improved, more inclusive process would restore trust and ensure that all voices, regardless of literacy levels, are given the opportunity to be acknowledged and addressed.

Family Engagement Survey

ASK:

\$75,000 to undertake a comprehensive consultation and survey of families to determine the ways schools and teachers are engaging families in learning, what families want from their students' educators, and to conduct codesign workshops to foster idea development on the ideal ways to engage families with student learning. Delivery of a report and recommendations for DECYP-wide policy development.

Our members tell us that there are significant differences within and across schools in the level of family engagement taking place. TASSO would like to gain an understanding of what family engagement looks like across a range of classes, grade levels, and schools, whether families feel engaged with their students' learning, and how engagement could be improved or enhanced. A survey will be conducted across multiple platforms, including online and in-person data gathering.

Project length: 6 months

WHY:

Family engagement in learning is crucial for creating a positive educational environment. Active participation from families fosters a supportive atmosphere characterised by open communication, trust, and a sense of security. Research consistently shows that students excel academically when their families are involved, as engaged parents can monitor progress, assist with homework, and support good study habits.

Engagement is linked to improved student behaviour and attendance, with actively involved parents contributing to positive behaviour, regular attendance, and participation in extracurricular activities. Regular communication between parents, teachers, and students helps address concerns early, fostering collaboration and a strong support network. Additionally, family involvement significantly impacts a child's social and emotional development, providing a sense of belonging and enhancing emotional well-being. This collaboration creates a supportive educational experience in Australia, promoting academic success, positive behaviour, and a lifelong love for learning.

Universal Communication Tool

ASK:

That the Department for Education Children and Young People prioritise and fast track the development and implementation of a universal communication platform for all state schools in Tasmania.

WHY:

The proposal to establish a universal digital communication tool or expand the Canvas parent platform to a more comprehensive user-friendly platform, brings about substantial benefits for both parents and teachers, with an added emphasis on promoting digital literacy. Central to this proposition is the simplification of communication and information sharing, providing parents with a hub for accessing their child(ren)s academic journey. This not only reduces the complexities associated with managing multiple platforms, as expressed by TASSO members, but also fosters a more engaged and informed parent community.

For teachers, a universal digital communication tool provides a centralised platform for sharing evidence of student learning, communicating real-time updates to parents, and offering valuable family engagement tips. A standardised interface and online forms alleviate administrative burdens, allowing teachers to focus more on instructional activities and fostering efficient teacher-parent collaboration.

Advantages for Parents:

Newsletters: A central platform eliminates the need for parents to sift through multiple channels for newsletters, ensuring they receive timely and relevant information directly on the proposed tool.

Reminders: The platform acts as a convenient reminder tool, notifying parents of important dates, deadlines, and other crucial information, enhancing overall parental engagement.

Online Forms and Permissions: Streamlining administrative processes, parents can conveniently fill out forms and provide permissions online, reducing paperwork and administrative burdens for both parents and educators.

Student Reports: Parents gain immediate access to student reports, showcasing achievements and progress, fostering a deeper understanding of their child's academic journey.

Evidence of Learning: The platform serves as a showcase for evidence of learning, allowing parents to view and celebrate their child's achievements, projects, and milestones.

Family Engagement Tips Linked to Classroom Learning: Parents receive valuable insights and tips on how to actively engage with their child's learning at home, fostering a stronger connection between classroom activities and family involvement.

Equal Communication: This universal tool would assist in providing consistency to both parents particularly benefiting those that shared custody of children. It would provide an equal and concise method of communication.

School Improvement Program (Infrastructure)

ASK: increase of \$1m p/a (total: \$25m over 5 years)

That that newly formed School Improvement Program (Infrastructure) have funding increased to \$5 million per year for future years. This fund aims to empower schools to seek financial assistance for asset prolonging maintenance and repairs of educational facilities, particularly when the estimated cost falls below \$250,000.

WHY:

Given the aging infrastructure, preserving, and extending the lifespan of our schools becomes imperative. The creation of a fund concentrating on significant maintenance efforts, overseen by the Department for Children and Young People's (DECYP) Facility Services, ensures proactive and effective maintenance is undertaken in a timely manner. This strategy helps prevent the escalation of issues, reducing the need for major capital works.

While alternative funding sources, including the Federal Schools Upgrade Fund, exist, each presents challenges regarding prioritisation and focus. The proposed state grant program addresses these concerns by considering school requests, supported by their respective school associations, and aligning the requests with DECYP's asset management priorities, ensuring a focus on schools in urgent need. Simultaneously, it will consider the cost potential saving benefits of completing works promptly.

These grants are designed to cover situations where schools have sought repair works from the department, such as fixing leaking roofs, replacing sections of buildings or completing minor structural alterations. This initiative caters to instances where the scale of required work exceeds the capacity of the school's general maintenance budget, but the nature of the repairs does not meet the criteria for capital works.