



## **TASSO SUBMISSION**

2026-27 Budget Priority Statement  
Community Consultation

***We speak as a proud voice for families  
within the Tasmanian State School  
community to ensure their needs and  
ideas are heard.***

## **Acknowledgements**

### *Acknowledgement of Country*

The Tasmanian Association of State School Organisations acknowledges the Palawa people as the Traditional Custodians and first educators of Lutruwita, Tasmania. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and recognise their enduring connection to Country. We express gratitude to share this land, sorrow for the costs of that sharing, and our hope for a future of equity, justice and partnership.

### *Acknowledging Parents*

TASSO acknowledges parents and families as the first educators in a child's life. We use the terms *parent* and *family* to describe the wide range of people who care for and support children, recognising the diversity of family structures. This submission reflects the experiences of Tasmanian state school families, and we thank all who have shared their insights with us over the past year.

## **Background**

Who is TASSO?

The Tasmanian Association of State School Organisations (TASSO) is the peak body representing parents and communities through School Associations in Tasmanian government schools. Our mission is to strengthen every School Association so they can contribute to the best outcomes for students. We provide training, resources and support to committees, help them meet their constitutional responsibilities, and create opportunities for networking and shared learning. TASSO represents School Associations across all government schools. We believe in the value of government education and speak as a strong voice for families to ensure their needs and ideas are heard.

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# **Tasmanian Association of State School Organisations (TASSO)**

## **2026/27 Budget Priority Submission**

TASSO represents School Associations across Tasmania and is the peak body for parents in government schools. Families are essential partners in student learning and wellbeing, yet many continue to face barriers to genuine engagement, whether through fragmented communication, long waits for essential assessments, inconsistent engagement with learning, and unclear or inaccessible complaints processes. All of these have a direct impact on student outcomes. The following budget priorities focus on practical, system-strengthening reforms that will improve family engagement, build trust, and support better student outcomes.

### **1. Review the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Year 11/12 Delivery in Urban High Schools**

#### **ASK**

Fund an independent review into the financial efficiency and educational effectiveness of providing Year 11 and 12 programs in urban high schools located within a 20km radius of established colleges.

#### **WHY**

There are clear structural inefficiencies in the current model. In 2024, fewer than 50 students were enrolled across eight urban high school extension programs. Cohorts of this size cannot provide the subject breadth, specialist teaching or young-adult learning environment that colleges offer.

The current model results in:

- capital expenditure not justified by enrolments
- timetable disruption and attendance issues for dual-enrolled students
- significant opportunity cost, diverting funds away from higher-impact supports
- lack of accessibility to school subjects for students enrolled in high school extension programs
- lack of skilled speciality staff and leadership resources

Maintaining Years 11/12 in urban high schools creates waste, fragmentation and reduced educational equity.

#### **BENEFIT**

A transparent review will allow government to determine whether current investment is justified and ensure resources are used where they most benefit students. The results of the review will provide a basis to develop a long-term plan for years 11/12 in Tasmania.

## 2. Strengthen Family Engagement as a Core Driver of Student Learning

### **ASK**

Invest in a system-wide strengthening of family engagement, ensuring that the 2026 review of DECYP's *Together with Families* framework leads to practical improvements in how families are connected to their child's learning, included in decision-making, and supported through consistent practices across all schools.

This work should:

- embed regular, accessible learning information for families
- set clear expectations for high-quality engagement
- support leaders and teachers with tools and training
- involve co-design with families across all schooling stages

### **WHY**

Families consistently report feeling disconnected from their child's learning, with information arriving too late to act on and engagement practices varying widely both between and within schools. Many want to support their child but are not given regular updates, clear insights into progress or straightforward ways to be involved. This inconsistency limits the impact families can have at home and delays the identification of learning needs.

Strong family-school partnerships lead to better learning, improved wellbeing and higher attendance. When families are equipped with clear and timely information, students thrive. The 2026 of the *Together with Families* framework review presents an opportunity to move from variable practices to a consistent statewide approach that places student learning at the centre of how schools engage with families.

### **BENEFIT**

Strengthening the family engagement framework will deliver:

- more consistent, and meaningful engagement across all schools
- clearer visibility into student learning
- improved trust and communication
- stronger student outcomes through early support
- clearer expectations for families and educators

## 3. Prioritise the Development of a Universal Communication Platform

### **ASK**

Fund and prioritise the development of a single, statewide communication and reporting platform for Tasmanian government schools, co-designed with parents and teachers,

implemented consistently across all schools, and aligned with recommendations on family engagement.

### **WHY**

Families consistently identify communication as one of the biggest barriers to engagement. Current systems are fragmented and inconsistent, with families often checking multiple apps, emails and notes to stay informed.

A well-designed platform must:

- integrate learning evidence, reporting, attendance, permissions and messages
- prioritise accessibility for all families
- reduce workload for educators
- provide consistent experiences across schools
- enable real-time insights into learning

### **BENEFIT**

Prioritising a single communication platform will:

- build stronger family–school relationships
- create more effective learning support
- lower administrative burden
- create system-wide consistency
- improve transparency and trust

## **4. Address Allied Health Workforce Shortages and Reduce Wait Times for Assessments**

### **ASK**

Fund a multi-year plan to reduce school allied health waitlists by increasing staffing levels, offering targeted recruitment incentives, expanding assessment capacity, establishing early-assessment clinics (both mobile & permanent), and improving coordination with the Department of Health.

### **WHY**

Waitlists for speech pathology and school psychology remain unacceptably long, creating an equity divide where families without means to self-fund support are forced to wait for support that directly affects learning.

Early assessment reduces long-term costs by:

- identifying needs earlier
- enabling quicker access to supports
- reducing behavioural escalation
- easing pressure on classroom teachers

International evidence shows that early intervention delivers strong returns by improving lifelong outcomes and reducing later expenditure on intensive or crisis services.

***BENEFIT***

- Shorter wait times
- Earlier intervention
- Improved engagement and learning
- Reduced behavioural escalation
- Long-term savings
- Easier access

**5. Provide Sustainable Peak Body Funding for TASSO**

***ASK***

Provide dedicated peak body funding, delivered through sustainable five-year agreements, to support TASSO's statewide role in consultation, reform and representing parents and School Associations.

***WHY***

TASSO's current Grant Deed funds only member support functions such as training, enquiries, and newsletters. It does not fund system-level representation, despite government departments routinely relying on TASSO for consultation, feedback and community insights. Current funding does not cover these responsibilities.

***BENEFIT***

- Stable representation for families
- Stronger governance across School Associations
- Improved system transparency
- A reliable, evidence-informed voice in reform

**6. Develop a Formal Partnership Agreement Between DECYP and TASSO**

***ASK***

Fund and co-design a Partnership Agreement between DECYP and TASSO, outlining clear roles, responsibilities and shared commitments.

***WHY***

Tasmania currently has no framework guiding how the department, schools and School Associations work together. This results in inconsistent engagement, reactive consultation and confusion about roles. A formal agreement would strengthen transparency, clarify expectations and reduce disputes.

### **BENEFIT**

- Clearer guidance across the system
- Consistent engagement
- Improved communication
- A stronger, more collaborative education system

## **7. Overhaul the DECYP Complaints Process**

### **ASK**

Fund a redesign of the DECYP complaints system so it is accessible, safe and known across schools. A system that allows both families and students to lodge concerns, that is supported by a centralised departmental record that tracks complaints and ensures independent oversight.

### **WHY**

Parents consistently report that the current complaints process is not commonly understood and, when known, is confusing. Many feel unclear or unsafe about how to raise concerns at a school level. Students also have limited safe avenues to raise complaints, with no consistent process across schools and no clear pathway beyond the school level. Complaints involving principals or senior staff often stay at the school, leaving both families and students without confidence that concerns will be addressed fairly. Without a centralised departmental record, complaints can be lost or unresolved, and the system cannot identify patterns or risks. A clearer, transparent and trauma-informed process would ensure all concerns, including those raised by students, are handled consistently and safely.

### **BENEFIT**

- Increased trust and confidence in the system
- A safe, clear pathway for students to raise concerns
- Fewer escalated or repeated complaints
- Better identification of systemic issues
- A more supportive and accountable environment for families, students and staff

## **Conclusion**

Tasmania's education system cannot succeed without strong family engagement, timely assessments, trusted processes and clear partnership structures. These budget priorities are practical, achievable and informed by the lived experiences of families and school communities.

TASSO looks forward to working with the Tasmanian Government to deliver these reforms and ensure all children in Tasmania's government schools can learn, grow and thrive.