

Attachment 2: Continue investing in governance and operational efficiency

Making Tasmanian Government Funding Go Further

The problem we need to solve

The current budget crisis means we need to make money go further. Houses are stretched by increased governance/operational demands and community needs. NHT helps Houses by reducing extra work. It shares useful information, resources, and connections. It makes things more efficient by finding opportunities for everyone to work together. NHT also links Houses with partners, government programs, and provides advice and support.

A strong peak body works with its members to leverage its shared power.

Without this work, the sector risks eroding under mounting regulatory complexity and operational pressures, risking the sustainability and resilience of every House.

This program will deliver:

Skills uplift – a pro-active comprehensive program of good governance modules to strengthen skills in Board self-assessments, analysis, constitutions, strategic planning, risk management, conflict resolution, financial literacy, compliance, recruitment and role clarity.

Neighbourhood Houses Governance Network – a statewide learning opportunity, to embed and deepen knowledge across Houses including monthly *drop-in* sessions and a peer mentoring program to build capacity and strengthen the skills base.

Dedicated point of contact for connecting Neighbourhood Houses, community services sector organisations and Tasmanian Government to: problem solve governance and operational issues, secure resources and address service gaps, mitigate emerging risks (such as occupational aggression and cybersecurity), collaborate as a consultation partner for government, as well as respond to disaster resilience, response and recovery initiatives.

Governance Hub a suite of easy access governance resources for leaders (such as shared policy and procedure suite, HR management training, risk management skills).

Specialist advice and coaching – brokering expertise to maximise group buying power and learning development as a network not just individual organisation. We will seek additional resources to broker external sector professionals for shared skill development. We will actively seek funding for this from outside resources.

Investment

Peak body project officer and program delivery \$149,702/year to ensure NHT has the capacity and resources to continue its current level of support to Neighbourhood Houses. This is a continuation and improvement on 2021-2025 funds with the goal to reorientate, drive and implement a targeted program to shift the dial on governance practice, develop partnerships to create business service efficiencies, foster social ventures, and develop other strategies for longer-term sustainability.

Why isn't governance fixed already?

Someone once said that governance is like farming: success comes from consistent care and action. We know uplifting governance and changing culture takes time. Our experience shows that our approach of responding to individual enquiries, providing resources and training has been beneficial and achieved much to date. We have 30+ Boards, each with between 6 to 10 members, with ever-changing relationships and a natural turnover of Board Members. These are volunteer community members responsible for understanding an increasingly complex regulatory environment. We also know that the relationship between the governance responsibilities of the President, Board Members and the operational responsibility of the Manager is critical in a House thriving. This approach will shift the dial at a systemic level.

Why continue investing?

Investing in good governance means stronger systems and Boards that can thrive and meet challenges. When governance is solid, Houses operate more effectively and are better prepared for risks and change. NHT plays a key role in this by saving government time and money—because with the right capacity, it can quickly respond to enquiries, help solve problems, and act as a trusted consultation partner. It also develops sector-specific resources and builds professional skills, which helps prevent issues from escalating to a departmental level. For Houses, NHT saves time and money by coordinating shared services and using the power of the network for things like group buying and streamlined processes. This includes preferred provider processes such as for insurance; developing a legally reviewed suite of policy and procedures tailored to Neighbourhood Houses; developing bespoke templates and shared resources; sharing legal information and regulatory updates; and providing learning and development opportunities.

With continued investment, we are taking a bold new approach to lift governance standards across the sector and tackle emerging risks head-on - child safety, cybersecurity, shifting regulations like changes to the Fair Work Act, and growing community needs. Through a staged project management approach, we will set clear goals and achieve them proactively. Backed by a peer and mentoring support network, we will embed good governance as a living culture—not just a folder gathering dust. This strategy will not only reduce risk across the sector but also create fertile ground for a healthy bounty of strong systems and thriving Boards.