



dorset
COUNCIL

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**Dorset Council Submission on the Exposure Draft | The Health Revolution:
Tasmania's 20-Year Preventive Health Strategy**

1. Introduction and Overall Position

Dorset Council welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the exposure draft of The Health Revolution - Tasmania's 20-Year Preventive Health Strategy.

Council strongly supports the Strategy's long-term focus on prevention, place-based action and whole-of-government collaboration. The Strategy appropriately recognises that health outcomes are shaped well beyond the hospital system and that local government plays a critical role in creating healthy environments, supporting social connection and enabling community resilience - particularly in regional and remote Tasmania.

Council supports the Strategy's emphasis on early childhood development and early help, noting that investment in the early years delivers the strongest long-term returns for health, wellbeing and system sustainability - especially in regional and remote communities.

This submission outlines:

- why Dorset's place-based context matters for preventive health outcomes,
- where Council already contributes to prevention through its core functions, and
- where additional State Government leadership, funding and system reform are required to achieve equitable outcomes.

2. Dorset Context – Why Place Matters

Dorset is a regional and remote municipality with a dispersed population, high levels of socio-economic disadvantage and a rapidly ageing demographic. These characteristics amplify both the importance of prevention and the limitations of short-term, program-based approaches.

Dorset entered a hyper-ageing phase in 2013. Since 2019, the majority of population growth has occurred in the 65+ age cohort, increasing demand for preventive, community-based and accessible health supports.

The community also faces heightened vulnerability to climate-related risks, including heat-related illness, extreme cold and social isolation. These factors intersect with ageing and remoteness to compound health risk.

For communities such as Dorset, prevention cannot rely on metropolitan service models or short-term funding. Regional and remote health systems must be deliberately designed, funded and sustained to reflect place, vulnerability and demographic change.

3. Where Dorset Council Already Contributes to Preventive Health

Dorset Council's role in preventive health is primarily enabling and place-based, rather than clinical service delivery. Through its core functions, Council already delivers significant preventive health outcomes aligned with the intent of the Strategy.

3.1 Healthy Environments and Places

Council contributes through:

- land use planning and place-making that supports liveable, walkable communities,
- environmental health services including food safety, water quality, waste management and housing standards, and
- investment in open space, trails and recreation infrastructure.

3.2 Community Health and Wellbeing

Council supports preventive health through:

- advocacy for a stable and sustainable community health hub,
- partnerships with community organisations and regional bodies, including shared funding of May Shaw Aged Care with the State Government, and
- delivery of child, youth and family infrastructure, including direct funding of the Bright Dorset Youth Program.

3.3 Social Connection and Resilience

Council's contribution includes:

- support for community events and volunteering,
- place-based emergency management and resilience planning, and
- initiatives that strengthen social connection and community capacity.

4. Priority Preventive Health Investments for Dorset

The Strategy provides a strong framework to translate prevention into practical, place-based investment.

Council also notes that a substantial proportion of preventive health investment already occurs through local government-owned and operated infrastructure, including parks, walking tracks, trails, recreation facilities, aquatic centres, town swimming pools and community facilities. While specific costings are not itemised within this submission, the planning, construction, operation and maintenance of this infrastructure represents a significant and ongoing financial commitment by local government that directly supports physical activity, social connection and wellbeing

Dorset Council identifies the following [Priority Projects](#) as key preventive health enablers requiring State and / or Federal Government support and funding:

- Community Health Needs (Gap) Analysis to inform evidence-based planning and investment.
- Continued funding for a sustainable Health Hub (Better Health 4 Dorset), noting current funding ceases on 30 June 2026.
- Northern Trails Initiative (North East Rail Trail – Stage 3) to support physical activity, connectivity and tourism.
- Dorset: Future Ready master planning to guide long-term liveability and service integration.
- State Government funding of a youth officer to support prevention and early intervention (Bright Dorset).
- Assessment of potential future community and health-related use of the James Scott Wing at the hospital.

Council views these initiatives as preventive health infrastructure that delivers long-term social, economic and wellbeing benefits.

5. Where Additional State Government Leadership and Funding Are Required

While councils play a critical enabling role, equitable preventive health outcomes in regional Tasmania require clear State Government leadership, funding and system reform.

5.1 Regional Preventive Health Planning

Council recommends consideration of a Regional Preventive Health Plan for northern Tasmania, funded by the State Government, to reduce duplication, improve coordination and support place-based outcomes.

5.2 Remoteness and Isolation

Targeted State investment is required to ensure:

- long-term funding certainty for services beyond election cycles,
- stronger emergency management systems that identify and support vulnerable residents, and
- improved mobile phone coverage to enhance safety, service access and emergency response.

5.3 Education, Prevention and Regulatory Alignment

Council supports:

- face-to-face health and wellbeing education and outreach in regional communities,
- stronger alignment between health promotion, housing policy and regulatory frameworks, and
- targeted investment to address substandard housing in low SEIFA and ageing communities.

Council emphasises that while local government is well placed to enable preventive health outcomes, equitable delivery requires sustained State Government leadership, funding certainty and system coordination to avoid unintended cost-shifting to councils.

6. Key Messages for the Final Strategy

Dorset Council recommends that the final Strategy:

- prevention should be recognised and funded as essential infrastructure, requiring long-term, predictable investment rather than short-term program funding.
- early childhood development and early help should be prioritised as the highest-return preventive health investments, particularly in regional and remote communities.
- recognises local government capacity and funding constraints,
- commits to long-term, stable and predictable funding for prevention,
- supports regional, place-based preventive health planning,
- aligns health promotion, regulation and housing policy, and
- treats local government as a genuine delivery partner.

7. Conclusion

Dorset Council strongly supports The Health Revolution and its ambition to reshape Tasmania's approach to health and wellbeing over the next 20 years.

With appropriate State leadership, funding and partnership, local government is well positioned to deliver meaningful, place-based preventive health outcomes for ageing, vulnerable and remote communities. Dorset Council stands ready to work with the State Government to translate this Strategy into practical outcomes for its community.

Yours sincerely



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