

# Unlocking the full potential of local leadership

2025-26 State Budget  
Community Consultation  
Submission 2



Neighbourhood Houses  
Tasmania

# Unlocking the full potential of local leadership

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...because local people know their community best.

This is an investment in strengthening the voices that shape our communities.

Local leaders are the people who volunteer their time, and drive local solutions to local challenges, make tough decisions and put their heart and soul into their neighbourhood.

By equipping local boards with the tools to lead effectively, we're ensuring that every Neighbourhood House—big or small—has the skills and confidence to chart its own course for the future.

This initiative is built on a simple but powerful principle:

“By the community, for the community.”

With this funding, we're not just supporting better governance; we're equipping a new generation of community leaders to take their seat at the table and develop their skills to make a real difference.

Together, we're creating resilient, thriving communities led by people who care deeply and act boldly for their neighbours, their neighbourhoods and their future.

At the core of our work is collaboration, responsiveness and consultation with our members to take the next step in future proofing the positive contributions to Tasmanian communities.



Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania acknowledges the palawa as the traditional and original custodians of lutruwita/Tasmania. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters, and culture. This always has been, and always will be, Aboriginal land.

Sovereignty of lutruwita/Tasmania has never been ceded.

## This project will deliver:

- **Neighbourhood Houses Governance Network**, connected and strong statewide learning network
  - Showcasing what local leadership looks like, awareness raising
  - Mentoring program – partnering to support local leadership
- **Comprehensive board self-assessments and action plans** that involve:
  - Updating constitutions
  - Skills analysis, identifying and securing the right people to governance roles
  - Board succession, developing board member pathways and role succession
  - Specialist advice and coaching
- **Governance Hub**
  - A suite of easy access governance resources for leaders
  - A program of governance modules – an annual offering to build capacity and strengthen the skills base
- **Strategies for short, medium and long-term sustainability**
  - Leveraging collective buying power for the Network
  - Investigating new models of governance
  - Developing governance and planning response to disasters

## Investment 2025-2029:

- **Project officer \$149,702 / year** to drive the project (continuation of funds for Governance support 2021-2025)
- **Specialist advice, coaching and resourcing \$85,000 / year.**



Thali Tuesdays at **Burnie Community House**

## Current context: A strong Network under pressure

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Neighbourhood Houses are vibrant, welcoming and connected organisations working in our communities. They are also under pressure.

Houses receive core funding for approximately 2 staff, are run by voluntary community-based boards, supported by volunteers and often supplemented by project funding.

Houses need to be experts in place-based community development and operating in a complex contemporary work environment. This behind-the-scenes work includes managing:

- human resources for paid staff and volunteers
- financial oversight, budgets and seeking additional funds
- grants, reporting and evaluation
- up-to-date policies and procedures
- workplace health and safety
- increasing complexity of regulatory and compliance
- strategy and emerging risks
- other governance and legal responsibilities.

This is done while responding to growing community need, intensified by cost-of-living pressures and an increase in homelessness, food insecurity, drug/alcohol misuse and addiction, mental health problems, family and domestic violence, debt, chronic health conditions, social isolation and desperation.

Government and others are increasingly looking to the Neighbourhood House Network to provide solutions when responding to community need during crises - whether COVID, food insecurity or other disasters, such as the recent severe weather and prolonged power outages (detailed in the case study on page 7).

This is because our place-based community development response works. Our Neighbourhood Houses managers and board members are local leaders. They earn the trust of communities by walking with or alongside people in dialogue, rather than imposing solutions and telling them what to do. This model takes time to build. These connections and relationships require secure and sustainable resourcing.

**In June 2025, NHT's governance program funding ends. This will be equivalent of the peak body losing a staff member. This will undermine NHT's ability to support our Network at this critical time.**

**It also means that when the Tasmanian and Australian Government reach out to NHT in future emergencies we will not have the capacity to deliver in a similar way to recent crises.**

## Solution: Building on the investment in a strong Network

Resourcing the peak body provides shared resources that radiate out to all our Neighbourhood Houses. We can create efficiencies, and leverage the power of the Network to support Houses in unlocking their local leadership potential and community impact.

A strong, resourced peak body works with members to adopt a network model to maximise resources. NHT works alongside our Neighbourhood Houses by advocating, problem solving, connecting and supporting managers.

Central to our Network's strength is the individual autonomy to respond to local communities. Our Houses rely on community-led boards for their governance, by the community, for the community.

**741**

contacts on average per week for each House

**58**

partnerships per House in a year

**2,393**

meals across the Network per typical week

**1,400**

volunteers across the Network

However, there are logistical challenges and cost burdens with this place-based model.

When a board member or manager spends time researching and responding to an issue, this work is replicated across the Network multiple times.

How does the Network consistently provide a pathway to assess and build governance skills across 250+ board members? These individual responses to common and Statewide problems also means the opportunity of leveraging the Network's buying power can be lost, training and development is done in a silo, sharing new successful ideas and peer support is ad hoc.

This is the crucible where a peak body's work is at its most valuable – to coordinate, respond and connect our members to create those relationships and harness the strength of the whole Network for everyone's benefit. This allows for a greater opportunity for our Houses to unlock their local leadership and community impact potential.

## The Ask

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Project Officer	\$149,702	\$154,193*	\$158,818*	\$163,583*
Coaching & resourcing	\$85,000	\$87,550*	\$90,177*	\$92,882*
<b>The ask</b>	<b>\$234,702</b>	<b>\$241,743*</b>	<b>\$248,995*</b>	<b>\$256,465*</b>

\* Including indexation of 3%

**NHT's new Strategic Plan 2025-2028**, developed with our Neighbourhood Houses, outlines our purpose as a peak body to resource and grow our member Network as leaders in place-based community development.

Our goals are:

- **Leadership and influence** to advocate and influence for positive change
- **Connections and partnerships** to grow collaborations and partnerships that extent the impact of NHT and the Network
- **Governance and long-term sustainability** to advance robust governance at NHT and across the Network, ensuring resilience and sustainable growth for the future.

# Case study in connecting Government and community

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## A coordinated response to the August flooding event

*"Disasters and the rise in extreme weather events exacerbate planning and governance challenges in the not-for-profit sector." - NFP Law*

The storms that impacted Tasmania in August/September 2024 demonstrated the central role Neighbourhood Houses play to respond to challenges. Through close cooperation between Resilience and Recovery Tasmania (RRT) and NHT, the Government was able to respond quickly and efficiently to the unfolding severe weather event.

It also shows the pivotal role a strong peak body can play in an emergency. NHT was a conduit between Tasmanian Government and our members. This allowed for a quick response to the Premier's Emergency Grant for the provision of food and water relief via Neighbourhood Houses. NHT was also a contact for RRT, to communicate with the Network and provide feedback on what was happening on the ground. This is reflected in the following comment from RRT's Acting-Director *"...we can collect evidence of damaged infrastructure but cannot take a photo of community well-being"*. Government was able to negotiate a single grant deed with NHT (instead of multiple Houses), while NHT managed and dispersed funds and processed applications from Houses responding to the disaster.

There is opportunity going forward for planning, coordinating and facilitating more community led disaster resilience projects. Without resourcing, however, NHT is not able to build on recent successes to work together in the future or deliver a similar outcome going forward.



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