

Tasmanian Sexual and  
Reproductive Health  
Collaborative Group

# Strategic Framework 2024 – 2030

Developed June 2024

For information about the Tasmanian Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategic Framework 2024 – 2030 and the Tasmanian Sexual and Reproductive Health Collaborative Group contact any member organisation:

- Working It Out [www.workingitout.org.au](http://www.workingitout.org.au)
- Women's Health Tasmania [www.womenshealthtas.org.au](http://www.womenshealthtas.org.au)
- The Link Youth Health Service [www.thelink.org.au](http://www.thelink.org.au)
- Sexual Assault Support Service [www.sass.org.au](http://www.sass.org.au)
- Scarlet Alliance [www.scarletalliance.org.au](http://www.scarletalliance.org.au)
- Red Cross [www.redcross.org.au](http://www.redcross.org.au)
- Primary Health Tasmania [www.primaryhealthtas.com.au](http://www.primaryhealthtas.com.au)
- Pharmacy Guild of Tasmania [www.guild.org.au](http://www.guild.org.au)
- Laurel House [www.laurelhouse.org.au](http://www.laurelhouse.org.au)
- Family Planning Tasmania [www.fpt.org.au](http://www.fpt.org.au)
- Department of Health [www.health.tas.gov.au](http://www.health.tas.gov.au)
- Department of Premier and Cabinet [www.dpac.tas.gov.au](http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au)

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# Strategic Framework 2024–2030

The purpose of the Sexual and Reproductive Health Collaborative Group Strategic Framework 2024–2030 is to inform the decisions and actions on sexual and reproductive health in lutruwita/Tasmania.

The Sexual and Reproductive Health Collaborative Group (SRHCG) is comprised of government and non-government organisations that provide sexual and reproductive health services and programs. It works with a broad range of stakeholders across federal, state, and local government, in the health and community services industry, education providers, research institutions and advocacy and reference groups.

The Collaborative Group shares information, local knowledge and experience, and data to develop best practice policy responses and to collaboratively design and deliver sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing services. The Group also works to develop, own, progress and monitor the Tasmanian Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy.

Membership of the Sexual and Reproductive Health Collaborative Group:

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Women’s Health Tasmania

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Scarlet Alliance

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Family Planning Tasmania

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Working It Out

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The Link Youth Health Service

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Sexual Assault Support Service

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Laurel House

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Red Cross

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Pharmacy Guild of Tasmania

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Primary Health Tasmania

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School Health Nurse Program  
(Tasmanian Department of Education,  
Children and Young People)

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Public Health Services (Tasmanian  
Department of Health)

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Pulse Youth Health Service (Tasmanian  
Department of Health)

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Sexual Health Services (Tasmanian  
Health Service)

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Forensic Health Services (Tasmanian  
Health Service)

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Department of Premier and Cabinet

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## Our vision

All Tasmanians are empowered with knowledge that supports their wellbeing and freedom of choice in their sexual and reproductive health.



## Our values

The decisions we make and the actions we take will be grounded in our values; we will:

- Protect and promote everyone's human rights.
- Stand for equity and justice.
- Respect individuals in all their diversity and intersectionality.
- Seek, support and value lived experience.
- Build our collaboration based on trust.



# Our priorities

## 1/ **Communication**

The SRHCG's commitment to collaborative working, listening, and advocating results in improved practice and policy in the sexual and reproductive health care system.

## 2/ **Respectful relationships and sexuality education**

Tasmanians have access to comprehensive respectful relationships and sexuality education across their lifespan.

## 3/ **Inclusion of people with diverse genders, sexual identities and innate variations of sex characteristics**

Tasmanian services respect diversity in age, culture, language, gender, bodies and sexual identity, and are inclusive of all people.

## 4/ **Preventing, detecting, and treating sexually transmissible infections**

Tasmanians are informed in managing their sexual health and maintaining healthy sexual relations.

## 5/ **Supporting reproductive rights**

Tasmanians have the capacity to make and act on their choices regarding their reproductive rights.

Within each of these priorities we identify important actions that need to be taken over the life of this Strategic Framework. The SRHCG may lead those actions or undertake them as individual member organisations and/or in partnership with others.

A Not For Profit Caucus consisting of SRHCG members from non-Government organisations may meet separately to work collectively on specific issues. This work may include joint advocacy.



## How to cite this document

This document was developed by the Sexual and Reproductive Health Collaborative Group through a strategic planning process held in November 2023 followed by collaborative authorship process conducted December – March 2024.

Citation should be Sexual and Reproductive Health Collaborative Group (2024), Hobart.

## Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of lutruwita/Tasmania, the palawa peoples, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present. Understanding the unique health needs and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities deeply informs our work and this framework. We commit to continually learning from these communities to foster sexual and reproductive health practices that honour their rich cultural knowledge and traditions.

# The Collaborative Group

The Sexual and Reproductive Health Collaborative Group (SRHCG) is comprised of government and non-government organisations that provide sexual and reproductive health services and programs.

The SRHCG shares information, local knowledge and experience, and data to develop best practice policy responses and to collaboratively design and deliver sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing services. The Group also works to develop, own, progress and monitor the Tasmanian Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy.

**The SRHCG is committed to developing an advocacy model which is inclusive, and which aligns with the Strategic Framework 2024-2030. To progress this work, SRHCG will form caucuses for groups to work collaboratively around a specific issue or action. NOTE – the advocacy role of the SRCHG is limited to non-government members.**

Group member organisations are supported by a wider, diverse group of allied organisations from which information and advice is sought.

Together the SRHCG brings interdisciplinary expertise, an intersectional perspective and deep community engagement practices to advocate for legislative and systems change that will benefit all Tasmanians.

## Health equity

A foundation of this work is the principle of health equity which means everyone in our community has the necessary agency (knowledge, skills and resources) to pursue, achieve and maintain their optimal health and wellbeing. It also means communities have the right services provided in the right ways and in the right places to support health and wellbeing.

To achieve health equity, it is necessary to address the experience of members of our community who share the experience of poorer health linked to systemic exclusion or disadvantage.

These priority populations broadly include:

- Aboriginal people
- People with migrant, refugee or refugee-type backgrounds
- Gay men and other men who have sex with men
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and asexual (LGBTIQ+) people
- Older people
- People in and having exited custodial settings
- People with disability
- Sex workers
- Women
- People living in rural and remote areas
- Young people

Members of the SRHCG work with a wide range of partners in the delivery of strategies, programs and initiatives covered by this framework.

# The Strategic Framework

Through this fourth Strategic Framework the SRHCG aims to promote system-wide collective action on sexual and reproductive health.

The purpose of the document is to inform the decisions and actions on sexual and reproductive health in lutruwita/Tasmania by the broad range of stakeholders across federal, state and local government, in the health and community services industry, education providers, research institutions and advocacy and reference groups.

The six-year Strategic Framework 2024–2030 will be reviewed in 2026 and 2028 to accommodate changes in context.



Sexual health is

*a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected and fulfilled.*

– World Health Organisation (WHO)



# Outcomes and challenges

The SRHCG has been operating since 2011 and in that time its members have influenced important changes in Tasmania. These include:

- The availability of surgical terminations of pregnancy in public hospitals, including for people without access to Medicare (Tasmanian Health Service);
- The provision of brokerage funds to assist with the cost of Long Acting Reversible Contraceptives and medical termination of pregnancy, and, where clinically required, the private provision of surgical termination of pregnancy (Public Health Services, funds managed through The Link Youth Health Service and Women's Health Tasmania);
- Period poverty initiatives such as the initiative to provide sanitary products in schools (Department for Education, Children and Young People), the initiative to provide sanitary products in hospitals (Department of Health) and the initiative to provide period friendly underwear to eligible low-income folk (Women's Health Tasmania);
- The establishment of the online directory, *Pregnancy Choices Tasmania* (Women's Health Tasmania);
- The release of the *Termination of Pregnancy: a Good Practice Guide for Tasmanian care providers* (Women's Health Tasmania);
- New training for Tasmanian health professionals in reproductive autonomy and reproductive coercion (Women's Health Tasmania);
- Continuing professional development modules for clinicians on abortion care pathways (Family Planning Tasmania);

- 'This Way // That Way', the youth-led project on sexual and reproductive health, relationships and culture (The Link Youth Health Service); and
- Representation for law reform around medical interventions on intersex infants (Working it Out).

The developments of recent years benefit many more Tasmanians, and there have also been significant global, national and local advances in knowledge and practice to support improved sexual and reproductive health.

However, there remain challenges that require a concerted, collaborative effort in the immediate future.

There is a need to improve community awareness of sexually transmissible infections (STIs) and individual participation in early detection to reduce morbidity and mortality from STIs. To do this work we need to incorporate health literacy principles such as co-designing and testing with users, providing care where it is most needed, and working with peer educators and trusted providers to share messages. We also need to ensure staff are skilled in health literacy practices, for example, using plain language and teach-back to check for understanding.

We also need to improve the knowledge of, and respect for, people with diverse genders, sexual identities, and innate variations of sex characteristics, to sustain better sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing. This includes ensuring information and services, to support reproductive choices are accessible to everyone.

Tasmanians face specific challenges that may impact their sexual and reproductive health, including:

- More than three out of five Tasmanians do not have adequate health literacy. This makes accessing, understanding or using health information difficult for most people.<sup>1</sup>
- Tasmanians with the lowest household incomes report significantly higher rates of poor or fair health compared to those with the highest household incomes.<sup>2</sup>
- lutruwita/Tasmania has the highest proportion of people with a disability of any Australian jurisdiction.<sup>3</sup>
- lutruwita/Tasmania has the highest pre-term birth rate of any Australian jurisdiction.<sup>4</sup>
- People living in most remote and regional communities of lutruwita/Tasmania have little or no direct access to sexual and reproductive health services.<sup>5</sup>
- Fourteen per cent of all Tasmanian adults report very high or high levels of psychological distress (2019).<sup>6</sup> Levels of psychological distress are particularly high among younger Tasmanians aged 18-34 years and have increased substantially in the decade prior to 2019.<sup>7</sup>
- Women and non-binary folk utilising antenatal and birthing services in Tasmania report fragmented antenatal and perinatal care with consequences for their health and wellbeing.<sup>8</sup>

In lutruwita/Tasmania we see Australia-wide patterns replicated, including:

- Aboriginal people face significant health inequities, compared with other Australians.<sup>9</sup> They also face ongoing challenges associated with racism, stigma and social disadvantage.<sup>10</sup>
- Reproductive coercion is significantly more likely to occur in a context of domestic violence.<sup>11</sup>
- Women on temporary visas experiencing complex health problems, including reproductive health issues which may not be covered by their private health insurance,<sup>12</sup> and are not covered by Medicare.
- Stigma and discrimination toward people because of their sexual orientation, drug use, STI or bloodborne virus (BBV) status, or work in the sex industry persists in Australia.<sup>13</sup>





## Context

The work of the Collaborative Group is informed by evidence, clinical and support innovations, and contemporary policy and service directions at the international, national and state levels.

### International

The World Health Organization (WHO) provides direction for policy and service activity to improve the sexual and reproductive health of individuals and communities internationally. The work of the WHO's Human Reproduction Programme on sexual health and wellbeing covers four technical areas:

- Research on prevention and control of sexually transmissible infections, including HIV;
- Prevention and management of cancers of the reproductive system;
- Education, counselling and care related to sexuality, sexual identity, and sexual relationships; and
- Sexual function and psychosexual counselling.

### National

In Australia, there is no single comprehensive sexual and reproductive health strategy. The Australian Government leads national responses that contribute to sexual and reproductive health access and outcomes; including:

- National Action Plan for The Health of Children and Young People 2020–2030
- National Action Plan for Endometriosis July 2018
- National Men's Health Strategy 2020–2030
- National Women's Health Strategy 2020–2030
- National strategies for bloodborne viruses and sexually transmissible infections

Relationships and sexuality education is a focus area within the *Personal, social and community health* strand of the *Australian Health and Physical Education Curriculum*. Version 9 includes a strengthened focus on consent education to “*take positive action regarding diversity, inclusion, consent and respect in different social contexts*”.



## State

lutruwita/Tasmania has in place legislative and policy frameworks targeted at supporting equitable access to sexual and reproductive health services and information.

Access to termination of pregnancy is regulated under the *Reproductive Health (Access to Terminations) Act 2013*.

The Act also provides provisions for conscientious objectors and access zones to ensure people can access reproductive health services free from harassment, intimidation, and protest.

The *Tasmanian Health and Wellbeing for Women Action Plan 2020–2023* aimed to progress actions to improve women's health and wellbeing. It was designed to closely align with the National Strategy and recognises that women continue to face barriers in health care access, particularly in relation to reproductive and sexual health.

The *Equal Means Equal: Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2022–2027* includes a gender impact assessment process so the gender impacts of government policies and programs can be identified and addressed, including for health and wellbeing.

*Survivors at the Centre: Tasmania's Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan 2022–2027* is the Tasmanian Government's, coordinated, whole-of-government action plan to respond to family and sexual violence. It includes a commitment to effectively embed Respectful Relationship and Consent Education in Tasmanian schools.

The *Healthy Tasmania Five-Year Strategic Plan 2022–2026* is the Tasmanian Government's key framework for preventative health. Implementation of this framework intersects with actions and priorities across other Tasmanian Government strategies and plans including:

- *Our HealthCare Future: Advancing Tasmania's Health*
- *It Takes a Tasmanian Village: Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy*
- *Strong Families Safe Kids Next Steps Action Plan 2021–2023*
- *Wellbeing for Learning: Child and Student Wellbeing Strategy*
- *Tasmanian Active Ageing Strategy 2023–2029*
- *Tasmanian Health Literacy Action Plan 2019–2024*

# Priorities

1. Communication
2. Respectful relationships and sexuality education
3. Inclusion of people with diverse genders, sexual identities and innate variations of sex characteristics
4. Preventing, detecting and treating sexually transmissible infections
5. Supporting reproductive rights

Within each of these priorities we identify important actions that need to be taken over the life of this Strategic Framework. The SRHCG may lead those actions or undertake them as individual member organisations and/or in partnership with others.

As with all behavioural and social change the work of the SRHCG takes place within a broader context. The achievement of meaningful positive outcomes for Tasmanians relies on collaboration by numerous sectors to create an environment where the following conditions are in place. These are our enablers for change. Some already have strategies in place, some need more attention. Some are the responsibilities of government and some of non-government organisations.

It is collaborative effort which will build and coordinate these enablers.

- Leadership across government and the community that promotes a culture of respect, especially for gender diverse people.
- Consistent commitment to community engagement and codesign.
- Resourcing and support for education on sexual and reproductive health and respectful relationships – in schools and across the lifespan.
- Acceptance and celebration of diversity.
- Health literacy responsiveness – services ensuring they are working in ways that support the diverse range of people to access information and the services they need to support their health.
- Breaking down silos through shared values, systems mapping and data.
- Commitment and resourcing to improve access to health services.
- Sustainable funding for service providers to enable them to address the growing demand for services and respond to increases in the cost of living.
- Service delivery organisations resourced to ensure:
  - Delivery of quality activities and programs;
  - Evaluation and data collection;
  - Lived experience advocacy;
  - Codesign approaches;
  - Knowledge sharing; and
  - Capacity building of employees.

# Measuring and reporting

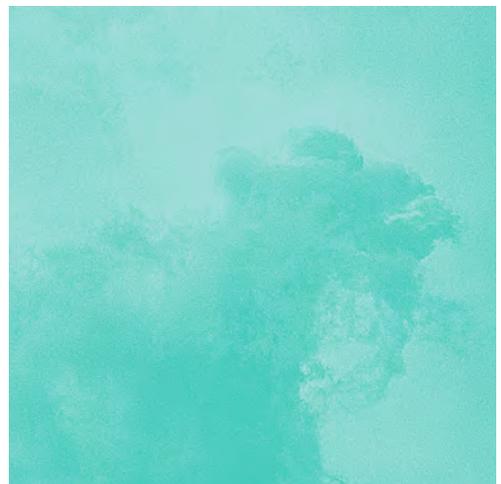
The influence and impact achieved by the SRHCG will be measured by:

- The inclusion of members of the SRHCG in government-led decision-making bodies and meetings;
- Measurable commitments to equity strategies to assist priority populations in government strategies and policies;
- The support and progress of joint initiatives;
- Achievement of legislative and/or systems change for sexual and reproductive health.

Evidence of progress on actions within the priority areas will be seen in:

- The reports to funders of the SRHCG's members; and
- A narrative report on progress developed by the SRCHG members collectively every 12 months.

The SRHCG will report on and share the narrative progress report with government agencies and other stakeholders annually.



# Priorities

## 1/ Communication

The SRHCG's commitment to collaborative working, listening, and sharing of evidence, results in improved practice and policy in the sexual and reproductive health care system.

We will:

### **Communicate and engage**

with stakeholders to consult on and progress the work encompassed by the Framework.

## 2/ Respectful relationships and sexuality education

Tasmanians have access to comprehensive respectful relationships and sexuality education across their lifespan.

Our activities will support:

### **Comprehensive health and wellbeing, respectful relationships, and sexuality education:**

in schools, colleges, and tertiary institutions.

### **Inclusive Programs:**

Normalising conversations across the lifespan about sexuality and relationships, and catering to diverse populations.

### **Community-Wide Approach:**

A whole-community approach to sexuality education.

### **Resource Guidance and Coordination:**

Resources to provide guidance on where to seek help in specific situations and to foster coordination among services/ programs for sharing evidence-based messages.

## 3/ Inclusion of people with diverse genders, sexual identities and innate variations of sex characteristics

Tasmanian services respect diversity in age, culture, language, gender, bodies and sexual identity, and are inclusive of all people.

Our activities will support:

### **Leadership:**

Leadership in building a culture that proactively fosters inclusion and diversity.

### **Workforce development:**

Sexual and reproductive health service staff understand the importance of, and implement, inclusive and good health literacy practice.

### **Service development:**

Equitable access to services for priority populations and address systemic gender bias in healthcare provision settings.

### **Systems change:**

Explicit inclusion of diverse population groups in government, and government funded, health and community service strategic plans and policies.

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## 4/

### Preventing, detecting and treating sexually transmissible infections (STI)

Tasmanians are informed in managing their sexual health and maintaining healthy sexual relations.

Our activities will support:

#### **Service access:**

Improved awareness of, and increased access to the full range of STI prevention strategies, testing, early diagnosis and treatment.

#### **Good practice:**

The development, implementation and dissemination of best practice guidelines and recommendations.

#### **Community awareness:**

Campaigns that incorporate health literacy principles and normalise discussions of prevention, testing and treatment of STIs.

#### **Responsiveness:**

Timely and appropriate responses to new and emerging concerns.

## 5/

### Supporting reproductive rights

Tasmanians have the capacity to make and act on their choices regarding their reproductive rights.

Our activities will support:

**Access:** to safe, accessible, affordable and effective contraception and termination of pregnancy services.

**Access:** to sexual health clinics and support services, with a wellbeing lens.

**Inclusion:** gender and culturally inclusive communication about contraception and reproductive rights.

#### **Service improvement:**

Continuity of antenatal and perinatal care.

#### **Health literacy:**

Improved individual and organisational health literacy to support safer sexual practice information in relationships and sexuality education, reproductive rights, and sexual and reproductive health and wellbeing.

# The Not-for-Profit Caucus

There are several non-Government organisations represented on the Sexual and Reproductive Health Advocacy Group. These groups have expressed a desire to work together to progress the goals of the framework through collective work – as a self-described ‘Not for Profit Caucus’. There will be times when the Not-for-Profit Caucus will meet separately, or at the end of SRCHG meetings to progress a separate goal. Any communications from the Not-for-Profit Caucus will be identified as such.

## Advocacy

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We will advocate collectively and through caucuses for resources to address systems gaps, and for policy and legislative improvements.



# Endnotes

- 1 Department of Health (2024) Why is health literacy important, [Health literacy | Tasmanian Department of Health](#)
- 2 Department of Health, Tasmania, Overview of health promotion, [https://health.tas.gov.au/wihpw/overview\\_of\\_health\\_promotion/tasmanias\\_health](https://health.tas.gov.au/wihpw/overview_of_health_promotion/tasmanias_health)
- 3 Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Disability (2019), Ageing and Carers Australia: Summary of Findings*
- 4 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2022), *Australia's mothers and babies*
- 5 Tasmania has 87 population centres with an Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA+)<sup>1</sup> score of over 2.40. The Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA+) is an index of the accessibility of places to service centres, or remoteness of places. Geographical areas are given a score between 0 to 15. An ARIA+ score of 2.40-5.92 indicates that a place has 'significantly restricted accessibility' to goods, services and opportunities for social interaction. A score from 5.92 to 10.50 indicates 'very restricted accessibility'; and over 10.50 indicates 'very little accessibility'.
- 6 Department of Health, *Tasmanian Population Health Survey: 2009-19*, cited in Primary Health Tasmania Health in Tasmania comprehensive Needs Assessment 2022-2025, <https://www.primaryhealthtas.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Health-in-Tasmania-Comprehensive-Needs-Assessment-2022-25.pdf>
- 7 Department of Health (2019) Tasmanian Population Health Survey: 2009-2019. Cited in Primary Health Tasmania, *Primary Health Tasmania Health Needs Assessment 2022-23 to 2024-25*
- 8 Talking to people about birth in Tasmania, Women's Health Tasmania report, forthcoming.
- 9 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2018\*) *Australia's health 2018: in brief*. Canberra: AIHW.
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- 11 Price E, Sharm LS, Douglas HA, Sheeran N, Dingle GA 2019, 'Experiences of Reproductive Coercion in Queensland Women', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, pp1-21, <https://noviolence.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Price-et-al-2019-Queensland-women-online-first.pdf>
- 12 Women's Health Tasmania 2021, *Response to Our Healthcare Future Consultation Paper*, Hobart. [https://www.health.tas.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-12/WHT\\_Our\\_Healthcare\\_Future\\_Consultation\\_Paper\\_DoHTasmania2021.pdf](https://www.health.tas.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-12/WHT_Our_Healthcare_Future_Consultation_Paper_DoHTasmania2021.pdf)
- 13 Stigma snapshot: General public (2021)

