

Supplementary information for the trial of Community Based Income (CBI) in North-West Tasmania

July 2025

There is one underlying factor that determines whether Tasmania is either a strong state, or a state with many difficult to resolve crises. This factor is the character of our people: whereby the symptoms of a culture of promoting strong character include high levels of education, low levels of crime, low levels of ill-health etc. This forms the basis of social cohesion and engaged citizens, who are able to contribute creatively and innovatively to vibrant socio-economic regions.

While our education system is crucial for promoting good character, research shows that early childhood is a critical phase in the formation of lifelong good character; hence those who suffer from intergenerational disadvantage are often unable to gain the benefits of primary and secondary education, and so often fall through the cracks. A reliance on the welfare system is a common outcome, however our current welfare system often perpetuates the psychosocial dynamics of low feelings of self-worth and a fixed mindset that struggles to engage in learning opportunities.

An underlying assumption of the CBI is that a focus on 'brain capital' and 'mental wealth' is vital for all human endeavour's, whereby brain capital is broadly defined as a form of capital which prioritises brain skills and brain health, and according to the World Health Organisation it allows individuals to realise their full cognitive, sensory, social-emotional, behavioural and motor potential, and hence to realise their potential as productive members of society and the economy. Likewise mental wealth is defined as 'a measure of national prosperity that captures the value generated by the deployment of collective mental assets and supporting social infrastructure'. It is contended here that unless there is a focus on brain capital and mental wealth, Australia will fail to cope with the huge challenges we currently face both in terms of environmental crises such as climate change, and psychosocial challenges such as rising rates of mental ill-health.

Community Based Income (CBI) aims to intervene for those most disadvantaged in terms of brain capital and mental wealth; it is based on inter-disciplinary research which has demonstrated evidence of what works for the cohort of disadvantaged job seekers. It also uses a collective impact approach, with both of these strategies providing the basis for a high return on investment, particularly due to a preventative approach of reducing longer term spending resulting from crime, ill-health and low education levels.

See the report "*Human capital and social Investment: making the case for a trial of Community Based Income in North-West Tasmania, February 2025*" for background information on the CBI.

This report briefly discusses the successful micro-trial of CBI conducted by Live Well Tasmania from July 2024 to July 2025. This project focussed on youth because many young people, in particular, those who are on a low-income with limited education or basic skills, face significant hurdles to sustainable employment, such as poor access to quality education, few opportunities for work experience and on-the-job training, and lack of critical social supports.

Finally this report identifies examples of activities that participants could be involved in to enable them to receive the income. A significant feature of the CBI is to help deliver on local and State government plans, such as Local Government Health and Wellbeing Plans, and the Tasmanian Government Youth Jobs Strategy; these can provide meaningful work opportunities for the CBI.

Social Activation Project (SAP)

Funding (\$54,000) was received by Live Well Tasmania in May 2024 to engage four youth in skill building and for-community-benefit activities. The project showed there is no shortage of opportunities for both of these; the four youth soon became in demand to assist a number of local community groups, ranging from the local Community Food Hub, a local community theatre group, and a tourism and endangered species conservation organisation. Key to the success has been the immersion of the youth in their community; they now feel much more connected to their community, and are more hopeful of finding sustainable employment in the future.

One outstanding feature of the SAP was that the same four young people continued the whole program from start to finish. We had been prepared for one or more to discontinue before the end of the project, which could have been for a variety of reasons, but the fact that there was no turnover supported one of the findings that the program was very engaging for the four participants. The project was a successful 'proof of the CBI concept', particularly to show that even though there may be a lack of employment opportunities for young people, there is no lack of skill building and community benefit opportunities.

Examples of CBI activities

A big part of the CBI strategy is to help deliver on local and State government plans, eg Local Government Health and Wellbeing Plans, and the Tasmanian Government Youth Jobs Strategy. A significant amount of work goes into formulating plans, but so often there are not sufficient resources to carry out the actions identified in the plans. Development of the CBI will therefore include identifying actions from various plans that can comprise CBI "Jobs".

For example, the following have been identified as key goals of the Tasmanian Government Youth Jobs Strategy:

- Increase the proportion of young people aged 20 to 24 with a successful year 12 completion or Certificate III or above to at least the national average.
- Increase the mental health and wellbeing of young people (Personal Wellbeing Index) to at least the national average.

Central to both these goals is the attainment of critical skills (often called 'soft skills' or '21st Century skills'), which research shows are becoming more and more important, five sets of skills have been identified as critical: positive self-concept, self-control, communication, social skills and higher-order thinking (which includes problem-solving, critical thinking and decision-making). Towards the goal of helping increase critical skills, the following can build the self-efficacy and positive self-concept needed for youth and other job seekers to succeed:

Imagine – Year 1 of the CBI trial with 75 participants, performing the following roles:

- Teacher Aides, to help kids read at school and after school
- Parent Support Workers, to replicate the successful Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HiPPY) program
- Youth mentors, working with school leavers to increase their employability skills/engaged in Community Based Youth Apprenticeships, including learning life skills
- Participants with the greatest physical and mental health challenges engaged with a group Social Activation project, including a modified Grow (mental wellbeing) program
- Participants engaged in creating one or more social enterprise's, for example involving locally grown food, with an emphasis on gaining employability skills
- Participants engaged in environmental projects, including penguin habitat restoration, bird conservation (eg via the Lobster Ponds) and environmental restoration, working with local landcare groups.

Other ideas are the creation of 'Community-Based Apprenticeships', where youth can increase their critical skills while benefitting the community.

Request for funding

We are requesting the following support from State and Federal Government, however the amounts and numbers of participants involved are subject to negotiation.

<i>Year 1</i>	<u>State Gov.</u>	<u>Fed. Gov.</u>
Project Manager & Assistant 20 hours/week	\$98,000	
Community projects eg materials	\$100,000	
Top up rate per week = \$183 x 75 participants		\$713,700
<u>Totals Year 1</u>	<u>\$198,000</u>	<u>\$713,700</u>
<i>Year 2</i>		
Project Manager & Assistant 30 hours/week	\$114,000	
Community projects eg materials	\$140,000	
Top up rate per week = \$183 x 150 participants		\$1,427,400
<u>Totals Year 2</u>	<u>\$254,000</u>	<u>\$1,427,400</u>
<i>Year 3</i>		
Project Manager & Assistant 40 hours/week	\$130,000	
Community projects eg materials	\$180,000	
Top up rate per week = \$183 x 300 participants		\$2,854,800
<u>Totals Year 3</u>	<u>\$310,000</u>	<u>\$2,854,800</u>
<u>Total for Years 1 to 3:</u>	<u>\$762,000</u>	<u>\$4,995,900</u>

NB: other assistant positions will be paid the CBI