

**Salvation Army HASS Speech**  
**Terry Martin MLC – Matter of Public Interest**  
**June 7 2007**

Mr President, I would like to take this opportunity to bring to the members attention an early intervention crime prevention program run in Southern Tasmania by the Salvation Army that will shortly be axed due to a lack of State funding.

Without pre-empting the report being prepared by the Legislative Council Ashley Detention Centre Committee, it is clear to any honest observer that Tasmania needs MORE early intervention crime prevention programs, NOT LESS.

The program I speak of is called Home and School Support. Also known as HASS.

In a nutshell, the Home and School Support program targets 10 – 14 year olds and their families and aims to prevent homelessness, early school leaving and offending behaviour in these young people.

This is achieved through a mix of counselling, mediation, advocacy, court support and the teaching of life skills and goal setting.

Like all successful programs, HASS uses a collaborative approach which involves parents, siblings, teachers, social workers, the Tasmanian Police and Youth Justice.

HASS is outcome driven and ensures clients receive the individual support they require to remain in school and separate themselves from criminal behaviour.

In the past year HASS has worked with 60 clients and 39 adults. 20 families have been successfully exited from the program with positive outcomes.

Mr President you would imagine that outcomes such as this that keep children out of Ashley and from being an ongoing burden for schools and the police would be expensive to run. On the contrary this program costs less per year to support 99 people than it costs to look after just 1 Ashley detainee for just 1 year.

You would think that it makes social and economical sense for the Government to not simply increase their funding to keep this program alive, but to increase the funding so that this program can be expanded to provide positive and cost saving outcomes for those at risk across the entire state.

In finishing I will read a quick Case Study that clearly demonstrates the need and benefits of the HASS program. I call on the Hon Treasurer to take note and see what is within his power to do to help make a difference for people like Simon and Lee.

Simon and Lee are brothers and were referred to HASS at the age of 12 and 13 by a community family support service. There were also two other siblings, a girl 14 and an older brother. Their father had left in 1993 and there had subsequently been a series of family crises.

The children were having problems attending school regularly, the brothers fought continually and there were concerns for their emotional well-being. All of them had experimented with drugs and alcohol and attempted or threatened suicide.

Their mother was physically incapacitated and bedridden much of the time with profound allergic reactions. She was under extreme stress and much of the domestic work had fallen onto her daughters shoulders. Although they had contact with a number of different services they felt that no one was really able to help them.

The Family engaged with HASS at the initial home visit and it was obvious that they required ongoing support.

They were distrustful of further interventions given the bad experiences they had had with services in the past and it took a while for the case-worker to establish a trusting relationship with each family member.

HASS also worked with the individual schools to address learning difficulties and with the mother to reinforce parenting skills.

Food issues were addressed as well as the mothers dependence on the eldest boy who was expected to be the man of the house.

The family appreciated being able to ring whenever they needed help and the children particularly welcomed the non judgemental approach of the case worker who felt was on their wave-length.

The case is now closed but the family still feel they can ring if anything comes up and feel very warm towards the case worker. Most importantly they feel they have been given strategies to cope with difficulties in the future.