



Submission to the inquiry into the Northern Heart Centre (Tasmanian Public Works Committee)

27 January 2026

For further information please contact:

Josh Hodges
National Heart Foundation of Australia
Head of Advocacy
josh.hodges@heartfoundation.org.au

The Heart Foundation in Tasmania

For over 60 years, the Heart Foundation has been the trusted national organisation working across Australia to improve prevention, detection and support of heart disease, the leading cause of disease burden in Australia.¹

The Heart Foundation continues to provide on-the-ground support in Tasmania:

The Heart Foundation maintains an office in Hobart's city centre. Our staff work at offices in every capital city across Australia, including Tasmania.

We support 2250 walkers in 36 Heart Foundation Walking groups across Tasmania, improving their physical and mental health through regular physical activity.

At Tasmania's AgFest2025, thousands of Tasmanians had access to on-the-spot cholesterol and blood pressure checks at the Heart Foundation marquee to help them

better understand their risks of heart disease.²

Patient support across the state through our MyHeart MyLife program,³ supporting Tasmanians with heart disease to recover well and live a healthy life (Figure 1).

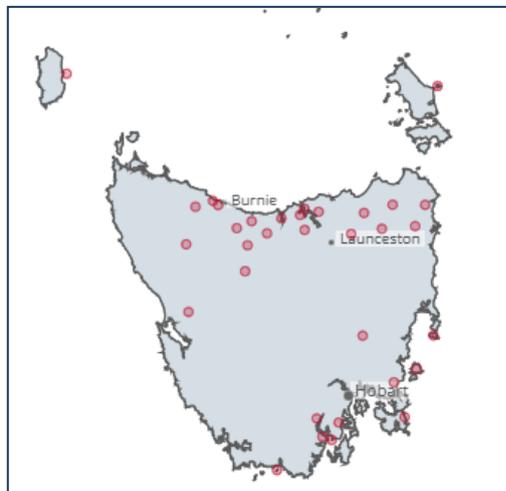


Figure 1. Registrants in the Heart Foundation's MyHeart MyLife patient support program reside across Tasmania.

Recommendation

The Heart Foundation strongly supports the delivery of the Northern Heart Centre at Launceston General Hospital to provide greatly improved access to advanced cardiac care for people living in north and north-west Tasmania, increase capacity for the state and reduce the strain on emergency departments.

Rationale

Tasmania has higher rates of heart disease than any other state, with north and north-west Tasmania bearing the highest burden (Figure 2).⁴

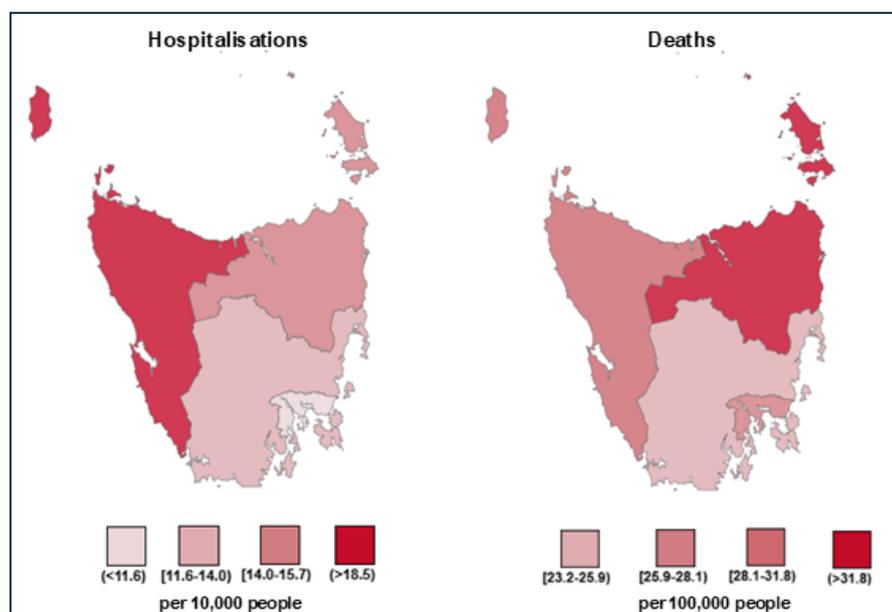


Figure 2. Rate of hospitalisations and deaths due to heart attack in Tasmania, by region.^{4,5}

The higher rate of heart disease is due to a higher proportion of the population who are over 65 years residing in these regions, and higher rates of behaviours increasing risk of heart disease such as low intake of healthy food, obesity and regular smoking.⁵ Error! Bookmark not defined.

However, there is currently a lack of life-saving, advanced cardiac care services in the north of the state to help meet this healthcare demand. Royal Hobart Hospital in the south of Tasmania is currently the only place in the state with advanced cardiac care, and where people can receive complex cardiology services such as cardiothoracic surgery.⁶ People who currently need this type of acute coronary care must be airlifted to Hobart in the south-east of Tasmania or across Bass Strait to mainland Australia, placing people at higher risk of clinically-significant delays in their treatment.

As well as providing much-needed advanced cardiac care facilities, the Northern Heart Centre to be constructed in Launceston will provide dedicated in-patient services, a catheterisation lab and cardiac care beds, allowing patients to bypass the emergency department.⁶ This will help relieve pressure on the Launceston General Hospital and other hospitals in the region as cardiac cases place disproportionate strain on Tasmanian emergency departments, particularly when patients need to be transferred to other hospitals.⁷ These new services will also help increase capacity in a previously underserved area of Tasmania, relieve pressure on hospital emergency departments, and help to meet current and future demand for cardiac healthcare services across the whole state.

Building the Northern Heart Centre to address the healthcare demand is outlined as a priority action in the Tasmanian Government's *Tasmanian Cardiac Strategy, Action plan for Tasmanian cardiac services 2025-2027*, and the Launceston General Hospital Precinct masterplan.^{6,8}

References

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Heart, stroke and vascular disease: Australian facts. 2024. Accessed 19 June 2025. Available at: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/heart-stroke-vascular-diseases/hsvd-facts>

² Ag-fest 2025. Heart Foundation sounds alarm on Tasmania's leading killer. 3 May 2025. Accessed 23 June 2025. <https://agfest.com.au/news/heart-foundation-sounds-alarm-on-tasmanias-leading-killer>

³ National Heart Foundation of Australia. MyHeart MyLife. <https://www.myheartmylife.org.au/>

⁴ National Heart Foundation of Australia. Australian Heart Maps. 2025. Accessed 27 January 2026.

⁵ The maps in Figure 2 show SA4 level regions of Tasmania defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, available at: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/standards/australian-statistical-geography-standard-asgs-edition-3/jul2021-jun2026/main-structure-and-greater-capital-city-statistical-areas/statistical-area-level-4>

⁶ Tasmanian Government Department of Health. Tasmanian Cardiac Strategy. 2024. Accessed 22 January 2026. <https://www.health.tas.gov.au/publications/tasmanian-cardiac-strategy>.

⁷ Independent Review of Tasmania's Major Hospital Emergency Departments. 7 May 2024. Accessed 27 January 2026. https://www.health.tas.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-05/independent_review_of_tasmanias_major_hospital_ed.pdf

⁸ Tasmanian Government Department of Health. Launceston General Hospital Precinct masterplan. Accessed 27 January 2026. <https://www.health.tas.gov.au/about/doing-business-us/priority-projects#launceston-general-hospital-precinct-masterplan>