

## 5. Supporting Children's Mental Health

Head to Health Kids (H2HKids) is a collaborative mental health initiative by the Tasmanian and Australian Governments. It offers free mental health and wellbeing services for children under 12 and their families to address mild to moderate developmental, mental health, behavioural, or emotional challenges. No formal referral or diagnosis is needed.

In Tasmania, H2HKids is being piloted in three locations: Bridgewater, Mayfield (East Tamar), and Burnie. The Bridgewater service started in March 2025, with Mayfield and Burnie expected to begin in the first half of 2025. The program collaborates with various services, including CHaPS, THS Paediatric Services, the Department for Education, Children and Young People, and the School Nursing Program to ensure it complements existing services and is tailored to local needs.

## 6. Enhancing Maternity Services in the North West



Following the transfer of maternity services in the North West to the public system on 4 December 2023, the service continues to support more connected statewide services and greater choice for mothers. The new service is providing high quality and safe care to mothers and babies across the North West and recently achieved positive outcomes during a safety and quality review against the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards.

Positive feedback from the assessors included that the North West maternity service has an established culture of safety and quality improvement, demonstrates a welcoming environment, genuinely recognises the importance of the cultural beliefs, and empowers patients to raise concerns.

The North West Regional Hospital (NWRH) Maternity and Paediatric Wards have been renamed to reflect the successful transition and community involvement. The Maternity Ward has a new name – niyakara (nee-ah-ka-rah) meaning 'to dream' in palawa kani. The 'Wombat Ward' or prupilathina (pru-pi-lah-ti-nah), was chosen to be the name of all three paediatric wards across the State at NWRH, Launceston General Hospital and Royal Hobart Hospital.

## 7. Investing in Women's Health

The Tasmanian Government is committed to supporting women's health and increasing available services. Endometriosis is a serious condition affecting one in seven women, and it can take years for women to receive a diagnosis. The Tasmanian Government has committed additional funding of \$1.2 million to expand endometriosis diagnosis and treatment services, including increasing the number of outpatient appointments available across Tasmania. In addition, \$4.7 million has been committed towards a cutting-edge surgical robot, to give Tasmanians access to the latest technology for a range of surgeries, including gynaecology surgery.

Department of Health  
GPO Box 125, Hobart TAS 7001  
1300 135 513  
[www.health.tas.gov.au](http://www.health.tas.gov.au)



# Meeting the needs of Tasmanian parents, families and children

## Update to Select Committee on Reproductive, Maternal and Paediatric Services in Tasmania | March 2025

### Our Commitment

Supporting the health and wellbeing of Tasmanian women, parents, children and families is a key priority of the Tasmanian Government. The Department of Health is committed to caring for the health and wellbeing of all Tasmanians, which includes continuous improvement of the timeliness, quality and breadth of health services – particularly for parents, families and children accessing our services.

### Key Actions

- ✓ Committed \$1.2 million to improve diagnosis and treatment of endometriosis by increasing the number of outpatient appointments available across Tasmania.
- ✓ Committed \$2.5 million statewide over three years to establish a new GP specialist service for children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) that will give families across Tasmania faster access to GPs with special interests who can diagnose and manage children with ADHD.
- ✓ Committed \$4.7 million towards a cutting-edge surgical robot, to give Tasmanians access to the latest technology for a range of surgeries, including gynaecology surgery.
- ✓ Successfully completed the North West Maternity Services transfer, providing high quality and safe care to mothers and babies across the North West and supporting enhanced continuity of care.
- ✓ Working to operationalise a new four-bed Intensive Residential Parenting Unit at the Launceston Health Hub during 2025.
- ✓ Renamed the Maternity Ward at the North West Regional Hospital (NWRH) 'niyakara' (nee-ah-ka-rah), which means 'to dream' in palawa kani.
- ✓ Renamed the Paediatric Ward the 'Wombat Ward' or prupilathina (pru-pi-lah-ti-nah) across the State, in partnership with staff, health leaders, and most importantly children and young people.
- ✓ Introduced appropriate training to staff to prescribe medications for up to three years for children with ADHD.
- ✓ Accepted all 38 recommendations of the Independent Investigation of Royal Hobart Hospital Maternity Service, with work underway to implement high priority recommendations by the end of June 2025.
- ✓ In partnership with the Australian Government, launched the Head to Health Kids (H2HKids) Tasmanian pilot in Bridgewater, providing free mental health services for children under 12 and their families.
- ✓ Secured \$6 million in funding from the Australian Government to support the expected increase in demand for maternity services in the public and private sector.
- ✓ Committed to new Intensive Residential Parenting Unit at St John's Park in New Town, to provide more holistic support for parents experiencing postnatal challenges, including support for their mental and physical health needs such as postnatal depression and anxiety, feeding, sleeping, settling and family attachment.

Department of Health





## Focus Areas

Through the Tasmanian Health Service (THS), the Department of Health provides a range of reproductive, maternal, perinatal mental health, and paediatric health services, including the Child Health and Parenting Service (CHaPS). There are a range of initiatives and reforms underway across the health system to ensure Tasmanians have access to the services they need, and Tasmanian infants, children and their families can thrive as part of a healthy community. The following focus areas highlight our recent progress towards key reforms, which have occurred since DoH made its submission to the Select Committee on Reproductive, Maternal and Paediatric Services in Tasmania.

### 1. Implementing Recommendations from the Royal Hobart Hospital Maternity Services Review

The Tasmanian Government welcomed the final report of the Independent Investigation of Royal Hobart Hospital Maternity Services in January 2025. The Department of Health has accepted all 38 recommendations made by the Independent Panel and is working to implement them fully.

An implementation committee has been formed, including staff from all regions in Tasmania, a consumer representative and a direct care midwife, to share best practice and to implement solutions statewide, where possible. High priority actions are expected to be completed by the end of June 2025.



### 2. Strengthening our Workforce

The Department of Health values the vital role our hard-working midwives play in supporting and caring for Tasmanian mums, babies, and families throughout their birthing journey. We are actively recruiting to midwifery roles across the State, with a package of recruitment incentives currently available to attract new midwives being offered by the Tasmanian Government.

The Department is also working closely with the University of Tasmania (UTAS) to strengthen midwifery education pathways in Tasmania by reintroducing a Graduate Diploma of Midwifery in Tasmania. The aim is to enable the Graduate Diploma, including a residential program, to be completed in Tasmania to continue to grow our midwifery workforce in the medium to long term.

### 3. Establishing new Intensive Residential Parenting Units

The Department of Health is working to continuously strengthen its parenting, perinatal and infant mental health services across the State to support equitable access for all Tasmanian families. We recognise a hospital environment may not be the most appropriate option for all families, and may not be convenient, particularly for those living in rural and regional areas.



For families living in northern Tasmania, the Tasmanian Government has invested in a new four-bed Intensive Residential Parenting Unit to be established at the Launceston Health Hub, to be run by Tresillian. The centre is expected to be operational in late 2025. This residential service will be a four night / five day program for families experiencing significant parenting challenges that require intensive intervention and strategies to promote family health and wellbeing, including mental health support.

For families in southern Tasmania, the Tasmanian Government worked quickly following Healthscope's closure of St Helen's Private Hospital in mid-2023 to establish a new public Mother Baby Unit at the Royal Hobart Hospital to ensure continuity of care and support for women and infants during this important period. Following Healthscope's recent announcement that Hobart Private Hospital will be ceasing maternity services from late August 2025, the Tasmanian Government worked with the Australian Government to secure \$6 million in Federal funding for capital upgrades to support the expected increase in demand for maternity services across the public and private system. A proportion of this funding will be used to move the current Mother Baby Unit to establish an Intensive Residential Parenting Unit at St John's Park in New Town.

The new Intensive Residential Parenting Unit will deliver comprehensive support for families facing postnatal challenges, including support for their mental and physical health needs such as postnatal depression and anxiety, feeding, sleeping, settling and family attachment, delivered by expert child and family health workers, in a home-like environment outside of the hospital.

### 4. Expanding Access to Specialist Services for Children with ADHD

Like other Australian states and territories, Tasmania is experiencing rapidly increasing demand for specialist assessment of children with developmental and behavioural management issues, including Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, known as ADHD. We know from recent inquiries there is more work to be done to address the challenges families face in accessing specialist appointments for assessment, diagnosis and ongoing care.

The Tasmanian Government is taking steps to ensure that children and young people with behavioural and developmental issues are better able to access the care they need. A new GP specialist service for children with ADHD will be established to provide faster access to diagnosis and management. The new GP specialist service for children will help ensure that Tasmanian children with behavioural or neurodevelopmental concerns are able to get timely access to the care they need. \$2.5 million has been allocated statewide over three years for this service, which will include training to enable authorised staff to prescribe medications for up to three years.