

Tasmania Government
Community Consultation Submission Cover Page

Organisation or Individual	Men's Resources Tasmania
Contact name	Jonathan Bedloe
Position in organisation	Vice-president
Telephone	0474721749
Email	info@mrtasmania.org Jonathan@mrtasmania.org
Relevant agencies	Department of Health Department of Premier and Cabinet Department of Justice

Budget Submission – 2024-25

Men's Resources Tasmania (MRT) is pleased to make the following recommendations for funding to support the improvement of men's health outcomes in Tasmania. This funding will enable MRT to develop as an organisation, meet the need to represent male voices in Tasmania, and to lead and support local men's organisations in Tasmania working towards the wellbeing of our community by focusing on that of men and boys. There are considerable resources required to run an organisation such as MRT. Operating on volunteer contributions and small fundraising initiatives is not sustainable.

MRT requests core function funding to enable it to continue its leadership role in male wellbeing in Tasmania, to support grassroots men's organisations and the broader community sector to develop and maintain continuous best practice in working with men.

About Men's Resources Tasmania

Men's Resources Tasmania (MRT) is a community-based not-for-profit organisation that actively supports and promotes the wellbeing of men and boys in Tasmania. We provide training and resources to help men with hardships in life, some tools to equip them for success, along with connection and support for the individuals and organisations working to support men and boys in Tasmania.

We're pleased to be able to present this submission. We wish to acknowledge the considerable time and effort that has gone into preparing this submission by our volunteers.

The recommendations below will enable MRT to play a significant role in implementing the next suicide prevention strategy and targeting responses to men. Evidence shows many services are not currently reaching men in a way that meets the needs of men and boys. MRT looks forward to being able to play a significant role in supporting and delivering improved supports and services for men and boys in Tasmania

Given the limited time we have had to put this submission together, MRT may look to add further information in the following weeks to support our recommendations. We are very willing to discuss these recommendations and to work constructively with anyone to address the continuing poor health outcomes for men and boys.

Why does Tasmania need a community based organisation to grow support for men and boys?

Addressing male health and well-being is a societal imperative that extends beyond benefiting men alone; it positively impacts women and the broader community. Improved male health creates a supportive environment for female counterparts, contributing to robust family structures, and communities where everyone thrives. Healthy and engaged men can more effectively fulfill family and community responsibilities, offering emotional and physical support to partners, parents and children.

Furthermore, addressing male health fosters healthy role modeling for the younger generation. Prioritizing self-care, preventive health measures, and seeking help when needed instills a culture of well-being benefiting both boys and girls, promoting healthier lifestyles.

Recognising unique challenges faced by men is crucial for holistic community well-being. Addressing male-specific health concerns creates an inclusive environment, extending benefits to women and contributing to a more balanced and equitable society. We can't expect to break down traditional gender stereotypes, without encouraging open conversations about men's health, and addressing the gaps and poorer outcomes experienced by men.

We also need to take stronger steps to recognise and address the needs of the diversity of men. The National Men's Health Strategy 2020-2030 identifies 9 priority population groups, whose health is poorer than most:

1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males;
2. males from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds;
3. males living in rural and regional areas;
4. males with a disability, including mental illness;
5. males from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
6. members of LGBTQIA+ communities;
7. male veterans;
8. socially isolated males;
9. males in the criminal justice system

We would argue there also needs to be consideration given to men in various age cohorts, boys and young men being of particular importance, and deriving the most benefit from funded initiatives.

In workplaces, addressing male health positively impacts all colleagues, fostering a healthier and more productive environment. Access to resources supporting men's mental and physical health contributes to a workplace culture prioritizing employee well-being, benefiting everyone. Pursuing positive health outcomes for men is a collective journey toward building supportive communities, breaking down gender barriers, and promoting a shared commitment to holistic health and happiness.

The difference funding MRT could make

Securing funding for the small grassroots organisations in Tasmania dedicated to representing male issues and fostering support for men and boys would be transformative in several ways. Firstly, financial resources would enable the organization to expand its outreach and impact. With funding, the group could organize more community events, workshops, and awareness campaigns, effectively reaching a broader audience and increasing engagement with the community and health sector.

Moreover, funding would empower the organization to establish and maintain strategic partnerships with local health professionals, clinics, and community leaders. These collaborations could lead to the development of targeted health initiatives and the implementation of programs addressing the specific needs of men and boys in Tasmania. Additionally, financial support would facilitate the creation of educational materials and resources, enhancing the organization's ability to disseminate crucial information about male issues and health promotion.

In terms of organisational capacity, funding will allow for the recruitment of dedicated staff or the remuneration of passionate volunteers, many of whom are not out of the workforce, and are looking to be able to derive an income from their contributions. This, in turn, will strengthen the organisation's operational capabilities, enabling it to sustainably manage its initiatives and respond more effectively to the evolving needs of the community.

Ultimately, funding is a catalyst for sustainability and growth. It will provide the necessary resources for the grassroots organization to make a lasting impact on male health and well-being in Tasmania, fostering positive change and garnering increased support from both the community and the health sector.

Our achievements over the last year

Since the time of our last submission, MRT has, through volunteer commitment and passion, and its own resources made the following contributions.

- Self-funded an office and basic organisational and operational needs.
- Contributed several submissions and convened several meetings of community sector organisations and members, including at the request of the Department of Health, Mental Health and Alcohol and Drug Directorate, as part of our advocacy to the Tasmanian government's Suicide Prevention Strategy consultation process. Our advocacy contributed significantly to the Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Strategy creating the Male Suicide Prevention Working Group.
- MRT contributed two further submissions to other Government consultations and has spoken at one Hearing.
- Reconvened the Tasmanian Men's Health Network to strengthen support and connection between organisations with an interest in men's health.
- Created and distributed 6 e-newsletters to the community sector.
- Advised on creating male-friendly marketing of a government funded service promoting cancer screening activities.
- Supported the development and delivery of the Building Pathways Program, supporting men at risk of engagement with correctional services in Tasmania.
- Attended dozens of meetings across the community sector aiming to bring a male perspective to various consultations and discussions across the community and health sector.
- Submitted abstracts to conferences.
- Participated in national online conferences including the Australian Men's Health Forum annual conference held online in 2022 and 2023.
- Attended and hosted a stall at the Rosny College wellbeing event.
- Planned and delivered annual International Men's Day events, sponsored by the corporate sector.
- Applied for several grants (1 successful, 4 unsuccessful)
- Prostate Cancer support group - met on one occasion online to provide an overview of what is around for men. (Provided free)
- Attended ManUp Tasmania events to support their work and efforts.

We have also had to turn down the following invitations due to the lack of funding, time and resources:

- Seven specific requests to bring men's health related information and presentations or activities to activities being run by other community organisations.
- One specific example includes a youth oriented organisation looking for MRT volunteers to bring some information and activity for a men's health week activity to their young men at risk of becoming disengaged. We were willing to do this activity, and requested funds to cover the cost of fuel to travel to Launceston. That organisation was not able to meet those small costs. There are many funded women's organisations that could meet such a brief for women and girls at no cost to the requesting organisation. While our community continues to place significant pressures on boys to meet community expectations, it make very little available to meet them and support them in a male-friendly and strengths-based way.
- Several requests per month to contribute male specific perspectives and commentary on various consultations or policy development processes for Tasmanian Government departments, TasCOSS, local governments along with the following organisations
 - Anglicare
 - Council on the Aging (COTA)
 - Health Consumers Tasmania
 - Mental Health Council
 - Palliative Care Tasmania
 - UTas centre for rural health
 - Primary Health Tasmania
 - National Mental Health Commission
 - Brain Injury Association Tasmania
 - TasCAHRD
 - Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Community Network
 - Worksafe Tasmania
 - Community Corrections forum - which would help to inform our oversight of, and contribution to the Building Pathways program.

Finally, a significant opportunity currently available includes two positions being advertised by TasCOSS, looking for volunteers, or people able to contribute from within their paid roles, to work with their Workforce Coalition. While TasCOSS say they are trying to consider men in their strategy, MRT questions who in the group has an informed perspective on men's health and wellbeing that is based on consultation and experience in working with men and boys specifically. This is an important opportunity MRT cannot contribute to. Informing and positively influencing the community sector to create opportunity for men to take on roles in the HEAL sector (Health Education Administration and Literacy) will help to alleviate the burden of responsibility for community wellbeing that overwhelmingly falls to women. It would also provide alternatives for the men who may not want to choose to go into the STEM sectors, thus freeing up more space for the women to take up Government funded strategies and programs aimed at supporting women to engage in careers in STEM. information about the opportunity we refer to can be found here:

<https://tascoss.org.au/projects/industry-plan/workforce-coalition-eoi/>

Invitations received in 2024

MRT has already received various invitations and had discussions about a variety of opportunities for the coming year ahead. Here's a list of these invitations that have come, largely unsolicited, with little active promotion offering our potential availability. Without funding support we will likely need to charge a fee for many of these services, which will likely mean many of these opportunities will be missed.

Positive Masculinity Youth Initiative:

Engage in small group activities focusing on promoting positive masculinity, and foster discussions and activities to encourage a healthy understanding of masculinity among young boys.

Makita Sponsored Men/Boys Night:

Collaborate with Makita for an exciting and enriching regular men and boys night event that focuses on increasing mateship and social connection across generations.

Collaborative Health Promotion Campaigns:

Additional partnerships with DHS health promotion units and cancer awareness groups, with a particular focus on creating impactful male-targeted awareness and prevention campaigns to address health issues.

Support Groups for Families of Convicted Men:

Invitation to partner with local community groups to facilitate support groups to provide assistance to family and friends of convicted men, addressing the unique challenges they face.

Rural and Remote Outreach for Male Lived Experience:

Conduct outreach programs to amplify the voices of men in rural and remote areas, to ensure that male lived experiences are heard and addressed in diverse communities, and that services are reaching their unique needs.

Prostate Cancer Foundation Presence:

Strengthen collaboration with the Prostate Cancer Foundation, and increase the foundation's presence at Men's health workshops, particularly during Men's Health Week.

Enhance physical presence at events and enable on-site health prevention, awareness, and early screening at men's services.

Well Men's Check Campaign:

Develop the Well Men's Check – an initiative to emphasise the significance of proactive health check-ups to catch potential issues early, even when individuals feel well – in partnership with key health initiatives.

Partnership with TACC for Male Health & Wellbeing:

Collaborate with industry regulatory bodies like the Tasmanian Automotive Chamber of Commerce (TACC) to improve male health and wellbeing by reaching out to small to medium businesses through targeted initiatives and programs. This will support bringing male-friendly messages to this sector,

and assist in developing and sustaining psychologically safe workplaces, as recent legislation demands.

Eat Well Tasmania - Plate with a Mate

Support, promote and potentially partner with Eat Well Tasmania to assist this campaign to reach male audiences.

Do others want MRT to play a leadership role in Tasmania?

Tasmanian Support

Yes. It is clear to us that, more than ever, other organisations and individuals want MRT to exist and to play a role to lead the men’s health sector.

MRT enjoys the support of the following organisations:

State:	
ManUp Tasmania (auspiced by MRT)	Tasmanian Men’s Shed Association
TasDads (auspiced by MRT)	Drug Education Network
Building Pathways	TasMen
Bethlehem House	JustTas
National:	
Australian Men’s Health Forum	Parents Beyond Breakup
The Men’s Table	Survivors & Mates Support Network (SAMSN)

We have several letters of support attached (Appendices), and will soon have more that we can share.

In 2023, MRT conducted a survey of community sector workers to assess the interest in the MRT and a Tasmanian Men’s Health Network. The following data comes from the 23 survey responses:

- 92% agree that Tasmania would benefit from having an organisation who can advocate on behalf of men and boys.
- 88% agree MRT should take on a role of leading consultation with people working with men and boys.
- 88% agree MRT should lead advocacy to the government and the broader community.
- 75% agree MRT should lead consultation with men and boys directly.
- 71% agree they would aim to attend meeting with a Tasmanian Men’s Health Network

“It's time for an organisation that has a genuine interest in men's wellbeing broadly to be supported by the government and community.”

Quote from survey participant

Survey participants expressed interest in seeing MRT play a role in the following ways:

- Advocacy or support to address male issues relating to:
 - Alcohol and other Drugs
 - Family and domestic violence - male victims as well as male perpetrators
 - respect for men in the community
- Developing programs and supports that target:
 - mentoring in the trades
 - training mentors for supporting young men and boys
 - men dealing with grief
 - healthy relationships
 - work life balance
 - communication skills for men and boys
- Communication and promotion about:
 - services available for men, to service organisations as well as the community more broadly
 - nutrition targeting boys and men
 - managing the digital world for boys
 - healthy relationships

National support

National organisations and structures want to see State based organisations focusing on men and boys:

In 2020, the First National Suicide Prevention Adviser called for "the disproportionate impacts of suicide on males, and those who care for them' to be "called out as a priority for whole of government attention." We acknowledge the Tasmanian Governments action with the current Suicide Prevention Strategy - First Implementation Plan. However, the Adviser's final advice stated that: "a fully inclusive gendered lens to suicide prevention action in Australia is required, with particular emphasis on ensuring accessibility of appropriate services in places and formats that suit the needs of men, including men from other priority population groups". This means address the issues that lead to suicide, much further upstream than is currently happening.

The Australian Men's Health Forum has advocated strongly for greater support for men and boys at a national level. In collaboration with MRT the AMHF report, *Time to level up? Funding men's health in Tasmania*¹, makes a powerful case. Here are some key points:

- 88% of Tasmanian support additional Government funding to tackle men's issues
- There is a significant gap in gender-based funding, with funding directed at male specific issues being dwarfed by that for female specific issues.
- In 2018-2019, for example, \$434.9m of Government funding was invested in national screening programs to help detect and prevent cancer. Close to 90% of the people screened are women. While opportunities to screen more men for cancer are limited, there are many different actions that could be taken to reduce men's risk of death and disease if funding to prevent cancer in men was made available.

How does the Tasmanian Government currently fund services for men?

Our analysis of the Tasmanian Budget 2023-24 showed the Tasmanian Government allocates \$6 million a year to programs directly supporting women's health and wellbeing, and approximately \$665,000 to men's health and wellbeing. The Tasmanian Government provides multiple times more funding in prisons and dealing with the results of challenges and problems faced by men, than to preventative early interventionist and educational approaches.

With no government minister, office, or state government employee tasked with advocating for, and taking action to address men's health, there is no accountability. A funded community sector organisation can champion male health causes to men as well as on behalf of men.

[Funding Men's Health in Tasmania: time to level up](#) is a report produced by the Australian Men's Health Forum to which MRT contributed that makes a powerful case for funding men's health in Tasmania.

¹ <https://www.mrtasmania.org/s/FundingMensHealth-TAS-AMHFMRT-2021.pdf>

MRT would like towards being able to deliver some/all of the following outcomes

- Establishment of an annual Tasmanian event to bring the sector together to share learnings and experiences in working with men and boys
- Consultation services to other agencies to ensure marketing and promotional materials are presented using male-friendly approaches.
- Grow of sponsorship and financial support and partnership with the corporate sector for organisational sustainability.
- Redevelopment and printing of the Dads Book and Blokes Book and other resources.
- Potential establishment of collaborative partnerships to proactively support activities to reduce family and domestic violence

Annual funding for FTE 1.2 staffing of an office, with some operational funding and working to deliver an agreed set of outcomes and activities from the above.

TOTAL: _____ **\$227,900.00 pa+CPI**

Funding request for Recommendation 1 - 2.5 FTE:

Ideally MRT is seeking funding to be able to operate to the level of 2.5 FTE. Such funding would enable MRT to operate as a peak body and to work towards many of the following activities and outcomes.

- 1. Research, policy and resource development, advice to government and their sector**
 - a. Provide advice on, and develop resources and educational materials such as the Blokes' Book or Dads' Book, for men and organisations, programs and services supporting men, distributed through a centralized hub providing information and resources on men's issues.
- 2. Sector consultation and coordination within their sector**
 - a. Establish a supportive community network for men dealing with relationship, parenting, and workplace stress challenges.
 - b. Maintain a network of Tasmanian organizations, host events like the Tasmanian Men's Conference, and engage the public through media.
- 3. Advocacy and representation to government and other decision makers**
 - a. Collate and report information gained from above consultation and engagement with our networks, to then advocate for inequalities experienced by men. Provide advocacy and representation to all levels of government and the broader community sector.
- 4. Information dissemination within their sector and to the community**
 - a. Conduct awareness and education programs addressing men's health concerns to community, corporate and government sectors
 - b. Partner with state and national bodies to amplify the impact of men's health initiatives.

5. Sector capacity building to enable better service delivery and functioning of community organisations in their support for men and boys.

- a. Facilitate and grow the men’s health and wellbeing sector developing, engaging and delivering training and support to sector organisations.

TOTAL: _____ **\$569,750.00 pa+CPI**

Funding Recommendation 1 - OPTIONS

	<i>First year estimate</i>
Recommendation One – Core Function – FTE 0.6	\$109,000.00
Recommendation One – Core Function – FTE 1.2	\$227,900.00
Recommendation Two – Core Function - FTE 2.5	\$569,750.00

Recommendation 2 - Men’s health week or IMD grants

Men’s Health Week grants, inline with those grants given for International Women’s Day, Youth Health Week etc.

\$20,000.00 in grants

\$10,000.00 for MRT administration, management and reporting of grants

Recommendation 3 - Sponsorship of Tasmanian Men’s health Conference 2024

MRT plans to run a 1 day conference inline with International Men’s Day activities in November, to include our annual Breakfast event.

Tasmanian Government is invited to sponsor the event to one of the following categories:

- **Gold (Major) Partner**
 - Investment: \$10,000 (excl. GST)
- **Silver Partner**
 - Investment: \$7500.00 (excl. GST)
- **Bronze Partner**
 - Investment: \$5,000.00 (excl. GST)

Appendices:

[Letter of Support from Man Up Tasmania](#)

[Letter of Support from T Stephenson](#)

[Letter of Support from The Men's Table](#)