



Li-Ve
TASMANIA

Stronger Together: creating an inclusive culture for young people living with disability, their families and local community.

Li-Ve Tasmania's *Stronger Together* program is an innovative, partnership-based initiative aimed at building resilience, genuine inclusivity and connectivity to community for children living with disability and their families.

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Background – Li-Ve Tasmania

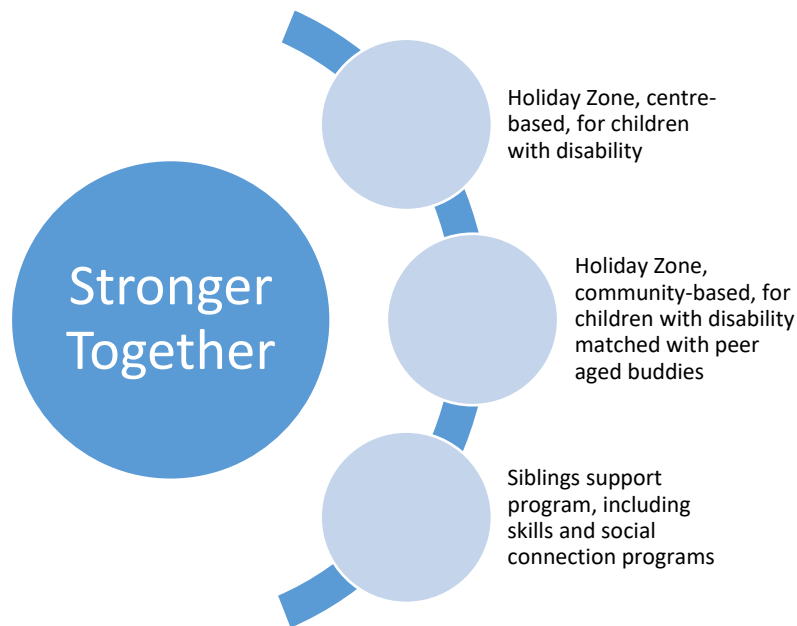
Li-Ve Tasmania has been established for over 65 years. In 2020, it supports more than 200 individuals and employs over 430 staff. Li-Ve Tasmania provide genuine person-centred support to people living with disability in Tasmania. The organisation's portfolio includes 20 group homes and a diverse range of community access programs, statewide. Li-Ve Tasmania supports participants of all ages with diverse support needs arising from a broad range of disabilities. Over the past 15 years, Li-Ve Tasmania has demonstrated particular expertise in services supporting people living with acquired brain injury and/or dementia. Over the last four years, it has focused on providing specialised programs to children with disability and their siblings.

In addition to its internal investment in maintaining services at an industry-leader level, Li-Ve Tasmania is committed to collaborating with like-minded industry leaders to achieve enhanced outcomes for young people with disability and their siblings. It does this by:

- contributing its own practice-based wisdom to evidence-based research
- providing quality skills- and recreation-based programs for children living with disability and their siblings during school holiday periods
- delivering an individual capacity-building program to siblings, which recognises them as critical and valued informal caregivers
- collaborating with community services to identify and leverage opportunities to enhance genuine inclusion for children and young people in mainstream programs, activities and events.

In 2016, Li-Ve Tasmania partnered with Tascare Society for Children, a Tasmanian peak body for children with disability and their families. Since then, Li-Ve Tasmania has invested significantly to gain insight into the opportunities available to young Tasmanians and their families; and the issues, barriers and service gaps they face.

Li-Ve Tasmania prides itself on working in partnership with others to better support people living with disability at all life stages, including early childhood and adulthood. Further, Li-Ve Tasmania has expertise in providing services for children and young people with disability, and currently leads on a range of initiatives focused on building opportunities, experiences, resilience, connectivity and inclusion for these individuals. The organisation's partnership approach and young-person focus underpin Li-Ve Tasmania's *Stronger Together* program.



The Li-Ve Tasmania *Stronger Together* program has three components:

1. HOLIDAY ZONE: centre-based services for children living with disability – people with disability focus

This service area aims to provide engaging, meaningful skills- and recreation-based programs and support for children aged between six and 16 years. By centre-based, Li-Ve Tasmania refers to using a local facility as a base to explore the local and broader community by offering a diverse range of in-house activities and external excursions.

Within this program, children and young people living with disability are engaged with Li-Ve Tasmania to co-design program activities that reflect their individual interests, create capacity-building opportunities, and enhance connectivity with their communities. Participants enjoy outings to local attractions, access to specialised tutors for tailored programs, and a broad range of activities aimed at building their confidence and self-worth, as well as actively supporting skill development, relationship building – and having fun!

2. COMMUNITY BASED MENTOR PROGRAM – all abilities young people focus

Since 2018, Li-Ve Tasmania has partnered with an innovative and exciting program called Young Leaders of Tasmania (YLOT). A division of Stronger Together, this initiative connects each of Li-Ve Tasmania’s Holiday Zone participants with a person their own age (YLOT volunteer). The volunteer encourages and supports them to participate in program activities and achieve personal goals. YLOT ‘buddies’ are trained, so they have skills to provide social support to a young person with disability. In a similar model to the Li-Ve Tasmania centre-based programs, the community-based programs offer capacity-building activities such as sporting clinics and cooking classes, all of which are co-designed by young people with disability. Activities are consistently well-received, with participants reporting increases in self-confidence, the development of new skills and, importantly, the motivation to try new activities in the future. Additionally, all ability friendships have continued beyond the program, further assisting young people with disability to build community connections and autonomy.

3. SIBLINGS SUPPORT PROGRAM – families and carers focus

Research shows siblings of children with disability often grow up in situations of considerable stress. Many cope well, but, at the same time, most are at risk of developing lifelong emotional and behavioural issues. In response to this risk, Li-Ve Tasmania's Sibling Support program provides support, activities and skill development for young Tasmanians (aged eight to 16 years) who are siblings of a child with disability. Li-Ve Tasmania aims to strengthen these children's experiences, opportunities and life skills by offering **two streams** of free activity-based programs.

- a. The first is a diverse range of pursuits (including bowling, sports clinics and cinema days) where children enjoy trying new activities, meeting new friends and spending time developing skills and interests of their own.
- b. Li-Ve Tasmania also offers Sibworks – a clinically designed and evaluated model (from Siblings Australia) to respond to the need for more holistic support to children who are growing up alongside a sibling with disability. Sibworks supports these children to generate peer connections, develop skills, and build resilience to cope with and contribute to their family situations.

Li-Ve Tasmania plans to offer Siblings Support programs to more Tasmanian children to achieve the program's vision of strengthening our community, with a particular focus on families.

Li-Ve Tasmania has been delivering the Sibling Support program (with foundational support from Tascare Society for Children) since 2017. The program consistently achieves overwhelming success, with participants confirming the program achieved its stated objectives of:

- **educating siblings** to better understand their brother's or sister's additional needs
- **building resilience** in young siblings by developing a 'tool box' for coping with challenging situations they may face, and learning how to handle situations commonly experienced by siblings of children with disabilities
- strengthening siblings' **communication** and their **relationships** with their families and friends.

In addition to the outcomes for children, this program also offers:

- **support to the family** with resources, links to local community services and practical support to ease the role of caring. Reports from parents and carers confirm that this has a significant positive impact on the parents/carers and broader family unit
- opportunities for families and the broader community (including health professionals) to **learn more about the insights, experiences and perspectives of the siblings cohort, and more broadly about disability and inclusion.**

Stronger Together vision

- For young people living with disability to live, learn, play and engage in their local community with a lifestyle similar to that enjoyed by other young people and which optimises their quality of life.
- To build the capacity of children living with disability, and their families.
- To support Tasmanian communities to build local capacity and capability to be accessible to and inclusive of people living with disability.

Underpinning objectives

Stronger Together will further this vision by ensuring all aspects of the program reflect the objectives of:

- enabling and supporting individual choice and control
- promoting healthy lifestyles for participants
- facilitating community inclusion, connectivity and social relationships
- providing flexible support and activities
- developing and nurturing partnerships within the community to help *Stronger Together* achieve its aims.

Program activities

The program will achieve its objectives through:

- direct support to participants to enable choice, participation and engagement
- facilitating relationships between participants and community members
- strengthening circles of support within each person's local community that safeguard their wellbeing
- individualised, outcomes-based planning with regular review for each participant
- partnerships with other services and community groups, particularly those relevant to other young people in the community
- strong leadership founded on teamwork and staff supervision.

Target group:

- Young people (aged between six and 25 years) living with disability
- Tasmanian local area community groups, services and clubs offering cultural, sporting, skills- or recreation-based activities.

Li-Ve Tasmania employs a discrete suite of strategies and processes to ensure the *Stronger Together* program operates at an industry-leading standard, including (but not limited to):

- assessment and planning for individual support, program design, delivery and service need mapping
- support provision
- internal and external review and evaluation cycles
- leadership and teamwork initiatives
- performance Indicators.

For more information about Li-Ve Tasmania's Stronger Together program, contact Anna Holliday at Li-Ve Tasmania on (03) 6227 5400 or at aholliday@livetasmania.org