



Tasmanian Council of Social Service Inc

Family/Sexual Violence Policy Development and Sector Coordination

2022/2023 TasCOSS Budget Priorities Statement



**INTEGRITY
COMPASSION
INFLUENCE**

Executive Summary

The Tasmanian Government has demonstrated a commitment to improving health, wellbeing and safety outcomes for women and girls in Tasmania. This includes the implementation of a range of strategies, legislative reform and funding support particularly for services working directly with victim survivors of family and sexual violence.¹

The development, monitoring and success of these initiatives requires close engagement with and between the relevant services in this sector. Government agencies and the sector have told TasCOSS this engagement needs to be more efficient and effective than it currently is in order to increase the chance of successful policy outcomes. The sector however, has told us that it is limited in its capacity to engage more regularly or deeply because its priority is focussed on the delivery of frontline services. There is a particular need for this due to the impacts of COVID-19.²

Due to its limited capacity, the sector has proposed the creation of a mechanism to coordinate their input into government strategies, legislative reforms and policies in the area of family and sexual violence, as well as the facilitation of sector training and development and the ability to provide the Tasmanian Government with a single point of contact for the sector.

Tasmania is the only jurisdiction without a coordinated, jurisdiction-wide, non-government specialist sector voice to engage in the development of local and national policy responses relating to family and sexual violence.

¹ See the [Tasmanian Women's Strategy \(2018-21\)](#), Department of Communities Tasmania, Sport and Recreation, Consultation Report, p. 8.

² Department of Communities Tasmania 2020, [Achievements in the Delivery of Safe Homes, Families, Communities: Tasmania's Action Plan for Family and Sexual Violence \(2019-22\)](#).

Benefits

The establishment of a family/sexual violence policy development and sector coordination mechanism will provide three key benefits, including:

1. Better outcomes for individuals who engage with mainstream and specialist services relating to women's safety by bringing their voices into policy development.
2. Streamline the Tasmanian and Australian Governments' engagement with the sector in the development of relevant strategies, policies and law reform, particularly in areas that affect women's safety.
3. Supporting the sector in policy development, allowing it more time for service delivery, as well as providing a resource to facilitate knowledge exchange and professional learning.

Proposed Role and Key Functions

Due to the volume of policy and law reform work in this area, we propose a full-time Family/Sexual Violence Policy Development and Sector Coordination Officer which would have the following policy, consultative and sector development functions:

Policy Functions:

- Coordinate responses to policy and legislative development.
- Undertake research for related consultations and inquiries, sharing resources and consulting with organisations as needed.
- Promote best practice resources, knowledge and responses, and facilitate learning and discussion within the sector.

Consultation Functions:

- Assess the impact and underlying factors contributing to family and sexual violence in Tasmania.
- Ensure the voices of people with lived experience are embedded in policy.
- Provide opportunities for community organisations to share learnings from service delivery and work collaboratively on strategies for reform.
- Provide a central point of contact for governments to consult with the sector.
- Facilitate inter-agency collaboration on research, submissions and other projects.

Sector Development Functions:

- Work proactively and responsively with the sector to identify key priorities for reform as well as gaps in service delivery and/or sector support.
- Facilitate the sharing of knowledge, resources and information between organisations, including interstate and intrastate organisations, such as Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS), Our Watch and No To Violence.
- Build relationships and networks between organisations and government agencies.
- Promote and assist improving workforce capacity.

A similar role exists in the Northern Territory. See Appendix A for more information.

Funding

We are seeking \$834,000 in funding for a five year contract, with the role to be initially based within TasCOSS at the request of the sector.

The funding includes an evaluation component to assess the degree to which the initiative meets stakeholder needs, is located in the appropriate organisation, and to inform the sustainability of policy development and coordination for this sector beyond the term of this role.

Costs (per annum)	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four	Year Five
Wages (including superannuation) and on-costs	\$136,356	\$140,320	\$144,405	\$148,610	\$152,943
Evaluation report	\$20,528	\$21,123	\$21,736	\$22,367	\$23,016
Lived experience participation	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500
TOTAL	\$157,384	\$161,943	\$166,641	\$171,477	\$176,459

Appendix A: Northern Territory Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Officer

The Northern Territory Government funds policy development and sector coordination in the area of domestic, family and sexual violence in order to deliver the following outcomes:

- Facilitate participation from the Northern Territory domestic, family and sexual violence sector into Northern Territory and Australian legislation and policy development, including research and preparation of briefing papers, policy advice and submissions.
- Work with the Northern Territory Government to coordinate the development of strategic responses to address systemic domestic and family violence (DFV) issues in the Northern Territory.
- Promote best practice resources, knowledge and responses, including primary prevention and perpetrator interventions.
- Promote inter-agency and inter-sector collaboration.
- Identify gaps in service delivery and research.
- Provide a central point of contact for government consultation with the sector.
- Provide opportunities for service providers to share the trends, practices and critical issues with each other and the national sector.
- Contribute to the generation of the Northern Territory evidence base by working with ANROWS and Our Watch.

The Northern Territory Government also supports a specialist working group, the Domestic and Family Violence Services (DFVS) Group, a network of specialist DFVS members at CEO or senior management level, who meet quarterly/as needed to discuss key issues emerging from across the Northern Territory.

These activities are driven by a dedicated policy officer role in the Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS). The policy officer also participates in several relevant working groups across the territory, including the Northern Territory Government's Cross Agency Working Group, the Darwin Family Violence Network, the Central Australian Family Violence and Sexual Assault Network, the Top End Safe House Reference Group and the DFV Justice Reform Working Group.