

Tasmanian Family and Sexual Violence Alliance

2024/25 BUDGET
PRIORITIES STATEMENT




The organisations and representatives which make up the Tasmanian Family and Sexual Violence Alliance membership are:

Ex-Officio and Independent Chair:

- TasCOSS — Adrienne Picone

Steering Committee:

- Engender Equality — Alina Thomas
- Huon Domestic Violence Services — Fiona Barrett
- Laurel House — Kathryn Fordyce
- No to Violence — Lauren Palma
- Sexual Assault Support Service — Sandi Doherty
- Women's Legal Service Tasmania — Yvette Cehtel
- Yemaya Women's Support Service — Christine Drew
- Tasmanian Victim-Survivor Representatives — Nicole McBride and Tess Moodie



The Tasmanian Family and Sexual Violence Alliance acknowledge that we live and work on Aboriginal land, land of the *palawa/pakana* people of *lutruwita* [Tasmania]. We pay our respects to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, to elders past and present and to all those who continue caring for country, sharing stories and upholding rights.

The Alliance wish to thank all of the victim-survivors who through adversity had the courage to speak up and help shine a light on past failures and where as a state we must improve, including those who bravely shared their own experiences of abuse, trauma and neglect as part of the Royal Commissions into Aged Care and Disability, the Independent Inquiry into the Tasmanian Department of Education's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, and the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings. We also recognise and commend the tireless dedication of the specialist family and sexual violence service providers in every corner of the state who continue to do everything they can to support Tasmanians in need of support and assistance.

A Coordinated, Collaborative Voice to Government on Family and Sexual Violence

Introduction

Fast Facts:

- *In 2021/22, Tasmania Police attended 6,743 family violence incidents and 2,518 occasions classified as family arguments or family information reports.¹*
- *Tasmanian victim-survivors of sexual violence are less likely to have disclosed their abuse (86%), compared to 91% of family violence victim-survivors.²*
- *One-in-four Tasmanians have experienced sexual assault during childhood.³*

Several recent national and Tasmanian reports and enquiries have highlighted the need for long-term, systemic change to promote healthy relationships and better protect individuals, families and communities from violence and abuse.

The work of Tasmania’s family violence and sexual violence service organisations demonstrates the ongoing need for specialist, community-based supports. It also reflects the need for strategic reform and cross-sector collaboration to respond more effectively to instances of violence and abuse and also to work with communities to prevent abuse from occurring (see Appendix 1).

Alongside providing frontline support services to victim survivors, developing and delivering preventative education and training, and engaging in early intervention initiatives, Tasmania’s family violence and sexual violence service organisations also actively contribute to national and state policy conversations around social and legal reform. These organisations participate in a variety of committees, prepare advice and submissions to state and national consultations, and are also members of participation organisations (including the National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence [NASASV], the Australian Women’s Health Alliance, the Our Watch Advisory Group, the National Alliance Family Violence Peaks, and the Department of Justice Gender Respect and Fairness Reference Group).

This work is often unfunded and happens ‘off the side of the desk,’ adding to the workload of employees already under pressure due to the increasing demand for services.

Tasmanian family violence and sexual violence service organisations have identified the need for a peak body to allow for focused and collaborative engagement in policy development and advice, enabling service delivery organisations to spend more of their limited financial and human resources on front-facing programs and services for the thousands of Tasmanians who need their support. The Tasmanian Government responded to this identified need by providing dedicated funding to explore the viability, establishment and sustainability of a family and sexual violence (FSV) peak body.

¹ [Safe Homes, Families, Communities Report](#), April 2023. Please refer to Appendix 1 for more Tasmanian data.

² Office for Women’s Equality, Department of Premier and Cabinet, The Tasmanian Hearing Lived Experience (HLE) Survey 2022/23, presentation to family and sexual violence stakeholders, 9 November 2023.

³ Based on nationally representative data.

This funding allowed the formation of the Family and Sexual Violence Alliance Steering Committee (the 'Steering Committee'), comprised of representatives from specialist family violence and sexual violence support services, who have developed a proposal to establish a formal peak body with the following functions:

- Representing the state's seven family violence and sexual violence specialist services;
- Centring the voices of victim-survivors in policy development and reform;
- Researching best-practice models and providing an evidence base for proposed reforms, as well as relevant education and information for the sector; and
- Allowing for greater collaboration between FSV services and the 12 agencies that run dedicated family violence and sexual violence support alongside other programs, as well as the range of broader service providers that work alongside the FSV sector (for example, the Neighbourhood Houses network and accommodation providers).

This peak body would be known as the Family and Sexual Violence Alliance (the 'Alliance').

The Alliance is an opportunity to ensure Tasmania's policy development and reform processes are aligned with other Australian jurisdictions with peak bodies. It will also deliver a wide range of benefits to Government, service provider organisations, victim-survivors and Tasmanians at risk of family violence, sexual violence and child sexual abuse, including:

- A formal, centralised leadership body to coordinate family violence and sexual violence services and provide advice on policy development and service design;
- Provision of comprehensive expert policy advice and sector coordination that benefits services and Government;
- Greater opportunities for the sharing of knowledge, information, and professional learning across service organisations, allowing them to focus their limited financial and human resources on service delivery;
- An intersectional approach to the drivers and outcomes relating to family violence and sexual violence and how these issues sit alongside other experiences of marginalisation or vulnerability; and
- The inclusion of the experience and expertise of specialist organisations, and their strong connection to and understanding of their communities, in policy development and responses.

The establishment of the Alliance provides an opportunity to deliver an integrated approach to family violence and sexual violence that: considers all the contexts where violence occurs; the drivers and enablers; and the intersecting experiences of victim-survivors and specialist providers.

While the Government is rightly focussed on its response to institutional child sexual abuse, the Alliance will be able to provide advice about how reforms and resourcing can be best targeted to prevent and respond to all forms of child sexual abuse and the cascading impacts on all forms of child maltreatment and family violence and sexual violence. We also intend for the work of the Alliance to include a transition plan to develop a separate, standalone peak body for sexual violence services, as recommended by the

final report of the *Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings* and agreed to by the Tasmanian Government.⁴

Proposal

The Steering Committee seeks to further advance the work it has been engaging in since funding was allocated in 2023/24 to formally establish a representative body (the Family and Sexual Violence Alliance).

In the 2024/25 Tasmanian Budget we request an investment by the Tasmanian Government to:

1. Establish the Family and Sexual Violence Alliance with appropriate ongoing peak body funding; and
2. Enable the Alliance to consult and advise on the establishment of the Sexual Assault Service System peak body within two years.

Family and Sexual Violence Alliance

The Alliance will perform the functions of a formal peak body, including:

- Research, policy development, advice to Government and the sector;
- Advocacy and representation to Government and other decision-makers;
- Information dissemination within the sector and to the community;
- Sector consultation and coordination; and
- Building sector capacity to enable coordinated, best practice service delivery and operation of community service providers.

The Alliance will also be a key consultation partner for the Government to deliver on the following commitments:

- Deliver on the commitment to “investigate the establishment of a Tasmanian Family and Sexual Violence Peak to improve coordination of family and sexual violence services and advice on policy development and service design,” as recommended in *Survivors at the Centre, Tasmania’s Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan (2022-27)*;
- Fulfil its commitment to establishing a peak body for the Sexual Assault Service System by July 2026;
- Implementation of the Child Sexual Abuse Reform Strategy and Action Plan, which will be released in July 2024; and
- Guarantee Tasmania will fully contribute to the vision of the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse (2021-30) and the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children (2022-32), in particular:

⁴ Tasmanian Government, [Keeping Children Safe and Rebuilding Trust: Government Response to the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings](#), 2023, p.189-190.

- Action 3: Increase and strengthen the capability of mainstream and specialist workforces to deliver quality services, activities and programs across the four domains, including those that are tailored to respond to the unique experiences of all victim-survivors.
- Action 4: Build the capacity of services and systems that support victim-survivors to provide trauma-informed, connected and coordinated responses that support long-term recovery, health and wellbeing.
- Action 6: Improve action to prevent and address sexual violence and harassment in all settings, across the four domains of the National Plan.⁵

Providing the full functions of a peak body requires appropriate, ongoing base funding of \$500,000 per year with indexation applied (see below for more detail). This funding will enable the Alliance to:

- Establish itself as an Association operating independently from government and overseen by a representative board;
- Employ three full-time equivalent specialist staff engaging in the work outlined above; and
- Facilitate ongoing contributions of victim-survivors through a lived experience engagement framework that includes reimbursing victim-survivors for their time and expertise.

Transition to a standalone Sexual Assault Service System peak

The Commission of Inquiry recommended the Tasmanian Government establish a peak body for the sexual assault service system that is “distinct from, but work in cooperation with, a family violence peak body.” The Government accepted this recommendation and committed to implementing it by July 2026.⁶

The peak body would:

- a) Ensure the needs of adult and child victim-survivors of child sexual abuse and children who have experienced or displayed harmful sexual behaviours are met by the sexual assault service system;
- b) Represent sexual assault service providers in a coordinated way;
- c) Share evidence and experience;
- d) Develop or identify practice standards for sexual assault services and interventions for child sexual abuse and harmful sexual behaviours;
- e) Coordinate service delivery for victim-survivors; and
- f) Advocate for improvements in the sexual assault service system.⁷

Since the Commission of Inquiry report was released, the Steering Committee has discussed the best way to establish a standalone peak for the sexual assault service system. It proposes funding of \$170,000 each year for an initial two year establishment phase to investigate and provide recommendations to the Government for a standalone peak body from 2026.

The transition phase will include identifying and consulting with key stakeholders in the sexual assault service system, investigation of models in other jurisdictions, and exploration of governance options that

⁵ Australian Government, [The National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children \(2022-32\)](#).

⁶ Tasmanian Government, [Keeping Children Safe and Rebuilding Trust: Government Response to the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government’s Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings](#), 2023, p. 189-190.

⁷ Ibid.

will deliver the best outcomes for victim-survivors and service providers. The approach will broadly follow the successful model the Steering Committee used to design the Family and Sexual Violence Alliance.

Proposed Funding and Timeline*

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
An appropriately funded Family and Sexual Violence Alliance peak body	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
	<i>Establish peak body with staff and resourcing</i>	<i>Peak body operational</i>			
	<i>Advise on implementation of Child Sexual Abuse Reform Strategy</i>				
	<i>Implement strategic plan</i>				
Transition to a Sexual Assault Service System peak	\$170,000	\$170,000	<i>To be determined</i>	<i>To be determined</i>	<i>To be determined</i>
	<i>Develop interim governance</i>	<i>Implement transition</i>	<i>Establish peak body</i>	<i>Peak body operational</i>	
	<i>Identify stakeholders</i> <i>Conduct consultation</i> <i>Develop transition options</i>	<i>Develop strategic plan</i>	<i>Implement strategic plan</i>		

* Indexation to be applied each year. Detailed cost breakdown of the Family and Sexual Violence Alliance is provided below.

Breakdown of Proposed Peak Body Funding for the Alliance

Resource	Cost (per annum)*
<p>Chief Executive Officer (1 FTE)</p> <p><u>Role Description</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the organisation. • Liaise with the board. • Ensure strategic plan is operationalised. • Engage with stakeholders, including members, the broader community services industry, all levels of government, national FSV peak bodies, and media. • Drive the advocacy of the FSV sector. 	<p>\$138,000</p>
<p>Policy Officer</p> <p><u>Role Description</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate consultation with stakeholders (especially members). • Develop proactive policy positions in liaison with members and national contemporaries in other FSV peak bodies. • Respond to and advise on Tasmanian and Australian Government policy positions and on issues related to FSV. • Support the CEO in advocacy and stakeholder relations. 	<p>\$121,476</p>
<p>Communications and Events Officer</p> <p><u>Role Description</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support communication to members, government and other key stakeholders for effective information sharing between stakeholders. • Liaise with media, as required. • Facilitate sector development and training to increase the capacity and capability of the sector. 	<p>\$88,941</p>

<p>Human Resources/Industrial Relations/Finance Role</p> <p><u>Role Description</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the human resource, industrial relations, and finance functions of the peak body. <i>NB: This could be an internal or externally contracted position.</i> 	<p>\$22,235</p>
<p>Victim-survivor reimbursement costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Payments to victim-survivors for advice and advocacy (estimated 200 hours of committee-based and individual advice and advocacy work per year). 	<p>\$25,000</p>
<p>Rental of office space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suitable office space for three people. 	<p>\$40,000</p>
<p>Vehicle and fuel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A vehicle will be required to allow staff to interact and coordinate with services and victim-survivors and other stakeholders statewide. 	<p>\$15,000</p>
<p>Indirect costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes indirect costs to support victim survivor participation (e.g. printing, utilities, phones, information technology, and consumables). 	<p>\$49,348</p>
<p><u>TOTAL</u></p>	<p>\$500,000</p>

* Indexation to be applied to all costs after Year 1.

Appendix 1: The Evidence

Too many people experience family and sexual violence in Tasmania and our service providers are under pressure due to growing demand.

One-in-five (3.8 million) Australian adults reported experiencing physical and/or sexual family and domestic violence since the age of 15.⁸ The 2021/22 Personal Safety Survey (PSS) estimated that of all Australian adults:

- 11.3% (2.2 million) had experienced violence from a partner (current or previous cohabiting).
- 5.9% (1.1 million) had experienced violence from a boyfriend, girlfriend or date.
- 7.0% (1.4 million) had experienced violence from another family member.⁹

An estimated 2.8 million Australians (14% of the population) have experienced sexual violence (occurrence, attempt and/or threat of sexual assault) since the age of 15.¹⁰ It is estimated that of all Australian adults:

- 13% (2.5 million) had experienced sexual violence by a male.
- 1.8% (353,000) had experienced sexual violence by a female.¹¹

In 2021/22, Tasmania Police attended 6,743 family violence incidents and 2,518 occasions classified as family arguments or family information reports in Tasmania.¹² This is an increase of around 1,500 incidents and arguments since 2015.

The Tasmanian Hearing Lived Experience (HLE) Survey 2022/23 reveals the experiences of victim-survivors in disclosing family and sexual violence and seeking help. In 2022/23, 91% of respondents had told someone about their experience of family violence, compared with 94% in 2018. Victim-survivors of sexual violence are less likely to have disclosed their abuse (86%), compared to 91% of family violence victim-survivors. In 2022, 32% of respondents had not sought support from a specialist or community-based family violence support service, compared to 55% in 2018.¹³

One-in-four Tasmanians have experienced sexual assault during childhood.¹⁴

At the same time, the capacity of the service sector to respond is under pressure. A recent report by the Australian Council for Social Services (ACOSS) revealed that only 3% of the 1,470 organisations surveyed said their main service can always meet demand.¹⁵ 80% of those delivering domestic and family violence services reported increased demand in 2022.¹⁶ The increased demand and complexity of need has put

⁸ [Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](#).

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² [Safe Homes, Families, Communities Report](#), April 2023.

¹³ Office for Women's Equality, Department of Premier and Cabinet, The Tasmanian Hearing Lived Experience (HLE) Survey 2022/23, presentation to family and sexual violence stakeholders, 9 November 2023.

¹⁴ Based on nationally representative data.

¹⁵ Australian Council of Social Service (2022), [Helping People in Need during a Cost of Living Crisis: Findings from the Australian Community Sector Survey](#).

¹⁶ Ibid.

extra pressure on staff of domestic and family violence services, as evidenced by 81% of respondents reporting staff exhaustion.¹⁷

Anecdotal evidence from individual services in Tasmania reveals a similar picture.

Yemaya Women's Support Service:

- The overall waitlist for in-house and outreach combined increased 250% since January 2023.
- The average wait time at the Launceston office has increased from four weeks in January 2023 to more than 16 weeks, as of November 2023.
- The wait time for Yemaya's Outreach program is four weeks.

Hobart Women's Shelter:

- From July 2020 to April 2022, 1,005 women and 1,189 accompanying children from across Tasmania sought crisis accommodation at their service.¹⁸
 - Of this number, 1,706 women and children (or 80% of women and 80% of children) were turned away due to a lack of space.¹⁹
- Without access to crisis accommodation, women run the risk of remaining in a cycle of abuse and homelessness or returning to perpetrators due to the lack of alternative accommodation.

Engender Equality:

- In Hobart, 180 people are on Engender Equality's waitlist with a potential three year wait for service.
- In the northern region, 31 people are on the waitlist with a four month wait for service.
- In the north-west region, 38 people are on the waitlist with a nine month wait for service.
- Increased demand negatively impacts those seeking support and places pressure on staff requiring diversion of resources to prevent burnout and adapt practices.

Women's Legal Service Tasmania:

- Currently operating at capacity in the north and north-west regions and is unable to take on new cases.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ [Hobart Women's Shelter Response Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan](#), May 2022.

¹⁹ Ibid.