

## FACT SHEET

### *Children, Young Persons and their Families Amendment Bill 2021*

This Bill introduces an amendment to the *Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997* to strengthen the legal authority for Tasmania to participate in the national child safety data linkage initiative known as Connect for Safety.

The amendment extends provisions for information sharing between child welfare officers to information sharing between State and Territory child protection agencies through direct system access under defined arrangements. Information exchange will occur in a secure way that protects the rights and safety of children, young persons and families. The national information sharing system ('Connect for Safety') does not provide jurisdictions with access to State information systems.

There will be robust governance arrangements in place to support the Connect for Safety system. Database access will only occur through authorised officers and those officers will have undertaken relevant training.

Safety and wellbeing information about children and young people is often held by multiple jurisdictions. Not having access to all relevant information can result in assessments and actions based on part information leading to increased safety risks or inappropriate interventions.

The current wording of the Act provides broad disclosure of relevant information to equivalent interstate officers exercising powers under child welfare law or an interstate law. The amendment Bill clearly defines information sharing between such persons to occur through a National database (s 111C). In addition, the proposed amendments make clear that the person to person information sharing provisions in the Act is not limited to only interstate orders and the transfer of child protection orders to other jurisdictions, by inserting a new section 111D (Disclosure of information) in Part 10 - Miscellaneous of the Act and amending the wording to reflect the more contemporary term of "a person" instead of "an interstate officer".

The Children, Young Persons and Their Families Amendment Bill 2020 will improve the sharing of information between State and Territory child protection agencies and other bodies dealing with child safety and family violence matters.

Formal support for the Amendments Bill were received from the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Child Advocate, Out of Home Care and CREATE Foundation.

No issues have arisen during the drafting or consultation process for the Bill.

The Department of Communities Tasmania has reviewed the Bill documentation and considers that the proposed legislation will not restrict competition in any way or impose a significant negative impact on business.

Commencement of the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Amendment Bill 2020 is upon Royal Assent so it can be actioned as soon as practicable.