

**From:** [Alice](#)  
**To:** [House of Assembly - GAA](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Discrimination and Bullying in Tasmanian Schools Inquiry  
**Date:** Monday, 29 July 2024 8:30:59 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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## Submission to the Government Administration Committee A

Submission by: Alice Webb, CEO of A Fairer World

Submission due: 9<sup>th</sup> August

### Introduction

A Fairer World is a not-for-profit organisation based in Tasmania dedicated to promoting diversity, inclusion, and social justice. We work closely with schools and workplaces to address issues of discrimination, racism, disability, and mental health through our initiatives, including the Hobart Human Library, where real people share their personal stories. We welcome the opportunity to provide this submission in response to the referral made by the House of Assembly on 12 June 2024 to the Government Administration Committee A.

### Terms of Reference

(a) Direct and indirect discrimination, prohibited conduct, unequal and disadvantageous treatment, bullying, and harassment in Tasmanian schools regarding students and staff

In our work with schools, we have observed various forms of direct and indirect discrimination, bullying, and harassment. This includes racial and cultural discrimination, gender-based bullying, disability discrimination, and mental health stigma. These behaviours not only create a hostile environment but also significantly hinder students' academic performance and staff's professional growth.

(b) Measures necessary to prevent and remedy discrimination and bullying in Tasmanian schools regarding students and staff

Preventative measures should include comprehensive diversity and inclusion training for all staff and students. Our organisation's training programs focus on unconscious bias, cultural competency, and strategies for fostering inclusive environments. Additionally, schools should implement robust reporting and support systems for victims of discrimination and bullying, ensuring timely and effective interventions.

(c) Obligations and duties of Tasmanian schools under the Anti-Discrimination Act 1998 and other relevant statutes and policies regarding students and staff

Tasmanian schools are obligated under the Anti-Discrimination Act 1998 to provide an environment free from discrimination and harassment. This includes proactive measures to prevent discriminatory behaviour and providing support and recourse for those affected.

Compliance with these obligations requires ongoing training, clear policies, and accountability mechanisms.

(d) Efforts being made and should be made towards meeting those obligations by Tasmanian schools regarding students and staff

Current efforts include some schools implementing diversity training and anti-bullying policies. However, there is a need for a more standardised and comprehensive approach across all schools. A Fairer World recommends mandatory training programs, regular audits of school policies and practices, and the establishment of dedicated diversity and inclusion officers in schools.

(e) Legislative or policy reforms required to address discrimination and bullying regarding students and staff

Legislative reforms should focus on strengthening the Anti-Discrimination Act to include clearer guidelines for schools and harsher penalties for non-compliance. Policy reforms should mandate regular training, transparent reporting mechanisms, and independent reviews of school practices.

(f) Impact of discrimination and bullying on student participation, retention, and educational outcomes, and on staff recruitment, retention, workplace safety, and career development

Discrimination and bullying have profound negative impacts on both students and staff. For students, these behaviours lead to decreased participation, higher dropout rates, and poorer educational outcomes. For staff, discrimination and bullying result in low morale, high turnover rates, and hindered career progression. Creating a safe and inclusive environment is crucial for the well-being and success of both students and staff.

(g) Ensuring appropriate public consultation on all matters

Public consultation is essential in developing effective measures to combat discrimination and bullying. We recommend engaging with students, parents, educators, and community organisations to gather diverse perspectives and insights.

(h) Any other matter incidental

A Fairer World also recommends the development of educational resources that celebrate diversity and promote empathy and understanding among students. Programs like our Hobart Human Library, where individuals share their lived experiences, can be an effective tool in fostering a culture of inclusion.

Conclusion

Discrimination and bullying in schools have far-reaching consequences for students and

staff. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach, involving legislative reforms, policy changes, and community engagement. A Fairer World is committed to supporting these efforts and looks forward to contributing further to the Committee's work.

We trust this submission will assist the Committee in its important work. Thank you for the opportunity to contribute.

Kind Regards

Alice Webb (She/Her)



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*I acknowledge Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the traditional owners of this Land, and pay respects to Elders past and present for they hold the knowledge, memories and culture of Aboriginal people in Tasmania. I also acknowledge the people who, on a daily basis, contribute to the development and delivery of programs and services for Aboriginal people.*



