

# Update on the progress of Premier's recommendations from 19.1 to 22.1

## Recommendation 19.1

This recommendation called upon the Tasmanian Government to develop a whole of government child abuse reform strategy and action plan for preventing, identifying and responding to child sexual abuse.

This Phase One recommendation, due for delivery by 1 July 2024, was met on 27 June 2024 with the release of the draft *Change for Children: Tasmania's 10 year Strategy for upholding the rights of children by preventing, identifying, and responding to child sexual abuse* (*Change for Children* Strategy and Action Plan).

The draft *Change for Children* Strategy and Action Plan describes how agencies and communities can work together to break down barriers and create a culture that keeps children safe. It recognises that most child sexual abuse occurs in homes and communities, highlighting the need for a whole of community approach to foster child safe cultures and systems to keep children safe.

The draft *Change for Children* Strategy and Action Plan outlines a vision and guiding principles for a child-safe system, based on the Child and Youth Safe Standards. The draft Action Plan details the first two years of the Government's efforts to address child sexual abuse in Tasmania and implement the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations,

The Commission of Inquiry recommended that the Strategy and Action Plan be informed by the voices of children, young people, and victim-survivors. Over 400 contributors, including victim-survivors, their supporters, children, young people, researchers, experts, and key sector partners, participated in targeted consultations.

The Department of Premier and Cabinet worked with agencies and the community sector to develop an evidence-based draft tailored to Tasmania. The Keeping Children Safe Reform Unit collaborated with partners including the Sexual Assault Support Service, Laurel House, and Tasmanian Aboriginal community representatives to develop the draft *Change for Children* Strategy and Action Plan.

Companion documents that informed the draft *Change for Children* Strategy and Action Plan are available to the public on the Keeping Children Safe website.

### Next Steps

- The draft *Change for Children* Strategy and Action Plan was released for consultation and feedback from the community.
- Consultation closes on 30 September 2024, with the final Strategy and Action Plan to be revised based on consultation feedback.

## Recommendation 19.2

The Tasmanian Government recognises the importance of ensuring that staff in government agencies and government funded services that provide services to children and young people, or adult victim-survivors of child sexual abuse can provide those services in a trauma-informed way.

The design and draft of a Trauma-informed Knowledge and Skills Framework was completed in Phase One.

Preliminary consultation has occurred with key stakeholders to develop the draft Framework, with over 80 contributions from agencies, government and non-government services, as well as regulatory bodies. Key community organisations were also included along with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.

Further refinement of the draft Framework is in progress, together with the development of key supporting documents, such as a language guide and an Outcomes Measurement Framework.

### Next steps

- The draft Framework and supporting documents will be available for broader consultation commencing in September to ensure that the professional development response to trauma meets the needs of all stakeholders in delivery of services.
- The delivery of this recommendation and related professional development recommendations for Phase 2 and 3 with the continued collaboration between the COI Reform Unit and the State Service Management Office will drive these significant cultural improvement programs and the associated professional development services.

## Recommendation 19.3

The Secretary of Department of Premier and Cabinet, as Chair of the Secretaries Board will be responsible for endorsing, overseeing and reporting on the child sexual abuse reform strategy and action plan.

This Phase One recommendation, due for delivery by 1 July 2024, has been met.

All relevant secretaries, as members of the Secretaries Board will be responsible for actioning particular reforms under the child sexual abuse reform strategy and action plan within their portfolio responsibilities.

The Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet chairs the Secretaries Board, which has supported development of the draft *Change for Children* Strategy and Action Plan. The Secretaries Board will be responsible for the endorsement, oversight, coordination, and reporting on the final version.

## Next Steps

- Governance and accountability mechanisms will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that the appropriate structures are in place to keep children safe and oversee reform.

## Recommendation 19.4

This recommendation calls upon the Premier to ensure that ensure Heads of Agencies are responsible for reforms under the child sexual abuse reform strategy and action plan within their portfolio responsibilities. Heads of Agencies should also ensure relevant State Service executives are also responsible for implementing the strategy and action plan, and that the statements of duties for relevant departmental staff should refer to their responsibilities in relation to the strategy and action plan.

This recommendation was met in Phase One but will require ongoing implementation action.

Heads of Agencies' Performance Agreements were amended to include specific reference to child and young person wellbeing as part of the Government's interim response to the Commission of Inquiry

Governance arrangements for Child and Youth Safety and Wellbeing have been established to ensure a coordinated approach to the implementation of the Commission's recommendations.

The Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet chairs the Child and Youth Safety and Wellbeing Subcommittee of Secretaries Board, which has supported development of the Child Sexual Abuse Reform Strategy and Action Plan and will endorse, oversee, coordinate and report on the final version.

## Next steps

- Statements of duties will be updated and reviewed on an ongoing basis to include references to relevant child and youth wellbeing requirements.

## Recommendation 19.5

The draft *Change for Children* Strategy and Action Plan outlines how children and young people, and victim-survivors of child sexual abuse, will be part of the governance structure to deliver this major reform program.

This is a Phase Two recommendation, due for delivery by 1 July 2026, and is in progress.

## Victim-Survivor Advisory Group

The establishment of the Victim-Survivor Advisory Group is well underway. The Keeping Children Safe Reform Unit in the Department of Premier and Cabinet has undertaken a trauma-informed selection process to identify Tasmanians who can represent the views of victim-survivors in this important forum.

Specialist staff have been recruited to the Keeping Children Safe Reform Unit to develop the framework and establish the Group. Consultation with lived experience experts and other similar groups was undertaken to develop a fair, trauma informed selection process. An expert lived-experience consultant has also been engaged to ensure that the recruitment and establishment of the group remains trauma-informed.

Time was taken to ensure that the recruitment process was developed to reflect best practice and trauma informed principles. Applicants were advised of progress throughout the process. Fifty-five applications were received for the group in late January 2024.

Conversations with applicants commenced in June 2024 and were completed by 1 August 2024. Some applicants withdrew from the process, therefore 39 of the 55 applicants were interviewed by specialist staff from Department of Premier and Cabinet with the assistance of senior clinicians from Laurel House and the Sexual Assault Support Service.

### **Children and Young People - Voices for Tasmanian Youth**

The Commissioner for Children and Young People established the Voices for Tasmanian Youth in early 2024. The draft *Change for Children* Strategy and Action Plan includes high-level detail on how the Voices for Tasmanian Youth will form part of the governance structure for the child sexual abuse reform program in Tasmania.

Voices for Tasmanian Youth contributed to the draft *Change for Children* Strategy and Action Plan with their report, 'Speaking Out for a Safer Tomorrow: Our Messages for Change'. They have also made a number of submissions as part of the consultation process on the draft *Change for Children* Strategy and Action Plan.

### **Next steps**

- The final version of the Strategy and Action Plan will reflect any changes made following feedback on governance and engagement arrangements for victim-survivors, children and young people, received through the consultation process which closes on 30 September 2024.
- It is expected that the Keeping Children Safe Reform Unit will be able to advise applicants for the Victim-Survivor Advisory Group of the outcome of the selection process before the end of September 2024.
- The Keeping Children Safe Reform Unit is working with the Acting Commissioner for Children and Young People to ensure Voices for Tasmanian Youth can continue to inform the full implementation of the Reform Strategy and Action Plan.
- The Department of Premier and Cabinet will report on the activities of these advisory groups in its annual report.
- A total of \$5.6 million has been allocated from 2024 to 2028 for support for victim-survivors, including the Victim Survivor Advisory Group.
- Funding of \$3.2 million from 2024 to 2028 has been allocated to support child and community engagement.

## Recommendation 19.8

The Department of Premier and Cabinet will lead the development of child safety information sharing, the coordination and development of guidelines to support government and government funded agencies, and statutory bodies to respond to child safety issues.

This is a Phase Two recommendation, due for delivery by 1 July 2026, and is in progress.

In the draft *Change for Children* Strategy and Action Plan, Information Sharing is one of the thirteen priority areas connecting the Commission of Inquiry recommendations into whole-of-government programs of work. The objective of this work is to remove barriers and to encourage the sharing of information between institutions to assist in reducing risks to children and young people.

The Departments of Premier and Cabinet and Justice have commenced the analysis of existing legislation to inform any legislative amendments required to enable information to be shared across agencies.

A project officer has been appointed within the Department of Premier and Cabinet, whose duties include further scoping of this project, and progressing work to lead the development of guidelines.

### Next steps

- Central to these changes in information sharing processes, structures, and practices will be a focus on the needs of children, young people, and survivors, emphasising their protection and providing trauma-informed support.
- A draft project plan will be developed for cross-agency consideration through the Child and Youth Safety and Wellbeing governance structure.

## Recommendation 20.1

The Tasmanian Government is committed to taking the necessary steps to ensure our State Service Code of Conduct is appropriate and adapted to responding to risks of child sexual abuse.

Recommendation 20.1 outlines a range of obligations in relation to an employee's conduct that should be introduced through legislation or other means.

This is a Phase Three recommendation, due for delivery by 1 July 2029.

The Tasmanian Government released revised *Employment Direction 5 – Procedures for the Investigation and determination of whether an employee has breached the Code of Conduct* (revised ED5), effective from 29 August 2024. Through the release of the revised ED5, it was a priority to ensure a new clause was included to ensure it is clear that 'The safety of children is to be a primary consideration when managing allegations and determinations of breaches of the Code involving children.'

### Next steps

- Implementing the remaining elements of this recommendation will be considered through further building on the guidance, training and capability building in relation to the management of Code of Conduct matters across Agencies.

## Recommendation 20.2

Recommendation 20.2 is designed to deliver professional conduct policies for agencies that provide services to children and young people. This recommendation outlines what the policies should contain and how these should be implemented.

This recommendation contains six components, with parts 1 to 5 focusing on the content, implementation and operation of professional conduct policies. Part 6 of the recommendation focuses on strengthening the enforceability of professional conduct policies.

This recommendation was due for delivery by 1 July 2024 but remains in progress. Parts 1 to 5 are well progressed. Agencies have developed policies and are progressing with consultation and publication. Led by the SSMO, a whole-of-government working group is supporting implementation of the policies, with particular focus on the ensuring that our workforce has the necessary understanding, skills and confidence to uphold the policies.

Regarding part 6, it was noted in the Government's initial response that the SSMO commenced work to examine and seek advice on the current applicability of Standing Orders in accordance with the *State Service Act 2000* and the ability to incorporate departmental professional conduct policies once established as Standing Orders.

Following the examination of the use of Standing Orders and advice received, it became difficult to continue to explore this due to challenges in linking Standing Orders to professional conduct policies.

### Next steps

As part of delivery for Phase Two, the focus will be on the implementation of the remaining components of the recommendation. In relation to parts 1 to 5, this includes:

- Consideration of the most appropriate approach to child safety training across the Tasmanian State Service to provide the workforce with the necessary capabilities.
- Acknowledging that implementation of these policies will impact individuals in different ways. The working group is ensuring that the implementation of these policies is appropriately empathetic, compassionate and trauma informed.

In relation to part 6, the SSMO is investigating options for legislative reform, giving particular consideration to the *State Service Act 2000*. It is anticipated that the SSMO will make recommendations to enable legislative reform by the end of 2024.

## Recommendation 20.3

The recommendation relates to the introduction of legislation to ensure that where reportable conduct has been found, this also constitutes a Breach of the Code of Conduct.

The revised ED5 includes a new clause, to ensure that an investigation under ED5 that relates to reportable conduct may be combined with or constitute an investigation under the Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act. This clarifies there is no need to carry out duplicate investigations.

Further Guidance is provided to note that in the same way as the ED5 matter would progress (in accordance with the State Service Code of Conduct) any reportable conduct in relation to the employee would relate to conduct in the course of employment or connected to employment.

### **Next Steps**

- While this recommendation was completed in Phase One, any further changes the employment framework including to legislation, will be considered following the finalisation of the *Independent Review into the actions taken in response to the information and concerns raised by the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* (the Woolcott Review).

## **Recommendation 20.4**

Recommendation 20.4 is designed to ensure that the provisions of professional conduct policies also apply to contractors, sub-contractors, volunteers, and other relevant adults who have contact with children.

The application of these policies to existing contractors and sub-contractors is subject to the provisions of individual contracts.

This recommendation was due for delivery in Phase One but remains in progress. Due primarily to both the number and variation in existing contracts, the contract environment in the Tasmanian State Service is complex and ensuring appropriate application of professional conduct policies is equally complex and time-consuming.

SSMO is seeking further advice on the most effective way to continue the implementation of this recommendation.

### **Next Steps**

- SSMO continues to work with relevant stakeholders to progress the implementation of this recommendation, including approach to both current and future contractual arrangements.

## **Recommendation 20.5**

This recommendation focusses on the development of guidance material being developed for Agencies specific to the investigation process.

This is a Phase Two recommendation, due for delivery by 1 July 2026, and is in progress.

The recently established Shared Capability and Centralised Investigations (SCCI) Unit will be building capability across the Tasmanian State Service in relation to investigative practices, in particular, child centred and trauma informed practices.



Regina Weiss has been engaged to provide expert practical and strategic advice to the SCCI Unit, which includes expert knowledge and experience to support investigations that involve children and victim-survivors.

The revised ED5 will support the culture and capability uplift in agencies and clarity around important accountability processes in the Tasmanian State Service.

#### **Next steps**

- The work of the SCCI Unit will include development of guidance for preliminary assessments and the approach to be taken with interviews for victim-survivors and child witnesses.

## **Recommendation 20.6**

This recommendation relates to amendments to *Employment Direction 4 - Suspension* (ED4) regarding the suspension of employees, with or without pay.

This is a Phase Two recommendation due for delivery by 1 July 2026 and is in progress.

Initial work on the review of ED4 has commenced.

#### **Next Steps**

- Noting that review of ED4 has commenced, delivery of this recommendation is anticipated in early 2025, ahead of the recommended Phase Two timeframe.

## **Recommendation 20.7**

This recommendation will form part of the scope of the Child-Related Incident Management Directorate once established in accordance with recommendation 6.6 of the Commission of Inquiry.

This is a Phase Two recommendation, due for delivery by 1 July 2026, and is in progress.

As per the update provided by the Premier during the hearing in relation to recommendation 6.6 (Establish a Child Related Incident Management Directorate), the Department of Premier and Cabinet has appointed a project officer whose duties include initial scoping of the Child Related Incident Management Directorate, in close collaboration with the Department for Education, Children and Young People and Department of Health.

In line with the recommendation, the Tasmanian Government will ensure investigations into misconduct in relation to child sexual abuse or related conduct by Tasmanian State Service employees of the Department for Education, Children and Young People and the Department of Health under ED5 are conducted by the Child-Related Incident Management Directorate.

#### **Next Steps**

- Over the next 12 months, the project officer will develop a project plan and work with agencies to scope the requirements of the Child-Related Incident Management Directorate, including how it will work with existing incident management structures.



## Recommendation 20.8

This recommendation relates to amendments to ED5 to clarify complaints and investigative processes for child sexual abuse and related conduct.

This is a Phase Two recommendation due for delivery by 1 July 2026, and is in progress.

Some of the initial actions taken have already delivered some of the elements of the recommendation, this includes:

- The revised ED5 includes a new clause to make it clear that the safety and protection of children is paramount in the consideration of all matters.
- The guidance developed on the changes to ED5 clarifies that where a matter relates to child sexual abuse or related conduct, this would clearly be a potential serious breach of the Code of Conduct and could not be dealt with in any other way, other than as a potential breach of the Code.
- As part of the government panel of investigators, an investigator is to be given a maximum of 12 weeks to complete their investigation. Regular updates are to be provided and where any delays identified, an explanation of the delay and an extension of time is to be sought.
- It was a requirement that investigators on the panel have undertaken trauma informed training and that details on an investigator's relevant skills or training are recorded so that investigations can be conducted by people with appropriate training, depending on the nature of the investigation.
- Trauma informed training has been made mandatory for those involved in ED5 processes and continues to be rolled out across the Service, this training includes the importance of communicating timeframes and any delays to all parties.

### Next steps

- The remaining elements of the recommendation will continue to be progressed for delivery by 1 July 2026.

## Recommendation 20.9

This recommendation calls for the establishment of a central cross-government register of complaints concerning misconduct, child sexual abuse, and related conduct. The Commission of Inquiry has indicated that the register should contain records of substantiated and unsubstantiated matters, including those that did not proceed to investigation.

This is a Phase Two recommendation due for delivery by 1 July 2026, and is in progress.

A register has been developed in relation to State Service Code of Conduct Breaches "resulting in" or that "would have resulted in Termination".

This includes where a breach of the Code of Conduct is found in relation to child sexual abuse and related conduct.

This Register records details where a breach of the Code has occurred that resulted in termination, or where an employee may resign, where a sanction of termination would have applied.

### **Next Steps**

- The broader scope of this recommendation will continue to be advanced in Phase Two including any legislative reform needed to achieve this.

## **Recommendation 20.10**

This recommendation relates to misconduct investigations under ED5 in relation to complaints or concerns of child sexual abuse. It is recommended to introduce measures for investigators to take into account prior substantiated, untested and unsubstantiated complains, allegations and disciplinary action, in addition to the immediately alleged misconduct.

This is a Phase Two recommendation, due for delivery by 1 July 2026, and is in progress.

Delivering this recommendation in full is dependent on employment related recommendations being completed as first steps in the implementation.

### **Next Steps**

- Further guidance material will be developed to build capability across Agencies regarding how and when prior allegations, including untested and unsubstantiated allegations of child sexual abuse or related conduct, can be considered at various stages of the disciplinary process.

## **Recommendation 20.11**

This recommendation relates to monitoring and reporting of misconduct matters relating to child sexual abuse by the Head of the State Service.

This recommendation is due for delivery in Phase Two, by 1 July 2026.

The recommendation calls for annual reporting on the management of misconduct matters related to child sexual abuse or related conduct. Since December 2023, the Tasmanian Government has published monthly updates of the assessments and actions by relevant Heads of Agencies of all current and former State Service employees referred to in the Commission of Inquiry report including alleged perpetrators.

This disclosure report contains three sections that provides assessment and actions for firstly, all current and former employees named in the report (who are not alleged perpetrators), secondly, all current and former employees that are alleged perpetrators and finally all current and former Tasmanian Police Officers in relation to matters referred to in the Commission's report.

This report provides information regarding the total number of employee matters arising from the COI report under consideration by Heads of Agencies, the breakdown of former and current State Service employees, the progress of those assessments and whether actions under the State Service Act 2000 have commenced or been determined.

This information is further broken down into separate agencies and work areas.

This report will be updated monthly until all actions are complete.

### **Next Steps**

- To ensure transparency, the Heads of the State Service have been tasked to review all available information to identify any opportunities to build on the existing routine disclosures relating to child sexual abuse matters.

## **Recommendation 20.12**

The focus of this recommendation is amendments to both legislation and *Employment Direction 6 – Inability* (ED6) related to whether an employee is able to efficiently and effectively perform their duties.

This is a Phase Two recommendation due for delivery by 1 July 2026 and is in progress.

The amendments are to:

- introduce a simplified process that applies to matters where the employee no longer has an essential employment requirement (for example, no registration under the *Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013*)
- introduce powers to immediately terminate a person's employment if the employee no longer meets an employment requirement for working with children or young people, and
- ensure that any interview with a child or young person be subject to the same considerations as apply in ED5.

### **Next Steps**

- Initial work has commenced on the review of ED6.
- Any further changes the employment framework including to legislation, will be considered following the finalisation of the Woolcott Review.

## **Recommendation 20.13**

This recommendation calls upon the Head of the State Service to issue guidance on State Service disciplinary processes and procedures to be followed.

This is a Phase Two recommendation, due for delivery by 1 July 2026 and is in progress.

In line with the recommendation, guidance is being developed in line with relevant child safety considerations, including the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and the Integrity Commission's *Guide to Managing Misconduct in the Tasmanian Public Sector*.

In light of the revised ED5, a What's Changed Guide has been produced in relation to the key changes made to the ED and what that means in practice.

The newly-established SCCI Unit will build capability across the State Service in relation to investigative practices, particularly child-centred and trauma-informed practices. This will include guidance relating to preliminary assessments.

As part of the government panel of investigators, an investigator is to be given a maximum of 12 weeks to complete their investigation. Regular updates are to be provided and where any delays identified, an explanation of the delay and an extension of time is to be sought.

Work has also commenced on the review of ED4 relating to the suspension of employees, with or without pay, and will particularly consider where matters are alleged to involve child sexual abuse.

In addition, work has commenced on the review of ED6 which will particularly consider where the employee no longer has essential employment requirements.

### **Next steps**

- The changes and Guide are a first step, and we will continue to build upon this change. There will be an ongoing process of building capability across State Service Agencies in how ED5 processes are managed and to support the cultural change we are committed to seeing across the State Service.

## **Recommendation 20.14**

This recommendation calls for the allocation of funding for cultural change and for awareness-raising to promote a shared understanding and application of disciplinary processes across the State Service.

This is a Phase One recommendation due for delivery by 1 July 2024 and has been met.

In 2023-24, \$4.5 million was allocated through a Supplementary Appropriation for whole-of-government State Service Leadership and Cultural Improvement program.

This umbrella funding incorporated a broad range of culture initiatives across agencies including the development of a trauma-informed knowledge and skills framework (recommendation 19.2), establishment of community engagement and change leads and system change training to support the Strategy and Action Plan implementation.

\$2.5 million of this funding was provided to the Department of Health to progress and expand components of their cultural change program, One Health (recommendation 15.3). Other agencies will utilise the outcomes of Health's program to inform their cultural change work, building accountability for child safety and conduct at all levels of the State Service.

A cross agency Child Safe Cultures Priority Area was established to inform the development of the *Change for Children* Strategy and Action Plan, and it is through this priority area that we will be leveraging the investment in One Health across all Government agencies.

A shared capability building, and centralised investigations unit has been established in SSMO to undertake the most serious cases likely to lead to termination and to develop guidance and consistent practice across the TSS as another important part of cultural change.

### **Next steps**

Child Safe Cultures is a priority area in the *Change for Children* Strategy with a key focus on changing the way that individuals and organisations perceive children and ensure that children are not discriminate against and that they are listen to and their rights upheld.

The cross-agency Child Safe Cultures Priority Area will:

- Transition into a community of practice to build on existing initiatives happening across agencies.
- Map culture activities across all agencies to leverage expertise and best practice models.
- Partner with Community Sector Engagement and Change Leads to work in partnership with government agencies to build child safe cultures within the community service sector, and broader community.
- Work in trauma informed partnerships with children and young people and victim survivors to engage on their terms.

## **Recommendation 21.1**

The Department of Premier and Cabinet will lead, coordinate and fund a therapeutic service system for child and adult victim-survivors of child sexual abuse and children who have experienced or displayed harmful sexual behaviours.

This is a Phase Three recommendation of due for delivery by 1 July 2029, and is in progress.

In 2023-24, the Tasmanian Government provided additional funding of \$1.2 million over 12 months to the Sexual Assault Support Service (SASS) and Laurel House to support the increased demand following the release of the Commission of Inquiry Final Report.

Additionally, in December of the same financial year, the Tasmanian Government also provided funding of \$1 million to SASS and Laurel House to support therapeutic services for harmful sexual behaviours, including expanding the Prevention, Assessment, Support, Treatment (PAST) program and increase services to children and young people in Ashley Youth Detention Centre.

On 1 July 2024, the Tasmanian Government released the draft *Change for Children* Strategy and Action Plan which highlights priority areas of 'Therapeutic Approach to Harmful Sexual Behaviours', 'Child Safe Cultures', and 'Child and Community Voice'. Across these priority areas, the Government has committed to actions to centre the experiences of victim survivors and children to strengthen the service system.

Through the development of *Change for Children* Strategy and Action Plan the Tasmanian Government held workshops with representatives from different groups and heard from victim survivors, their families and supporters through a partnership with SASS and Laurel

House. The Tasmanian Government will continue to listen to children, young people and victim survivors so that services can meet their needs.

The Tasmanian government is establishing a number of formal channels for consultation and engagement, including the Victim-Survivor Advisory Council, work with Community Sector Engagement and Change Leads and consultation with people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities through collaboration with the Multicultural Council of Tasmania.

### **Next Steps**

- The Tasmanian Government will continue to work with key stakeholders to understand service needs and accessibility.
- The Tasmanian Government is developing a consultation approach with an outcome of mapping the current service system and current gaps.
- A review of existing consultation conducted with cohorts for Change for Children will also inform this analysis.
- \$5.25 million has been allocated from 2024 to 2028 for action in relation to harmful sexual behaviours.

## **Recommendation 21.3**

The Tasmanian Government will establish a peak body for the sexual assault service system, including therapeutic interventions for children who have engaged in harmful sexual behaviours.

This is a Phase Two recommendation due for delivery by 1 July 2026, and is in progress.

The Commission has recommended that the Tasmanian Government work with the community services sector to create a more active and supported peak body to enhance the sexual assault service system. This body is to ensure consistent and coordinated services.. This peak body will play a crucial role in coordination and can develop or adopt standards of practice to maintain consistent quality.

Work is already underway. The Tasmanian Government provided funding to the Tasmanian Council of Social Service in 2022, to investigate the establishment of a Family and Sexual Violence Peak Body. Currently this project is still under investigation, with a broadened scope to consider a separate sexual violence peak body.

### **Next steps**

- In December 2024, the investigation of a Family and Sexual Violence Peak will complete its initial project.
- In February 2025, the Family and Sexual Violence Alliance will provide its final report and recommendations to the Tasmanian Government.
- After this period and taking into considerations the outcomes of the Family and Sexual Violence Peak investigation project, the Tasmanian Government will consider next steps for the establishment of the sexual violence peak.
- \$2.6 million has been allocated from 2024 to 2026 for SASS and Laurel House to continue funding for increased core therapeutic services provided in 2023-24.

## Recommendation 21.4

The Tasmanian Government is committed to increasing funding for free or low-cost sexual assault counselling services.

This is a Phase Two recommendation, due for delivery by 1 July 2026 and is in progress.

The Department of Premier and Cabinet will work on adopting strategies to increase the number of professionals with skills to provide therapeutic responses to abuse related trauma to address the challenge in attracting and retaining sufficient suitably qualified staff to fill vacancies and meet the needs for therapeutic responses to child sexual abuse.

In 2023-24, the Tasmanian Government provided additional funding of \$1.2 million to SASS and Laurel House to support increased demand following the release of the Commission of Inquiry Final Report. In December 2023-24, the Tasmanian Government also provided additional funding of \$1 million to SASS and Laurel House to support therapeutic services for harmful sexual behaviours, including expanding the PAST Program and an increase in services to children and young people in Ashley Youth Detention Centre.

On 1 July 2024, the Tasmanian Government released the draft child sexual abuse Strategy and Action Plan, *Change for Children*, which highlights priority areas of 'Therapeutic Approach to Harmful Sexual Behaviours', 'Child Safe Cultures', and 'Child and Community Voice'. Across these priority areas, the Government has committed to actions to centre the experiences of victim survivors and children to strengthen the service system.

### Next steps

- A consultation approach will be developed, to map the service system and current gaps. A review of existing consultation conducted with groups for Change for Children Strategy and Action Plan will also inform this analysis.
- Developing strategies to increase the number of suitably qualified professionals in the sector is dependent on identifying the issues and barriers contributing towards recruitment and retention challenges.
- Once the issues and barriers are identified in partnership with the community services sector and Government agencies, work will be done on potential strategies to increase the number of suitably qualified professionals to offer therapeutic support for abuse related trauma.
- As noted above, \$2.6 million has been allocated from 2024 to 2026 for SASS and Laurel House to continue funding for increased core therapeutic services provided in 2023-24.

## Recommendation 21.6

This recommendation aims to ensure that the needs of particular groups of victim-survivors are met by the therapeutic service system and related contracting of services. These groups include the needs of children who are victim survivors or have displayed harmful sexual behaviours; victim-survivors with disability or mental illness; victim-



survivors who identify as LGBTQIA+; male victim-survivors and victim-survivors who are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

This is a Phase Two recommendation due for delivery by 1 July 2026, and is in progress.

The Tasmanian Government is committed to ensuring that all victim-survivors can access appropriate supports. The Tasmanian Government will consult on the therapeutic service system with relevant stakeholder groups, including the Interim Disability Commissioner, community groups and representative bodies.

Through the development of *Change for Children* Strategy and Action Plan, the Tasmanian Government held workshops with representatives from various groups. Additionally, the Tasmanian Government heard from victim survivors, their families and supporters through a partnership with Sexual Assault Support Service and Laurel House.

### **Next Steps**

- The Tasmanian Government is developing a consultation approach with an outcome of mapping the current service system and current gaps. This is the same process that is being used to inform the response to recommendation 21.1, which seeks to ensure a coordinated, accessible service system for child and adult victim-survivors of harmful sexual behaviours.
- Work will be done in partnership with the community sector, and in particular specialist services, following the initial consultation and analysis, on proposed approaches to meet the requirements of individuals either through:
  - New/adapted models of care and therapeutic governance models from existing specialist sexual violence services
  - Budget considerations and/or partnerships for new and/or expanded services, and/or
  - Budget considerations and/or partnerships for capacity building.
- As noted above, \$2.6 million has been allocated from 2024 to 2026 for SASS and Laurel House to continue funding for increased core therapeutic services provided in 2023-24.

## **Recommendation 21.7**

This recommendation calls upon the Tasmanian Government to improve healing services for Aboriginal victim-survivors and their families and communities, by fully resourcing and supporting recognised Aboriginal organisations across the state to design, develop and deliver Aboriginal-led healing approaches targeted to victim-survivors of child sexual abuse; and ensuring Aboriginal representation on the boards of management or in the executive structures of sexual assault services.

This is a Phase Three recommendation, due for delivery by 1 July 2029, and is in progress.

Funding has been provided to a number of Aboriginal organisations for services related to addressing sexual violence. This includes:

- \$395,465 to the Karadi Aboriginal Corporation to provide additional workers to support victim survivors and those affected by sexual violence across the North and North West of Tasmania which includes access to specialist community based services which empower, and support individuals and families affected by sexual violence (funding provided from the Federal Government for 500 Community Sector and Frontline Workers initiative)
- \$50,000 each to the Karadi Aboriginal Corporation and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre to assist with responding to service needs as a consequence of the Commission of Inquiry Report.
- \$266,425 to the Southeast Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation to build their capacity in family support and prevention of family violence services; and
- \$300,000 to the Karadi Aboriginal Corporation to build the capacity to deliver health and community services which includes improving the health of Tasmanian Aboriginal people and their families through improved access to health services, health promotion and improving the capacity of Karadi to apply for funding for other community and health services (funding provided from the State Government Closing the Gap Building Capacity Fund).

### **Next steps**

- Engagement with key stakeholder organisations to commence the progress of co-designing an Aboriginal-led healing service model is expected to commence this year.

## **Recommendation 21.8**

The Tasmanian Government, in collaboration, with key stakeholders, will develop a statewide framework with key stakeholders to prevent, identify and respond to harmful sexual behaviours.

This is a Phase Three recommendation, due for delivery by 1 July 2029, and is in progress.

The Tasmanian Government will lead a coordinated response to harmful sexual behaviours, increasing the availability accessibility of therapeutic services for affected children. A framework is being developed to prevent, identify and respond to harmful sexual behaviours.

To inform the Framework a cross-agency group has been established. The Tasmanian Government has also engaged with national and state counterparts on the development and implementation of similar frameworks.

### **Next Steps**

- The state-wide harmful sexual behaviours framework will support a coordinated, consistent and appropriate statewide response to children and young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours, and children who have been impacted by harmful sexual behaviours.
- Next steps include:

- develop a framework, based on the shared definition, outlining a therapeutic service system for harmful sexual behaviours;
- clarify roles and responsibilities of Government agencies and community services involved in preventing, identifying and responding to the full continuum of harmful sexual behaviours, including new roles recommended by the Commission of Inquiry;
- increase therapeutic services for those who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours and children who have been impacted by harmful sexual behaviours.
- As noted above, \$5.25 million has been allocated from 2024 to 2028 for action in relation to harmful sexual behaviours.

## Recommendation 22.1

The Implementation Monitor will provide independent oversight and assessment to the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry are implemented and that they are having the intended effect of making our children and young people safe.

This Phase One recommendation, due for delivery by 1 July 2024, has been met.

The role of the Monitor will be to establish an evaluation framework to monitor and provide written reports to the Tasmanian Parliament on the implementation of recommendations of:

- the Commission of Inquiry;
- the Independent Inquiry into the Tasmanian Department of Education's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse;
- Health's Child Safe Governance Review;
- Weiss Independent Review into former police officer Paul Reynolds and
- recommendations of the Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse that were accepted but not implemented.

The framework will include key indicators to be used by the Monitor in evaluations and assessments, Agency requirements for reporting to the Monitor, and Agency data collection and publication requirements.

The Monitor is required to report annually to Parliament. This reporting will include independent evaluation of how effective the measures and actions taken have been, especially around safety of children and young people in government and government funded institutions.

### Next steps

- An open merit-based recruitment process is currently underway for the role of the Implementation Monitor. Applications closed on 3 August 2024.
- A selection panel has been convened, which comprises people from similar oversight bodies, Government, the community and someone with lived experience.

- The selection of the right person to fulfill the position of the Monitor is a significant and important step forward in achieving reform for child safety in institutional settings.
- The establishment of this new statutory role is one part of a program of reforms to strengthen the protective framework to safeguard our children and young people now and into the future.
- In their first year, the Monitor's priority will be to establish an evaluation framework to monitor and provide written reports to the Tasmanian Parliament on monitored recommendations. The framework is to include:
  - Key indicators
  - Reporting requirements of Agencies
  - Data collection and publication requirements of Agencies
  - Intervals for evaluation and assessments.
- Funding of \$5.24 million has been provided from 2024 to 2028 to fund the establishment and operations of the Monitor.