

The Secretary,  
Government Administration Committee A,  
House of Assembly,  
Parliament House,  
Hobart, TAS 7000

Attn: Fiona Murphy – [assemblygaa@parliament.tas.gov.au](mailto:assemblygaa@parliament.tas.gov.au)

### **For Public Submission**

Dear Fiona,

I am writing this submission in response to the resolution of the House of Assembly of 12 June 2024 to the Tasmanian Parliament in relation to the Inquiry into Discrimination and Bullying in Tasmanian Schools.

I' am a survivor of bullying within the Tasmanian education system. I was bullied the entire time that I attended school in both primary school and High School on the Northwest Coast of Tasmania; these schools were part of the state education system. I was targeted due to being identified as feminine or gay. I was subjected to humiliation, degradation, violence, abuse, and ridicule, on a daily basis, for the majority of my educational experience. I was subject to physical and psychological bullying mainly by male peers.

I have detailed some of the abuse and degradation, in my private submission, that I was subject to in the hope that my experience can go some way towards stopping what happened to me from happening to anyone else.

I came out as gay when I was 17 years old and I' am a proud Gay Man, who has continued to experience discrimination and bullying in my adult life within the Tasmanian community.

In terms of measures necessary to prevent Bullying, I believe a comprehensive study needs to be conducted to determine the realities of bullying in Tasmanian schools. I do not believe that adopting an external approach, such as a bullying program that has proved successfully elsewhere, without first thoroughly studying the current occurrence of bullying in Tasmanian schools will work.

Speaking from my own experience, better education and inclusiveness training would have made a difference. I didn't even know what gay was when I was being bullied, there were significant failures of the education system. All schools regardless of being religious should have obligations and a duty to protect students from bullying and discrimination regardless of the student's sexuality, gender identity, or other attributes.

Bullying has a significant impact on student participation in both direct and indirect ways as I have alluded to in my submission from my own personal experience. I believe

that my academic and professional opportunities were limited by my bullying experience and that despite the passage of time this remains the case.

Better training for teachers and schools in how to respond and prevent bullying and harassment in the school environment would enable teachers to more easily identify bullying, however from my own experience bullying is often not contained to the school environment and a broader community approach to bullying needs to be considered. Bullying often extends beyond the school environment and victims are often targeted outside of school as well as within the school environment.

Yours Sincerely,

Benjamin Jago