

2025-26 State Budget Community Consultation Submission Cover Sheet

Organisation or Individual	Tasmanian Family and Sexual Violence Alliance (peak body)
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Theme of Advice	To which of the following themes does your submission relate? (select all that apply) ☒ the environment in which you or your organisation currently operates; ☒ identification of services that you or your organisation considers should be a high priority to the Government; ☒ identification of instances where Government goods and services could be delivered more effectively, in a better way, or more successfully; ☒ identification of instances where Government goods and services could be delivered more efficiently that is, at a lower cost or in a timelier manner; ☒ identification of instances where savings could be achieved by either ceasing activities or changing the way in which Government activities are performed or delivered; ☒ identification of options for the funding of goods and services; ☐ the impact of State taxes and charges within the context of the organisation's current role within the Tasmanian community or opportunities to streamline taxes and charges.

Submission Description	Please provide a short description of your submission (no more than 100 words). The Tasmanian Family and Sexual Violence Alliance (TFSVA) is Tasmania's new peak body for FSV providers. Establishment of TFSVA is supported by the Tasmanian Government, including a commitment of \$370,000 per annum to fund the core functions in 2025-26 and 2026-27 (in addition to \$270,000 in 2024-25). TFSVA has identified a Tasmanian FSV Sector 10-Year Workforce Development Strategy as the priority additional project for the peak to undertake in 2025-26 and 2025-27. This Strategy, which is essential to effective delivery of Tasmanian Government and national FSV priorities, can be delivered by the TFSVA with a one-off budget allocation of \$700,000.
Link to existing Government initiatives or programs	Please specify any existing Government initiatives or programs that your submission has links to. • (2024) <i>Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches</i> • (2022-27) <i>Survivors at the Centre: Tasmania's Third Sexual and Family Violence Action Plan</i> • (2022-2032) <i>National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children</i> • (2021-31) <i>National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse</i> • (2024) [Draft] <i>Change for Children Strategy and Action Plan</i> • (2023) <i>Keeping Children Safe and Rebuilding Trust</i> (Tasmanian Government Response to the <i>Commission of Inquiry into Tasmanian Government Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings</i>) • (2021-31) <i>Tasmanian Community Service Industry Plan</i> • <i>National Partnership Agreement on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence Responses</i> (including five year renewal from 2025 currently in negotiation) • <i>Decisions arising from the meeting of National Cabinet on 6 September 2024 relating to domestic, family and sexual violence</i> • <i>Decisions arising from the meeting of Australian Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council on 22 November 2024</i>
Relevant agencies	☒ Department of Premier and Cabinet

The Tasmanian Family and Sexual Violence Alliance proposes funding of \$700,000 over 2025-26 and 2025-27 to develop a Tasmanian Family and Sexual Violence Sector 10-Year Workforce Development Strategy.

Background

The establishment of a Tasmanian Family and Sexual Violence (FSV) Peak was a key action in Tasmania's *Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan 2022-2027*.

The Tasmanian Government provided \$170,000 in 2023-24 (via TasCOSS) to facilitate the establishment of the **Tasmanian Family and Sexual Violence Alliance (TFSVA)** as this peak body. This process will be completed in December 2025.

A Steering Committee comprised of specialist FSV services and lived experience experts has guided the establishment of the new Tasmanian FSV peak, including its constitution (for incorporation under the *Associations Act*); strategic plan; communications plan; risk framework; and board code of practice.

The purpose of the TFSVA is to:

- transform the culture and systems that hold gender inequity and violence in place
- provide a coordinated, strategic response to family violence, sexual violence and child sexual abuse in lutruwita/Tasmania.

It will achieve this purpose through building the capability of specialist and mainstream workforces and industries to prevent and respond to family and sexual violence through:

- providing leadership on specialist practice across the four interconnecting domains of primary prevention, early intervention, response, healing, and recovery.
- ensuring the expertise of lived experience, research and the practice wisdom of specialist services is embedded in policy development, services and other decision making
- streamlining engagement between the government and the family violence and sexual violence services sector.

The TFSVA has already commenced its work advocating for victim-survivors and the sector, including:

- development of *Tasmanian Victim-Survivor Engagement Guidelines* (June 2024)
- a companion document for Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC): *Three essential elements of an effective Tasmanian Child Sexual Abuse Reform Strategy and Action Plan* (April 2024)
- a detailed submission for the Australian Law Reform Commission on *Justice Responses to Sexual Violence in Tasmania* (July 2024)
- advice on improving the draft *Change for Children* strategy (October 2024).

The TFSVA has been advised by DPAC, and the office of the Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence, that it has been allocated the following 'core' funding (subject to the extension in 2025 of Tasmania's National Partnership Agreement on Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence):

- \$270,000 in 2024-25
- \$370,000 in 2025-26
- \$370,000 in 2026-27

This will allow the TFSVA to:

- employ 2.8 FTE from January 2025 for administration, governance, project delivery, sector and lived expertise engagement (approximately \$270,000)
- operate on a 'skeleton' budget of \$112,000 per year (including membership fees).

The core services that FSV will deliver with this modest establishment budget will be:

- identifying ways to meet current and projected need and demand for FSV services in Tasmania
- responding to requests from government for whole-of-sector policy submissions relating to family violence, sexual violence and child sexual abuse
- supporting member organisations with advocacy and representations to government
- collecting and disseminating relevant state and national information to Tasmania's FSV sector
- maintaining compliant governance functions
- maintaining compliant administrative functions
- in all its work:
 - engaging broadly and directly with the sector
 - seeking partnerships of respect and understanding with Tasmanian Aboriginal people
 - leveraging existing networks to gain deeper lived experience perspectives on service demand and innovative service approaches.

Headline recommendation

The TFSVA has identified the development of a **comprehensive, long-term (10-Year) TFSV Sector Workforce Development Strategy** as an essential FSV project for Tasmania, closely aligned to State and Commonwealth FSV policy frameworks. Among other things, it will directly address Tasmania's commitments via the Australian Women and Women's Safety Ministerial Council, and directly respond to the *Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches (2024)*. One of the three priority areas for action agreed by Australian and State/Territory Ministers on 22 November 2024 is to "...build the specialist FDSV workforce and to expand workforce capability of other services and sectors".

The development and implementation of the Strategy will provide practical solutions to a critical problem facing Tasmania's response to family and sexual violence, including child sexual abuse. Put simply, without an effective strategy for ensuring well qualified and supported workers choose to build a professional career in Tasmania's FSV sector, all current and future FSV policies and programs in Tasmania will fail to adequately address gendered violence and abuse. This problem is apparent now, and with no strategic or coordinated response, it is going to get worse over the medium to long term.

Currently (December 2024), TFSVA members report they are often unable to recruit experienced practitioners for funded positions, let alone those with deep understandings of gendered violence in the Tasmanian context. This results in positions going unfilled, or people with limited experience being asked to take on roles that may be beyond their capacity. In addition, good recruits are often not retained due to the challenging and confronting nature of the work, combined with non-competitive pay and conditions. The problem is especially acute in North West Tasmania.

The TFSVA is uniquely placed to deliver the TFSV Sector Workforce Development Strategy in a timely manner. For example, engagement with members on this proposal indicates the TFSVA will have access to high quality, up-to-date, sector-wide workforce and service demand data from its members that will enable a highly detailed 'blueprint' approach, rather than a 'broadbrush' approach.

The TFSV Sector Workforce Development Strategy would focus on Tasmanian specialist services in family violence, sexual violence and child sexual abuse - across prevention, early intervention, response, and recovery and healing. It would also, however, incorporate initiatives for developing the capacity of related Tasmanian workforces to address FSV. The Strategy development would commence in 2025-26 and be delivered for implementation in 2026-27, at a cost of \$700,000.

Rationale for proposed investment by the Tasmanian Government:

The family and sexual violence sector requires specialised learning, skills, knowledge and experience. Current and predicted future workforce shortages represent a critical impediment to addressing family violence, sexual violence and child sexual abuse in Tasmania, and to achieving commitments made by Tasmanian and Australian Governments to reduce the incidence and impact of FSV.

TasCOSS has recently completed its Workforce Coordination Project and some of the learnings from this very broad initiative can be applied to a Tasmanian FSV Workforce Development Strategy. However, the TasCOSS project did not focus specifically on the Tasmanian FSV specialist sector (for example, the FSV sector was not identified as a 'industry cluster' in the TasCOSS project; and the FSV sector was not represented in the project governance group). Further, the *Tasmanian Community Service Industry Plan 2021-31* provides very broad actions for the entire community services sector which can provide some guidance for a Tasmanian FSV Workforce Development Strategy, but does not include any specific measures or actions for Tasmania's FSV sector.

Change the Story, Australia's shared framework for the prevention of violence against women, identifies that to create a mature, robust, representative and sustainable FSV sector, a blueprint is required to build the capacity of the current workforce, support pathways into the sector, and increase the overall size of the workforce.

The current lack of sector-wide, long-term workforce planning in Tasmania's FSV sector places additional strain on limited resources, and compromises the quality and timeliness of services provided to victim-survivors. Lack of workforce planning and resultant workforce shortages have negative impacts on recruitment and retention of existing workers in the sector. Workforce shortages result in long wait lists for therapeutic counselling and case-management support in Tasmania and impact timely responses to FSV prevention and response.

Workforce shortages also impact the health, safety and wellbeing of specialist sexual violence and primary prevention workers. Workers in the sector face inherently heightened emotional and psychological burdens. The risks of burnout and workplace injury are heightened by overwhelming workloads without adequate support structures and within organisations that are strained due to a lack of staffing.

Current truncated funding cycles, or one-off funding (especially where there are tight lead times to scale up services), result in short-term and unstable contracts for employees, creating job and career uncertainty. In turn, this makes it more difficult for FSV services to invest in professional development for workers to acquire specialist skills that meet the needs of victim-survivors and vulnerable communities.

Job uncertainty is a determinant of poor job satisfaction and reduced productivity, and is damaging for the psychological health of employees. Tasmanian FSV providers report that job uncertainty impacts overall health and makes individuals more vulnerable to ill-health.

While the focus of TFSV Workforce Development Strategy will be on specialist services, there are many workers and organisations that intersect with the sector, victim-survivors and/or perpetrators, on a daily basis. People who have experienced family violence and sexual abuse often come into contact with professionals across health, education, law enforcement, family law and social services. These service intersections need to be considered in a comprehensive approach.

TFSVA members report that many people who work in the specialist family and sexual violence sector are victim-survivors of family violence, sexual violence and child sexual abuse, who may or may not

choose to disclose their lived experience. The needs of this cohort, and other people with lived experience working with victim survivors, should be addressed in the workforce plan.

For Tasmania to deliver on its commitments to address gendered violence and child sexual abuse, a coordinated, strategic and inclusive approach to workforce development is required. By doing so, Tasmania can ensure that the right people are equipped with the right skills to offer effective, compassionate, and sustained responses to violence and abuse, safeguarding the future of all Tasmanian communities.

The effective implementation of Tasmania's commitments to addressing family violence, sexual violence and child sexual abuse requires a comprehensive FSV workforce development strategy *that is owned and led by the sector* and:

- aligns the workforce, and pathways into the sector, with the specific needs of victim-survivors, vulnerable cohorts, and Tasmanian communities
- carefully and realistically plans workforce development and expansion
- provides guidance on the investment required for specialist services and the sector to recruit and employ the required workforce
- provides options to increase the capability of broader workforces that intersect with family and sexual violence
- ensures appropriate coverage across all regions of Tasmania of a trained and qualified workforce across prevention, early intervention, response and recovery and healing
- recognises and leverages the expertise of victim-survivors.

Accordingly, the TFSVA proposes the development of 10-year Tasmanian FSV Workforce Development Strategy that includes (but is not limited to):

1. Centring the expertise of victim-survivors, including those working in the sector

- Orient the future workforce to meet the needs of victim-survivors.
- Centre victim-survivors in all levels of workforce planning, decision making and implementation.
- Embed lived experience in proposed education, training and professional development.
- Ensure the recognition and involvement of dual expertise (practice wisdom and lived expertise) in professional development and career progression.
- Consider how members of the workforce with lived experience of violence and abuse can be supported to address stigma and shame if they choose to disclose their experience.

2. Identifying Need

- Establish current and projected need and demand for specialist, generalist and Tasmanian Aboriginal FSV services in Tasmania across prevention, early intervention, response, and recovery/healing.
- Project future capacity required by Tasmania FSV services to meet need and demand.
- Map current and projected total funding for FSV services in Tasmania (including government agencies and community-based services), including by region and service type.
- Examine the extent to which the current workforce reflects and meets the needs of diverse Tasmanian populations, including First Nations people, young women, culturally and linguistically diverse Tasmanians, LGBTIQ+ Tasmanians, and people with disability.
- Identify the extent to which the current workforce and Tasmanian FSV services align with the priorities of lived experience advocates.
- Obtain sector and lived experience endorsement for analysis and recommendations, via deep and broad engagement.

3. Facilitating Pathways into the Sector

- Identify options to ensure that people are supported to obtain appropriate qualifications and experience to enter the sector, and that a sufficient number of qualified persons are available and willing to deliver such education.
- Address the barriers associated with some qualifications requiring long unpaid placements which prevent people from entering or remaining in education and training programs.
- Identify better ways to support persons from diverse communities to access and complete educational programs in the sector including social workers, (degree-level qualified) counsellors, and psychologists. This may include options for subsidising education, internships, placements for such courses, vocational training, and on-the-job mentoring and training programs.
- Address regional inequities in sector training and development opportunities (particularly in North West Tasmania).
- Identify flexible and diverse pathways, providing for both informal and formal entry to education and employment, including for people with lived expertise and peer workers.
- Work with professional bodies to adapt accreditation standards to include mandating certain levels of understanding in the prevention of violence against women and children as a requirement.
- Provide guidance to ensure workforce development initiatives take an intersectional approach that addresses systemic barriers and inequalities that some communities face in accessing FSV education, training and employment.
- Ensure FSV sector education and employment pathways are culturally safe,
- Identify person-centric approaches to working with First Nations communities, including engaging persons that are trusted by, and connected to, community; and opportunities for community members to obtain relevant qualifications whilst working with their community.

4. Resourcing the future workforce

- Identify the level of funding required (across State, Commonwealth and private/philanthropic sources) to achieve adequate FSV staffing levels, and provide appropriate service levels for victim-survivors.
- Present options for resourcing providers over longer periods to ensure sustainability, retention, and success.
- Identify remuneration levels required to attract and retain qualified staff in Tasmania.
- Identify and cost programs to support those who work with FSV victim-survivors to address the persistent risk of vicarious trauma, heavy workloads, and compassion fatigue, stemming from continuous exposure to distressing experiences.
- Identify resources required for ongoing, targeted, and coordinated statewide professional development, including onboarding, continuing supervision, peer learning and leadership programs.

5. Increasing the capability of broader workforces that intersect with family and sexual violence

- Identify options for comprehensive, evidence-based, trauma-informed FSV training programs tailored to unique contexts and needs of relevant workforce sectors (such as primary health, education, policing, justice, community services etc).
- Provide guidance on ways to co-design programs with the specialist sexual violence sector and victim-survivors and include components to shift culture and attitudes that perpetuate gendered violence and victim-blaming, ensure workers understand consent and coercion, cultural competence, victim-survivor rights, referral pathways, and legal obligations.

- Provide options for working with organisations and industries outside the public and community sectors.
- Identify ways to facilitate cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary collaboration and partnerships.

6. Research and Evaluation

- Conduct research to inform evidence-based approaches to FSV sector workforce development.
- Adapt other FSV workforce development initiatives to the Tasmanian context (such as The National Centre for Action on Child Sexual Abuse's *Learning and Professional Development Survey Report 2023*; and Our Watch's *Growing with change: Developing an expert workforce to prevent violence against women*).
- Where relevant, ensure alignment with the 2021-31 *Tasmanian Community Service Industry Plan*
- Ensure that strategies respond to both emerging trends and best practices in addressing family violence, sexual violence and child sexual abuse.
- Ensure the Tasmanian FSV Workforce Development Strategy is supported by a transparent program logic and theory of change.
- Ensure the recommended actions and strategies in Tasmanian FSV Workforce Development Strategy have clear and measurable success indicators.
- Include ongoing data collection, monitoring, reporting and evaluation as an integral part of the Tasmanian FSV Workforce Development Strategy.

Submission Ends