

MEDIA RELEASE

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Women and children continue to wait years for trauma support, specialist housing and legal representation. Family violence is up nearly 70%, and sexual violence 180% in the past 5 years.

Funding remains flat.

Budget repair can't be at the expense of women and children's safety and wellbeing. Our community-based services save lives - yet have been under-resourced for far too long.

The Tasmanian Family and Sexual Violence Alliance (the Alliance) says that the Interim Budget does not meet the scale of the state's family and sexual violence crisis - warning that rising demand, growing waitlists and stagnant investment continue to leave women and children unsafe.

Reports of family violence have risen by nearly 70% over the past 5 years, and sexual violence by 180%, yet funding to specialist support services has not shifted to match that demand.

"This budget doesn't meet the scale of the crisis. We're seeing demand rising and funding for specialist family and sexual violence services flat. Women and children are waiting months, sometimes years for support", said Bree Klerck, Chief Executive Officer of the Tasmanian Family and Sexual Violence Alliance.

Our frontline family violence services report women are having to wait far too long. Sexual violence services report significant wait times for survivors to access much needed trauma counselling, including victim-survivors of child sexual abuse. Women experiencing family and sexual violence are increasingly self-representing in court because they cannot access specialist legal services.

We are also hearing from the sector that critical investment is needed in services to support children and young people impacted by family violence, in programs that educate children on respectful relationships, along with dedicated supports for Aboriginal women, and investment in dedicated housing - including crisis accommodation, transition and long-term homes. This must be met with a sustainable and skilled workforce to meet rising demand.

"We're still relying on police and courts to hold this crisis in family and sexual violence, but police are often not the best option for people. We need to invest in specialist services that prevent harm, are trusted by the community, not only after the harm has occurred," Ms

Klerck said. “We also need to ensure that we have adequate and sustained investment across the full continuum of prevention, early intervention, response and recovery. These services save lives but remain under-resourced with no capacity for further cuts.”

“Tasmania has the chance to prevent harm and reduce demand - but that requires sustained investment, not only short-term crisis responses,” Ms Klerck said. “Every Tasmanian deserves to live safely, with dignity and agency.”

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