

Tasmanian  
**Family and  
Sexual Violence**  
Alliance

December 2025

# **State Budget Consultation 2026/27: Prioritising a Tasmania Free from Family and Sexual Violence**

## About Us

The Tasmanian Family and Sexual Violence Alliance (TFSVA) is the peak body for family violence and sexual violence including child sexual abuse. We represent the sector across the continuum of primary prevention, early intervention, response and healing and recovery. We amplify the voices of lived experience and practice knowledge to improve the family and sexual violence system, influence policy, and drive cultural change to end gendered violence.

### **Acknowledgements**

*We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians and first peoples on the land on which we live, work and play in lutruwita (Tasmania). We pay our respects to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, to elders past and present and to all those who continue caring for country, sharing stories and upholding rights. We acknowledge the impacts of colonisation and dispossession and the contemporary disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We also acknowledge the devastating impacts of family and sexual violence and child removal in Aboriginal communities and recognise the power of truth telling and ongoing leadership by Aboriginal communities in addressing and preventing family and sexual violence.*

*We acknowledge Tasmania's victim-survivors of family and sexual violence. Victim-survivors hold the insights, knowledge and expertise to inform primary prevention and systems change, and authentically embedding the lived expertise of victim-survivors is vital in addressing family and sexual violence in Tasmania. We acknowledge children and young people who are victim-survivors also hold expertise that must be valued and respected alongside that of adult victim-survivors. And we recognise the life-long impacts of trauma and acquired disability as a direct result of family and sexual violence.*

## Introduction

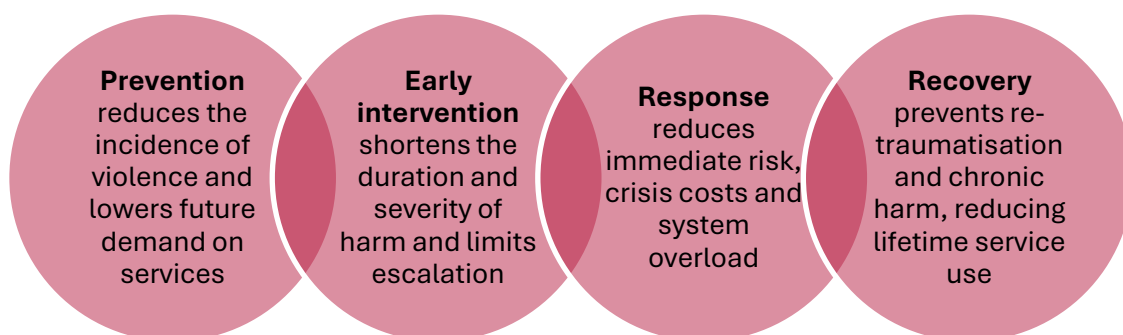
TFSVA acknowledges the Tasmanian Government's commitment to ending child sexual abuse, family violence and sexual violence, and recognises that addressing these forms of violence is a core, non-negotiable priority for our state. This commitment is reflected in the implementation of the Commission of Inquiry recommendations, the *Change for Children* strategy and the *Survivors at the Centre Action Plan*. The priority now is to ensure these reforms are fully implemented, supported by secure and adequate funding. Under-funding of these forms creates significant risks, including non-compliance, implementation failure, loss of public trust, escalating costs across the public service, and profound harm to women and children experiencing violence.

As part of this year's budget consultation process, the Tasmanian Department of Treasury and Finance invited responses to five questions. In addressing these questions, TFSVA's focus is on ensuring the sector and service system has the capability and capacity to deliver on the Government's reform commitments - commitments that are critical to ending violence.

It is important to note that while this submission refers to family and sexual violence (FSV), this term encompasses family violence, sexual violence, child maltreatment and child sexual abuse. These forms of violence are sometimes deeply interconnected and, at other times, distinct - requiring tailored strategies. Our members and other community-based FSV service providers outline these considerations in their submissions to the Department of Treasury and Finance. It is important to note that the community sector already operates leanly and efficiently, routinely delivering services above funded capacity and absorbing costs that would otherwise be borne by health, justice, child protection and housing systems.

As a priority, TFSVA urges the State Government to recognise the community sector's contribution and invest in a whole-of-continuum approach to family and sexual violence, this not only aligns with national and state strategies in ending gendered violence but also provides economic value over time.

### The economic benefits of a whole of continuum approach



## Response to consultation questions

### 1. Which programs/projects could be refocused to deliver core outcomes with more streamlined resources or refined focus?

In the context of FSV, any decision to refocus or streamline services must be approached with extreme care. Changes driven primarily by cost-saving rather than safety and improved outcomes for victim-survivors risk undermining the very purpose of the system.

Tasmania has some of the highest rates of violence against women in the country <sup>1</sup>. If investment is insufficient, the capacity for FSV services to support victim-survivors is reduced – resulting in more opportunities for perpetrators to cause harm. Budget decisions in this area must be guided first and foremost by safety, not by efficiency.

Type of Violence Against Women	Rate in Tasmania	National Rate	Tasmania 'rank' re: other States/Territories
Sexual violence	26.0%	22.3%	Second highest (to NT)
Intimate partner violence	28.1%	23.3%	Equal Highest (with NT)
Cohabiting partner violence	21.6%	16.9%	Highest
Cohabiting partner emotional abuse	28.3%	22.9%	Highest
Cohabiting partner economic abuse	19.6%	16.3%	Highest
Stalking	21.1%	20.3%	Equal Highest (with SA)
Sexual harassment	56.8%	52.9%	Third Highest
Physical violence	32.7%	30.8%	Fourth Highest

*ABS Personal Safety Survey, Australia, 2021–22 Women aged 18 yrs and over, Experiences since age of 15, By state and territory Proportion*

The Tasmanian Government has made a commitment to remaining steadfast in its approach to tackling family and sexual violence through the Survivors at the Centre Action Plan, the Change for Children Strategy and in fully implementing all recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, for that reason, the 2026-27 state budget must prioritise safety. That requires clearly defining core outcomes and investing in strategies that reliably deliver them. The cost of getting this wrong is immense – both economically and, more importantly, in human terms. Rather than seeking programs to streamline, TFSVA suggests:

- **Defining core outcomes**

Clearly articulate outcomes from the perspective of victim-survivors (for example: safety, housing stability, recovery and child wellbeing), and ensure these outcomes guide strategy,

funding decisions and service design.

- **Refocus on coordination and implementation of reforms**

Evaluate the Survivors and the Centre Action Plan to identify opportunities to coordinate and align programs so they operate as a whole-of-continuum approach. The priority should be on safety, and better coordination and implementation of existing reforms.

- **Sustain essential FSV services**

Guarantee ongoing, sufficient funding for services working with victim-survivors so that waitlists do not escalate and people are not turned away. These are essential, life-saving services and must remain a core budget priority. FSV programs and services should not be refocused to deliver savings; they must be strengthened to deliver safety and recovery for victim-survivors.

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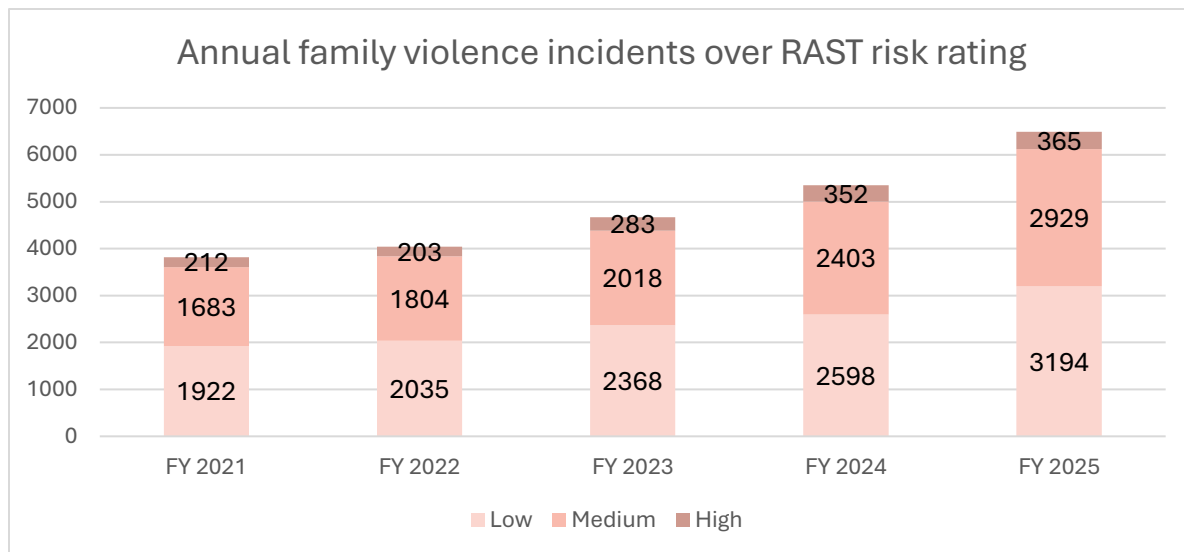
## 2. Are there initiatives or investments that could be reconsidered helping balance the budget now, without losing sight of long-term goals?

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The Tasmanian Government's long-term commitments to addressing family violence, sexual violence and child sexual abuse are critical, however won't be achieved without an ongoing and sustained focus on implementation of these reforms. As a baseline, current data provides a snapshot of the current situation:

- **Technology-facilitated abuse:** 72% of young people (18–24) have experienced technology-facilitated abuse <sup>2</sup>
- **First Nations communities:** 2 in 3 (67%) First Nations people aged 15+ who experienced physical harm in the last 12 months reported the perpetrator was an intimate partner or family member. Estimates suggest around 90% of violence against First Nations women, and most sexual abuse of First Nations children, is never disclosed <sup>3</sup>
- **Family violence:** A 70% rise in reported family violence over the past five years, with many women waiting months – even years – for support <sup>4</sup>
- **Impact on children:** Children are present in almost 60% of these incidents <sup>5</sup>. They are victim-survivors in their own right and many are waiting up to three years for support.
- **Sexual assault:** Reported sexual assault has been climbing since 2020 <sup>6</sup>, with services reporting long waitlists
- **Child sexual abuse:** The Australian Child Maltreatment Study (ACMS) estimates around 1 in 4 (28.5%) Australians aged 16+ have experienced child sexual abuse – equating to approximately 110,000 adult Tasmanians affected <sup>7</sup>

- **Housing and safety:** An estimated 933 Tasmanian women each year are returning to a violent partner or entering homelessness after experiencing family violence due to a lack of housing<sup>8</sup>



*Tasmania police corporate performance reports 2021 to 2025*

With this data in mind, continued and strategic investment in family and sexual violence (FSV) services is central to addressing escalating violence in our community and in meeting the Tasmanian Government's long-term goals. TFSVA recommends that the Tasmanian Government:

- **Recognise the value of current investment in community-based FSV services**

FSV services are a cost-prevention mechanism. They reduce demand on far more expensive acute and crisis responses in health, housing, policing and justice. Cutting or destabilising these services now would simply shift costs – and increase these costs elsewhere in the system, while also exposing victim-survivors to greater risk and harm.

- **Invest with safety and quality at the centre**

Service providers are already operating on highly constrained resources and frequently deliver well above funded capacity. There is very little room for further reduction without serious safety implications. Any reconsideration of initiatives or investments must:

- assess whether services can still meet quality service delivery
- uphold practice standards that guarantee trauma-informed, culturally safe, accessible support
- ensure responses are tailored to the needs and circumstances of victim-survivors, including children and Tasmanian Aboriginal communities
- meet the commitments of current reforms

- **Create efficiency through certainty**

Real efficiencies come from stability, not short-term savings. The community sector has experienced chronic underfunding for far too long; they have little to no room for further efficiencies. Five-year, adequately funded contracts inclusive of indexation should be implemented as soon as possible, this will:

- allow services to plan and innovate
- improve staff retention and reduce churn
- support efficient operations and sustainable workforce development
- maintain continuity of care and responsiveness to demand

Programs such as the 500 workers program must be secured to ensure the workforce capacity needed to respond to current and future demand.

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### **3. Are there programs or services that could be transitioned out as the needs of Tasmanians evolve and priorities shift?**

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Violence against women and children is not only a profound human tragedy – it is also a major, ongoing economic burden. It is estimated to cost Australia at least **\$22 billion per year** (2015–16), rising to around **\$26 billion** when under-represented high-risk groups are properly counted – a recurring cost comparable to a major Commonwealth program. Governments directly bear about **\$4.1 billion** (19%) of these costs each year through higher expenditure on hospitals, mental health, police, courts, prisons, homelessness and income support, as well as foregone taxation from reduced earnings.<sup>9</sup>

Sexual violence alone imposes significant lifetime and annual costs while specialist services remain under-funded. Nationally, the lifetime economic and social costs of sexual violence equate to **\$14.1 billion** for a single year's cohort of victim-survivors, this includes \$7.5 billion attributable to child sexual abuse and \$6.6 billion attributable to adult sexual abuse. However, specialist sexual violence services are estimated to be under-funded by around **\$80 million per year**, meaning governments are effectively paying more in long-run health, welfare, justice and productivity losses than it would cost to meet demand for timely support.<sup>10</sup>

Victim-survivors of child sexual abuse also experience significantly worse health and wellbeing outcomes. Compared with those who have not experienced child sexual abuse, they are:

- almost 3 times as likely to report self-harming behaviour
- more than twice as likely to report suicide attempts
- twice as likely to have cannabis dependence

- 1.6 times as likely to be a current smoker
- almost 1.4 times as likely to binge drink <sup>11</sup>

Evidence shows that prevention and early-intervention programs in family and sexual violence have positive benefit to cost ratios. Targeted investment can reduce a large, recurrent fiscal and economic liability while strengthening long-term human capital and productivity. TFSVA recommends that the Tasmanian government considers the following:

- **Do not transition away from essential FSV services**

Services that support victim-survivors must remain a core budget priority. Removing or reducing them would increase harm. TFSVA has heard from members and community-based FSV services that they are experiencing lengthy waitlists, with people waiting months to years for assistance. This leads to higher costs in the public sector through health, housing, justice and child protection.

- **Invest adequately across the whole-of-continuum of programs and services**

Use economic modelling to understand how long term, sustained investment in prevention and early intervention now, can support transition and reprioritisation of funds over time. While crisis and recovery services must be protected and strengthened, there must also be sustained investment in prevention and early intervention so that, over time, demand for high-cost crisis responses and the lifetime impacts of abuse are reduced. The national rapid review on prevention approaches highlights several priority areas including investment in programs to support children and young people exposed to family violence, programs to address harmful sexual behaviours (supported through the Commission of Inquiry recommendations) and programs to engage men and boys on healthy masculinities <sup>12</sup>

- **Recognise the current scale of existing harm**

Harm has already occurred for many people – including the 28% of adult Tasmanians who are victim-survivors of child sexual abuse. Alongside investment in prevention, we must ensure sufficient legal assistance and trauma-recovery services for women, children and adults impacted by family and sexual violence.

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#### **4. Where could government activities be re-calibrated to operate more effectively, while still meeting essential needs?**

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Tasmanian evidence indicates that three in four victim-survivors experience some level of systems abuse within the services and systems intended to protect and support them. This not only compounds public-sector costs, but also significantly increases the emotional and mental health impact on victim-survivors <sup>13</sup>. To remove impacts of systems abuse, TFSVA suggests that the Tasmanian government considers:



- **Re-calibrating systems to prevent systems abuse**

Ensure all Tasmanian government systems that interact with victim-survivors have appropriate policies and practices in place that do not enable systems abuse. Accountability mechanisms should be embedded, along with the inclusion of training and ongoing professional development and supervision in trauma-informed practices. Co-design practices with victim-survivors should be supported in the continuous improvement of existing services and in the design of new programs and services.

- **Strengthen effective operations through integration**

Adopt whole-of-system frameworks that connect federal and state initiatives, community services, housing, police and justice. People should experience a joined-up system that responds to and meets their needs, rather than a series of disconnected services.

- **Drive innovation through co-design**

Create space to test new approaches that are co-designed with victim-survivors, practitioners and researchers, so that innovation is firmly grounded in lived experience, practice knowledge and evidence, this ensures that services and systems are fit for purpose and meet the needs of victim-survivors. This should include a focus on streamlining consultations and taking action on current research and report recommendations. Developing approaches that support monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement.

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**5. For any new funding ideas (specifying whether operational or capital), what savings or offsets could be identified elsewhere to ensure the overall budget remains balanced?**

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Independent research commissioned by TFSVA on government expenditure indicates that, on the face of what is reported in the 2024–25 budget statements of five state and territory jurisdictions, Tasmania has by far the lowest per capita funding for family and sexual violence (FSV) services.

While it is not the role of TFSVA to determine where budget offsets should be found, it is critical to recognise that Tasmania’s chronic underfunding of FSV services requires focused investment to meet demand, alongside new and innovative programs. These must directly support the implementation of existing reforms and strategies, including the Commission of Inquiry recommendations, the Survivors at the Centre Action Plan and the Change for Children Strategy.

State/Territory Budget	Budget Amount	2024 Population	Funding per capita
<b>Tasmania 2024-25 Budget**</b>	\$14,828,750	571,200	\$25.96
<b>Western Australia 2024-25 Budget**</b>	\$127,060,000	2,965,159	\$42.85
<b>ACT 2024-25 Budget**</b>	\$23,693,000	474,132	\$49.97
<b>Queensland 2024-25 Budget***</b>	\$323,284,000	5,460,477	\$59.20
<b>Victoria 2024-25 Budget***</b>	\$778,100,000	6,816,241	\$114.15

*\* Total specific DFSV funding not readily identified in brief analysis of NSW; SA and NT 2024-25 Budgets*

*\*\* Averaged across 2024-25 forward estimates; \*\*\* 2024-25 amount only*

*Sources:*

- *Tasmanian Government, 2024-25 Budget, Government Services, Budget Paper No.2, Volume 1 (page 273)*
- *State of Western Australia, 2024-25 Budget Statements, Budget Paper No. 2 Volume 2, (page 509)*
- *Australian Capital Territory, Budget 2024-25, Budget Statements G, Community Services Directorate, (page 15) and Budget Outlook 2024-25 (page 335)*
- *State of Queensland (Queensland Treasury) - 2024-25 Queensland Budget, Service Delivery Statements, Department of Justice and Attorney General (page 9)*
- *State of Victoria, 2024-25 Victorian Budget, Service Delivery, Budget Paper No.3, (page 116)*

*TFSVA commissioned research 2024*

TFSVA and our members are acutely aware of current state budget pressures. However, essential services for victim-survivors and efforts to end violence are already chronically underfunded. TFSVA supports the careful consideration of new funding opportunities that will address and deliver the reforms needed to ensure the safety, dignity and agency of Tasmanian women and children.

TFSVA does not support offsets being taken from frontline FSV services, or from any prevention, early intervention, response or recovery initiatives. Doing so would simply shift costs and risk into crisis responses and increase long-term expenditure across health, housing, and justice.

## Conclusion

Tasmania's reforms will only succeed if the service system is funded to implement them safely, consistently and at the scale required to meet demand and end violence. Budget decisions must be guided first by victim-survivor safety and outcomes - not short-term efficiencies that can unintentionally create greater risk, longer waitlists, and higher downstream costs.

TFSVA calls on the Tasmanian Government to:

- Protect and strengthen essential frontline community-based FSV services, so victim-survivors are not turned away and waitlists do not escalate.
- Deliver reform through coordination and implementation, aligning existing initiatives into a coherent whole-of-continuum system.
- Build stability and efficiency through funding certainty, including long-term, five-year contracts with indexation to improve workforce retention and service continuity.
- Sustain investment in prevention and early intervention, alongside crisis and recovery services, to reduce long-term harm and economic burden over time.

If we do not strengthen and invest in the family and sexual violence service system now, the cycle of violence will continue - at significant human and economic cost.

# References

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- <sup>2</sup> Australian Institute of Health and welfare, 2025, Family, domestic and sexual violence <https://www.aihw.gov.au/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence>
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid*
- <sup>4</sup> Tasmania Police, Corporate Performance Reports, <https://www.police.tas.gov.au/about-us/our-performance/>
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid*
- <sup>6</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2024, Recorded Crime – Victims, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/recorded-crime-victims/latest-release>
- <sup>7</sup> Australian Child Maltreatment Study, 2023, The Australian Child Maltreatment Study National prevalence and associated health outcomes of child abuse and neglect, <https://www.acms.au/>
- <sup>8</sup> Shelter Tasmania, 2023, ‘Somewhere To Go: Meeting the housing needs of women and children in Tasmania’, [https://sheltertas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Somewhere-to-Go\\_Housing\\_FinNov2013.pdf](https://sheltertas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Somewhere-to-Go_Housing_FinNov2013.pdf)
- <sup>9</sup> KPMG, 2026, ‘The cost of violence against women and their children in Australia’  
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- <sup>11</sup> Australian Institute of Health and welfare, 2025, Family, domestic and sexual violence <https://www.aihw.gov.au/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence>
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<https://www.pmc.gov.au/resources/unlocking-the-prevention-potential>
- <sup>13</sup> Engender Equality 2025, ‘Systems Abuse and Family Violence in Tasmania Report’  
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