

**SAFE
HOMES
FAMILIES
COMMUNITIES**

RESPONDING AND REPORTING 2022

Achievements in the delivery of
Safe Homes, Families, Communities:
Tasmania's action plan for family
and sexual violence 2019-2022

APRIL 2023



Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement of Tasmanian Aboriginal People

The Tasmanian Government acknowledges and pays respect to Tasmanian Aboriginal people; the past and present custodians of Tasmania and pays respect to Tasmanian Aboriginal Elders, past and present.

We acknowledge the devastating impacts of family and sexual violence in Aboriginal communities.

We recognise the ongoing leadership of Aboriginal communities in addressing and preventing family and sexual violence.

Acknowledgement of Victims and Survivors of Family and Sexual Violence

We pay our respects to victims and victim-survivors of family and sexual violence. We acknowledge their resilience and courage. Victim-survivors are at the heart of our work to prevent and respond to family and sexual violence, and to hold perpetrators to account. We also acknowledge the families and friends of those who have been killed as a result of family and sexual violence and acknowledge that the devastating impacts can be widely felt in a family and community.

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SAFE HOMES, FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES

2021–22*



\$26 million over three years

(2019-20 to 2021-22) committed to implement our ongoing response to eliminate family and sexual violence under Safe Homes, Families, Communities

\$9.347 million in additional funding allocated to family and sexual violence responses since the onset of the COVID 19 pandemic

258 high-risk family violence incidents mapped by the Safe Families Coordination Unit

4,352 at-risk children identified and **2,978** notifications made by the Safe Families Coordination Unit to schools to support students experiencing family violence

756 clients provided with support, counselling and referral options by the Safe Choices service

Over **33,905** unique views of the family and sexual violence website, Safe from Violence. Total views over life of Safe Homes, Families, Communities is **43,960**

443*** Aboriginal families (parents and children) supported by Aboriginal Family Safety Workers**
(minimum number based on families that have identified as Aboriginal)

60 high-risk family violence perpetrators tracked through the Electronic Monitoring program

92 households assisted by the Family Violence Rapid Rehousing program

304 additional children and young people received counselling services provided by the Australian Childhood Foundation**

2,543 additional hours of counselling and service provision for children and young people provided by the Australian Childhood Foundation**

1,391 additional hours of counselling services for adults provided by Engender Equality**

252 additional clients provided with legal assistance by Women's Legal Service Tasmania and Tasmania Legal Aid**

140 women provided with safety upgrades to support them to remain in their own home or home of choice

* All data is from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022

** This is for additional clients supported under Safe Homes, Families, Communities funding, these were in addition to clients supported by other government programs

*** A change as to what was being counted occurred during 2022, affecting this total (detailed below)

FOREWORD

The Tasmanian Government remains steadfastly committed to a Tasmania free from violence.

As Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence and Minister for Women, I am deeply committed to taking evidence-based, effective action to eliminate family and sexual violence, provide victim-survivor centred responses, and hold perpetrators to account. Our goal is that every Tasmanian lives free from violence. This is not aspirational, it is your right.

It is a travesty that family and sexual violence still occurs in our community, even after a decade of targeted action. However, more Tasmanians are coming forward than ever before. I hope this reflects a lower community tolerance for family and sexual violence, and greater awareness that family and sexual violence is a crime.

We have learned a lot since the release of our first Family Violence Action Plan in 2015. This learning informed our second Action Plan *Safe Homes, Families, Communities* which we released in 2019. The Second Action Plan outlined a vision for our State where all Tasmanians are safe, equal and respected and our homes, families and communities are free from all forms of family and sexual violence. This remains our vision today.

Responding and Reporting 2022 continues the Tasmanian Government's commitment to publicly report implementation progress and outcomes for *Safe Homes, Families, Communities*. Implementation has continued to progress well throughout 2021-22 – which was the last year of *Safe Homes, Families, Communities*.



During 2021-22 we progressed all actions in *Safe Homes, Families, Communities* to completion, noting that many initiatives are ongoing and have expanded including therapeutic counselling services, and coordinated and collaborative approaches to service delivery. My colleague, the Attorney General has also led significant legislative reform that has, amongst many achievements, strengthened consent laws and made stealthing a crime.

This Report concludes *Safe Homes, Families, Communities*. In November 2022, I released *Survivors at the Centre: Tasmania's Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan 2022 -2027*. Many of the actions from *Safe Homes, Families, Communities* are continuing, and the Third Action Plan also contains new and enhanced actions. Our Third Action Plan builds on our successes, and further refines and targets our efforts, to achieve the goal that every Tasmanian is able to live free from violence.

From 2024 we will report annually on *Survivors at the Centre* and continue our commitment to transparent reporting to achieve a Tasmania free from violence. I would like to thank the expert and dedicated frontline services who work in partnership with government to achieve this goal. And I would like to acknowledge victim-survivors of family and sexual violence who are at the heart and the centre of our response.

Jo Palmer MLC

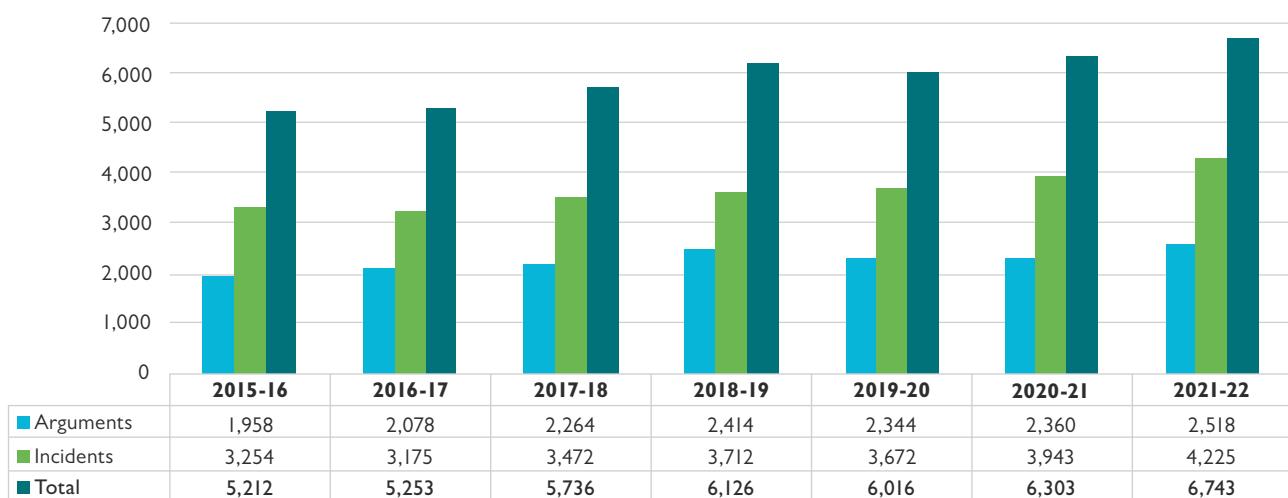
Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence



FAMILY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN TASMANIA

Family violence

In 2021-22, Tasmania Police attended 6,743 family violence incidents and 2,518 occasions classified as family arguments or family information reports¹. The graph below shows the reported incidence of family violence over the past seven financial years.



Source: Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management Reporting Services, March 2023.

In 2021-22, family violence incidents assessed as high-risk remained steady: 219 in 2021-22 compared with 218 in 2020-21. This represents a 39 per cent reduction over 7 years since the first year of the first Action Plan (2015-16).

Table I shows reported family violence incidents by risk category over the past seven financial years.

Table I: Family violence incidents in Tasmania by risk category²

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Low	1,031	1,068	1,364	1,652	1,696	1,963	2,115
Medium	1,864	1,755	1,801	1,777	1,739	1,762	1,891
High	359	352	307	283	237	218	219
Total	3,254	3,175	3,472	3,712	3,672	3,943	4,225

Source: Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management Reporting Services, March 2023.

¹ A family argument is a dispute where family violence as defined in the *Family Violence Act 2004* (Tas), has not been, and is not likely to be, committed. For example: A couple may engage in a loud argument that attracts the attention of concerned neighbours who contact Tasmania Police. On arrival, Tasmania Police make an assessment about whether a situation is a family argument or family violence.

² Risk category is determined by the rating under the Risk Assessment Screening Tool (RAST) which indicates the likelihood of the perpetrator of family violence repeating or escalating their violence.

Over the seven year period to 2021-22, medium-risk incidents have remained steady with a slight increase of 1 per cent and low risk incidents increased by 105 per cent. The increase in low-risk incidents, together with an increase in reported family arguments, has driven an overall increase of 7 per cent in total family arguments and incidents from 2020-21 to 2021-22.

This sustained level of reporting suggests a reduced level of tolerance for family violence in the community and by persons affected by family violence. It also shows an increased awareness and confidence in family violence response, intervention and support services.

Sexual violence

In 2021-22, 574 sexual assaults were reported to Tasmania Police, a 19 per cent increase from 2020-21 and 107 per cent above the six year average (277).

Table 2: Sexual Assaults recorded

2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
240	249	220	240	227	484	574

Source: Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management Reporting Services, March 2023.

The number of sexual assaults reported to police can vary significantly from year to year. Of the 574 sexual assaults reported in 2021-22, 38 per cent were committed a year or more before they were reported, some occurring several decades ago.³

Females accounted for 85 per cent of victim-survivors. Most sexual assaults reported occurred at residential locations (76 per cent).

Data monitoring and building the evidence base in Tasmania

The Tasmanian Government continually monitors data relating to the demand for family and sexual violence services, and we work closely with service providers to ensure these needs can be met.

Monitoring demand outside of our criminal justice response continues to prove challenging due to the complexity of collating data sets across community-based support services. This is a shared national issue across jurisdictions.

In 2020-21, Communities Tasmania commenced the Demand, Assess, Track, Act (DATA) Project. This is a dedicated data project to review current and preferred data reporting capability across our government and non-government specialist family and sexual violence services.

The DATA Project has had close alignment with the work being undertaken under Action 36, to establish a common risk assessment tool for family violence services, in the form of a TARRA (Tasmanian and Rural Risk Assessment) tool. Both of these projects have improved data reporting capability for our specialist services being progressed under Action 35. In 2021-22 the TARRA has been trialled by specialist family violence services as a common risk assessment tool.

The work to improve data reporting is progressing in collaboration with family and sexual violence specialist services. The intent is to provide more robust data and understanding of the drivers behind family and sexual violence, including trends frontline services may be experiencing.

Continuing to build and review our collaborative evidence base is essential to ensuring that our programs and services meet the needs of victim-survivors and are effective in preventing and responding to family and sexual violence.

³ Source: Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management Crime Statistics Supplement 2021-22



Legislative Reform

Since 2015, the Tasmanian Government, through the Attorney General, has achieved a significant program of legislative changes in the family and sexual violence area:

2017 Reformed the *Family Violence Act* to:

- allow judges to make an order declaring an alleged victim of family violence to be a special witness; and
- enable the recording of a family violence offence on a person's criminal record as a family violence offence.

Amended the *Family Violence Act* to:

- include the option of electronic monitoring a family violence offender, in a Family Violence Order, if that person has previously been found guilty of a family violence offence; currently charged with a family violence offence; or has a history of committing family violence.

2018 Reformed the *Family Violence Act* to:

- introduce a new crime of persistent family violence; and
- prohibit self-represented defendants from cross-examining witnesses in family violence matters.

2019 Amended the *Criminal Code (Bullying) Act* to extend the crime of stalking to address bullying behaviours and enhance the definition of family violence.

2020 Amended the *Evidence Act* to allow victims of crime to consent to publication of their identity, if they choose to do so.

Amended the *Criminal Code (Sexual Abuse Terminology) Act* to remove outdated terminology in relation to sexual offending, and to ensure the gravity of crimes against children is properly reflected in the terminology and that this predatory and exploitative offending is clearly identified and recorded.

Abolished court fees for Tasmanians imposed through the Courts for Tasmanians seeking interim family violence orders.

2022 Amended the *Criminal Code* to:

- reflect that there is no free agreement to sexual intercourse in the event of certain conduct regarding condoms; and
- create the new stand-alone offence of strangulation, choking and suffocation.

Family Violence Reforms Bill 2022 - to amend the *Family Violence Act 2004* and other Acts to:

- introduce a Serial Family Violence Perpetrator Declaration to identify perpetrators who repeatedly commit family violence offences against a single partner or multiple and successive partners;
- introduce an option for the court to order mandated rehabilitation program participation as a Family Violence Order condition; and
- expand the definition of family violence to include additional specific offences, and expand the definition of harassing to reflect that making unwelcome contact is a form of family violence.

SAFE HOMES, FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES

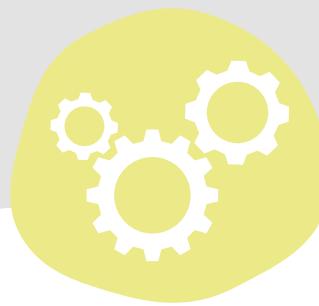


Tasmania's Action Plan for Family and Sexual Violence 2019–2022

*Safe Homes, Families,
Communities outlines
40 actions to prevent and
respond to family and sexual
violence in Tasmania.*

Primary prevention and early intervention

- I.** Membership of Our Watch
- 2.** Establish an Our Watch Primary Prevention Officer in Tasmania
- 3.** Embed Respectful Relationships education in Tasmanian Government schools
- 4.** Support the successful National Campaign *Stop It At The Start*
- 5.** Support implementation of the new National Sexual Violence Campaign
- 6.** Continue to ensure that gender equality and respect are at the centre of all Tasmanian State Service workplaces
- 7.** Develop a family and sexual violence website
- 8.** Work with the eSafety Commissioner to deliver education and training in response to technology-facilitated abuse
- 9.** Deliver a Problem Sexual Behaviours and Sexually Abusive Behaviours program for children and young people
- 10.** Support Tasmanian Aboriginal Communities to deliver targeted primary prevention and early intervention programs and to improve service delivery for Aboriginal people affected by family and sexual violence
- 11.** Trial the Step Up adolescent intervention program
- 12.** Strengthen the Defendant Health Liaison Service to provide early intervention to offenders
- 13.** Deliver the Men's Referral Service



Response and recovery

- 14.** Deliver Safe Choices
- 15.** Support women with disability through the Local Support Coordinator role in Safe Choices
- 16.** Support children and families through the Safe Homes, Safe Families Support Team
- 17.** Support Aboriginal families through the Aboriginal Family Safety Workers in Child and Family Centres
- 18.** Provide increased counselling services for children and young people experiencing family violence
- 19.** Provide counselling services for adults experiencing family violence
- 20.** Invest in crisis accommodation through the *Affordable Housing Action Plan 2019-2023*
- 21.** Deliver the Rapid Rehousing program for people experiencing family violence
- 22.** Deliver the Keeping Women Safe In Their Homes program
- 23.** Provide legal assistance to people experiencing family violence
- 24.** Deliver perpetrator programs for low, medium and high-risk perpetrators
- 25.** Introduce the ability to require mandated behaviour change program participation as part of a Family Violence Order
- 26.** Extend forensic medical examinations for adult victim-survivors of family and sexual violence to a Statewide service

Strengthening the service system

- 27.** Strengthen the Safe Families Coordination Unit
- 28.** Trial electronic monitoring of high-risk family violence offenders, with opt-in available for victim-survivors
- 29.** Strengthen specialist police prosecution services
- 30.** Implement legislative reform to strengthen legal responses to family and sexual violence
- 31.** Improve data collection and reporting
- 32.** Membership of Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety
- 33.** Strengthen mechanisms for schools to respond to technology-facilitated abuse including image-based abuse
- 34.** Roll out mobile phone data extraction devices to collect evidence of technology-facilitated abuse
- 35.** Centralise management of family and sexual violence services within the former Department of Communities Tasmania
- 36.** Introduce standardised risk assessment processes across government and non-government family and sexual violence services
- 37.** Develop and deliver training across identified Tasmanian Government services to respond to family and sexual violence
- 38.** Establish a Family Violence Liaison Officer in the Strong Families, Safe Kids Advice and Referral Line
- 39.** Undertake a feasibility study for a disclosure scheme in Tasmania
- 40.** Review the regional sexual assault protocols

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

2021-22

Safe Homes, Families, Communities built on actions established under our first family violence action plan and introduced several new actions.

Primary prevention and early intervention

- The Tasmanian Government continued to promote and support Our Watch campaigns and resources during 2021-22, including the *Change the Story* series; Our Watch's Men in Focus events across Tasmania; and the publication of Our Watch's *National Primary Prevention Hub Forum report for Tasmania* (Action 1). The Tasmanian Government and Our Watch signed a historic new five-year partnership agreement on 23 June 2022.
- During 2021-22, Our Watch's Senior Advisor Tasmania continued to support Tasmanian Government departments to implement the Workplace Equality and Respect Standards, and conducted targeted engagement with key stakeholders across Tasmania including government stakeholders, such as working with Local Governments to embed Workplace Equality and Respect Standards, and non-government stakeholders such as influential sporting organisations including AFL Tasmania and Football Tasmania (Action 2).
- In April 2022, Education Ministers endorsed the revised Version 9.0 of the Australian Curriculum which strengthens content and guidance around teaching consent, respectful relationships and sexuality. The Department for Education, Children and Young People continued to enhance the content of the Prep to Year 10 Respectful Relationships Education Teaching and Learning packages by aligning modules to Version 9.0 of the Australian Curriculum. The Department offered professional learning opportunities to support embedding consent education within schools.
- During 2022, all Tasmanian Government departments implemented activities and reported against the five Our Watch Workplace Equality and Respect (WER) Standards by 30 June 2022 (Action 6). This is to ensure that gender equality and respect are at the centre of all Tasmanian State Service workplaces.
- The family and sexual violence website had a total of 33,905 views during 2021-22. Since its inception in 2018, there has been a total of 43,960 website views.
- During 2022, the Sexual Assault Support Service delivered Problem Sexual Behaviours (PSB) and Sexually Abusive Behaviours (SAB) programs for children and young people. Over the period 2021-22 the programs received 93 referrals, 27 young people completed the programs and 19 training sessions were delivered Statewide (Action 9). These programs are unique to Tasmania.
The initial PSB and SAB programs are currently being evaluated across two phases, and the final report is due at the end of 2023.
- Aboriginal Primary Prevention and Early Intervention Grants Program: the South East Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation received \$50,000 towards delivery of the Bark Hut Project, an Aboriginal designed and led family violence primary prevention project that engages Aboriginal families through the building of Tasmanian Aboriginal bark huts (Action 10).
- The trial of the Step-Up Adolescent Intervention Program proved successful and program expansion was recommended. This program is being expanded Statewide from 2022-23 (Action 11).
- In 2022, a minimum of 150 new clients accessed the Defendant Health Liaison Service and 1,892 client contacts were made through face to face meetings, email and phone (Action 12).
- In 2021-22, there was a total of 383 perpetrators of family violence who accessed information and referral to the Men's Referral Service from the previous year (376), indicating an uptake in men seeking help for behaviour change and increased awareness of the service (Action 13).





Above and to the right: The Our Watch partnership signing was on June 23 2022. (L-R): the former Minister for Prevention of Family Violence Jacquie Petrusma, Moo Baulch OAM Chair, Our Watch Board and Patty Kinnery, CEO Our Watch.



(L-R): Kathryn Fordyce, CEO Laurel House, Jill Maxwell, CEO Sexual Assault Support Service, Former Minister for Prevention of Family Violence, the Hon Jacquie Petrusma, Yvette Cehtel, CEO Women's Legal Service, Mary Knowles OAM, Mayor Northern Midlands Council and Consultation Ambassador, and Alina Thomas, CEO Engender Equality.



The launch of the consultation strategy for the Government's Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan was on 10 February 2022. (L-R): Jill Maxwell, CEO Sexual Assault Support Service, former Minister for Prevention of Family Violence Jacquie Petrusma, and Mary Knowles OAM, Mayor of the Northern Midlands Council and Consultation Ambassador.

Response and recovery

- 756 clients were provided with practical support, counselling, information and referral by Safe Choices (Action 14).
- 179 Safe Choices clients with a disability were supported through the Local Support Coordinator, an increase from 120 in the previous year (Action 15).
- 3,338 students affected by family violence in Tasmanian Government schools and Child and Family Learning Centres were supported by the Safe Homes, Safe Families Support Team (Action 16).⁴
- 443⁵ Aboriginal parents and children were supported by Aboriginal Family Safety Workers in Child and Family Learning Centres (minimum number based on families that have identified as Aboriginal) (Action 17).
- 304 children and young people received counselling services, and an additional 2,543 hours of counselling and service provision were provided by the Australian Childhood Foundation (Action 18).
- 413 adults accessed counselling services provided through Engender Equality (Action 19). This represented a large increase in clients accessing counselling from 2020-21, which is consistent with the above mentioned trend of increasing family arguments and incidents being reported since 2015-16. The number of hours of direct service provided decreased from 2020-21 from 1,617 to 1,391⁶ in 2021-22.
- The Tasmanian Government is currently developing a 20 year comprehensive Tasmanian Housing Strategy, which is due to be completed mid-2023. This will include the development of an Action Plan outlining future housing and homelessness initiatives, including responding to the needs of specific cohorts such as women and/or children experiencing family violence (Action 20).
- As at the end of June 2022, new crisis accommodation under the Affordable Housing Action Plan 2019-2023 included the completion of 36 new units of accommodation and 110 new units to be completed (at various statewide locations) (Action 20).
- As at 30 June 2022, there were 60 properties available under the Family Violence Rapid Rehousing program. In 2021-22, 42 households were assisted through program. Since the commencement of the program, 355 households in total were assisted.
- 140 women were assisted to stay safely in their own home, or a home of their choice, through the Keeping Women Safe in their Homes program (Action 22).
- 252 clients were provided with legal assistance by Women's Legal Service Tasmania and Tasmania Legal Aid (Action 23).
- 15 forensic medical examinations were performed for victim-survivors of family violence, and 144 examinations were performed for victim-survivors of sexual assault (Action 26).

⁴ Figures from 2020-21 cannot be directly compared to figures from 2021-22 due to increases in reporting capabilities, and also children enrolled in non-government schools were included in the 2021-22 figure.

⁵ Child and Family Learning Centres amended their reporting processes in 2022 so this figure is not comparable with the 2020-21 figure.

⁶ This figure varies from the 2020-21 figure due to staff leave and turnover.



Strengthening the service system

- The Safe Families Coordination Unit mapped 258 high risk family violence incidents, identified 4,352 children affected by family violence and made 2,978 notifications to schools (Action 27).
- 60 family violence perpetrators were tracked through the Electronic Monitoring Trial, with 43 victim-survivors also opting-in to the Trial (Action 28).⁷
- 2,047 family violence matters were prosecuted by Specialist Police Prosecution Services (Action 29).
- During 2021-22, the Tasmanian Government implemented further new legislative reforms (Action 30):
 - In June 2022, *The Criminal Code Amendment 2022* received Royal Assent to amend the definition of consent in the Criminal Code to specifically recognise ‘stealthling’ as a crime; and criminalise non-fatal strangulation, choking and suffocation as a standalone offence.
 - In March 2022, *The Family Violence Reforms Bill 2022* was introduced to deliver on our Government’s commitments to: provide the courts with the power to declare repeat offenders as Serial Family Violence Perpetrators and order rehabilitation program participation as a family violence order condition. This Bill also amends the Family Violence Act to provide an option for the court to order mandated rehabilitation program participation as a family violence order condition (Action 25).
- The Department for Education, Children and Young People continued to promote its suite of protective behaviours and personal safety online resources to assist children and young people to identify early warning signs of technology-facilitated abuse and strategies to protect themselves if they experience these scenarios (Action 33).
- The former Department of Communities Tasmania, now part of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, continued its project to introduce standardised risk assessment, reporting and data collection across community-based family violence services through development and piloting of the TARRA (Action 36).

⁷ Statistics between 2020-21 and 2021-22 cannot be compared due to offenders continuing their electronic monitoring devices between reporting periods.



SURVIVORS AT THE CENTRE: TASMANIA'S THIRD FAMILY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE ACTION PLAN

Eliminating family and sexual violence is a key priority of the Tasmanian Government.

Survivors at the Centre: Tasmania's Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan 2022-27 is the Tasmanian Government's coordinated, whole-of-government new action plan to respond to family and sexual violence.

The voice of victim-survivors continues to be at the centre of the government's approach to consultation and collaboration with the Tasmanian community. Throughout 2022, the Tasmanian Government undertook extensive consultation to develop *Survivors at the Centre*.

This included a public survey of adult victim-survivors ('The Hearing Lived Experience Survey 2022'), targeted workshops held in 2022, public written submissions and partnering with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.

The Hearing Lived Experience Survey was opened in February 2022 for 12 months. Over 700 responses were received. Outcomes from the survey have shaped *Survivors at the Centre*, and continue to inform its implementation.

The Tasmanian Government has also committed to establishing Tasmania's first Victim-Survivor Advisory Council. The council will provide an ongoing voice to government and will inform the ongoing evolution and implementation of *Survivors at the Centre*.

Survivors at the Centre's vision is that all Tasmanians are safe, equal and respected, and that our homes, families and communities are free from all forms of family and sexual violence.

Survivors at the Centre represents the next stage of the government's long-term commitment to preventing and responding to family and sexual violence.

Survivors at the Centre commits \$100 million over five years for 38 actions to prevent and respond to family and sexual violence in Tasmania. These include new actions and continuing or enhanced actions from the Tasmanian Government's previous two Action Plans.



NEXT STEPS

Many of the actions from *Safe Homes, Families, Communities* continue into our action plan, *Survivors at the Centre*.

The next Responding and Reporting Report will focus on the implementation of the first year of *Survivors at the Centre*.

Survivors at the Centre also commits to the development of an outcomes framework to deepen our evidence base and enable evaluation of our prevention and response initiatives.

The outcomes framework will be developed in 2023-24, after which Responding and Reporting will include reporting against the framework.





Email: fsvap@dpac.tas.gov.au | Visit: www.safefromviolence.tas.gov.au

If you or someone you know is impacted by family violence:

Call the Safe at Home Family Violence Response and Referral Line on 1800 633 937

If you or someone you know is impacted by sexual violence:

Call the Statewide Sexual Assault Crisis Line on 1800 697 877

In an emergency, always call 000

For more information, visit www.1800respect.org.au or www.safefromviolence.tas.gov.au