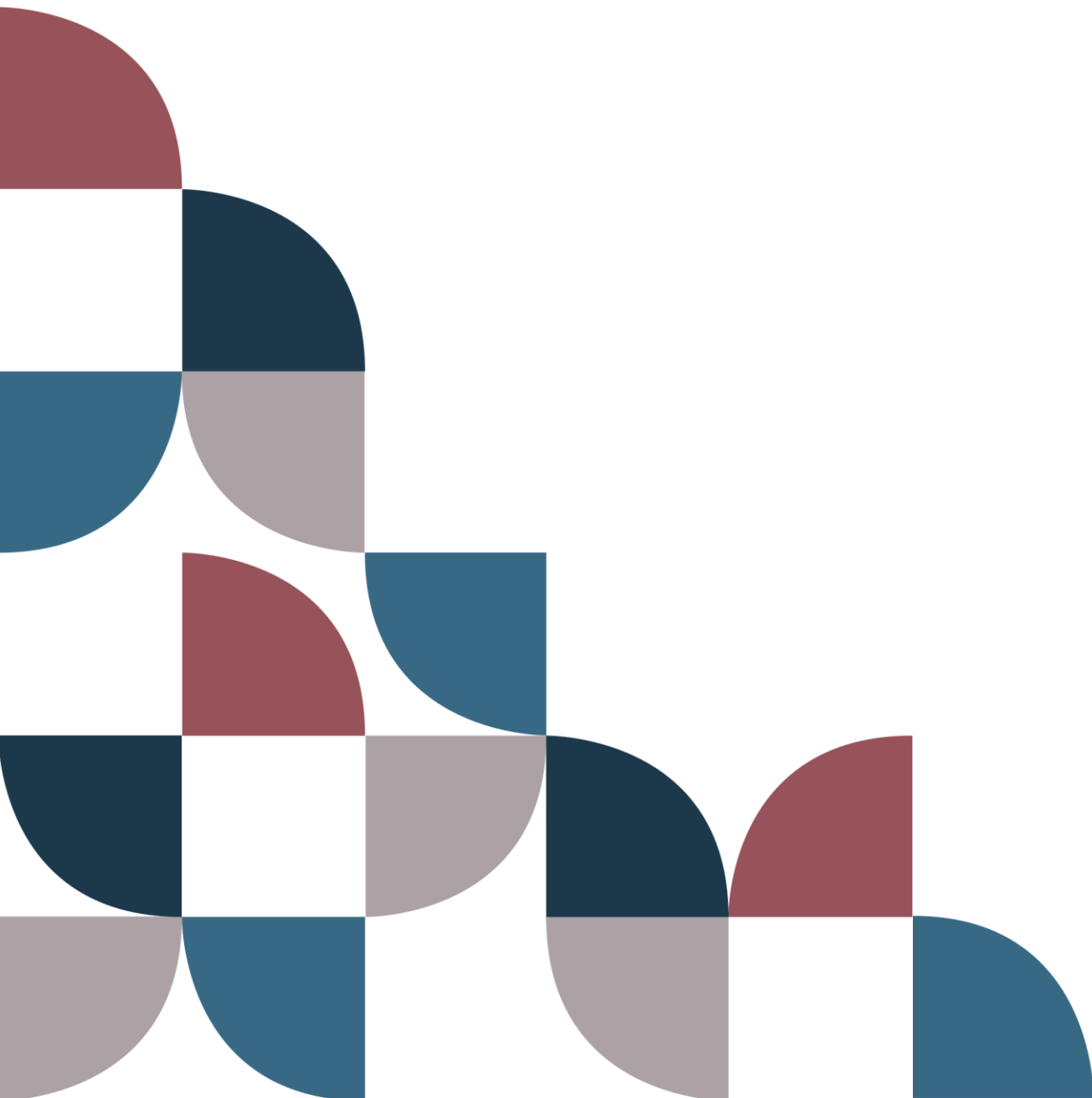


Tasmanian Government Submission

**Second Action Plan consultations: National Plan to End
Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032**

August 2026



Contents

Contents	2
Introduction.....	3
Tasmania's Position	4
Key Messages.....	4
Opportunities for National Investment and Innovation	5
Victim-Survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence	5
Prevention and early intervention	7
Children and young people in their own right.....	8
People who use violence	10
System integration and workforce	11
Conclusion.....	13

The Tasmanian Government welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to inform the Second Action Plan under the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032*.

Introduction

This submission outlines Tasmania's position on how Australia can strengthen efforts to prevent and respond to family, domestic and sexual violence over the next five years through the Second Action Plan (2027-2032). It identifies key opportunities to enhance prevention, early intervention, response, recovery and healing efforts.

Tasmania's *Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan, Survivors at the Centre 2022-27 (Survivors at the Centre)* is the Tasmanian Government's commitment to eliminating family and sexual violence from our community. The Plan sets out a vision where all Tasmanians are safe, equal and respected, and homes, families and communities are free from violence. More than \$150 million has been invested over five years to support prevention, early intervention, response and recovery initiatives, while holding perpetrators to account. *Survivors at the Centre* aligns closely with the *National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032* (the *National Plan*).

The Tasmanian Government remains committed to working collaboratively with the Australian Government and all states and territories to achieve our shared vision of ending gender-based violence in one generation.

Structure

This submission is structured around the five priority areas identified by the Australian Government for consultation on the Second Action Plan:

- Victim-survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence
- Prevention and early intervention
- Children and young people in their own right
- People who use violence
- System integration and workforce

Across each priority area, Tasmania emphasises the importance of integrated and coordinated responses, recognising that improved outcomes require collaboration across governments, service systems and communities. Key themes throughout this submission include child-centred practice, accessibility and inclusion, perpetrator accountability, workforce capability, and responses to emerging forms of violence.

Terminology

The [*Family Violence Act 2004 \(Tas\)*](#) defines family violence in Tasmania as violent, abusive and controlling behaviour committed by a person against their current or former spouse or intimate partner. Tasmania uses the term *family violence* to

acknowledge that children are impacted when violence is directed at one of their parents or carers, and as a result, are victim-survivors in their own right.

Tasmania acknowledges the broader terminology adopted in the *National Plan* – family, domestic and sexual violence (FDSV). Accordingly, this term and acronym are used throughout the submission.

Tasmania's Position

Tasmania is a smaller jurisdiction with a geographically dispersed population, with strong regional communities and interconnected service systems. Tasmania's regionality and unique socio-economic demographics adds further layers of complexity to preventing and responding to FDSV, particularly for vulnerable cohorts who may experience additional barriers to accessing timely and appropriate support. Like many parts of Australia, Tasmania also faces increasing demand across family and sexual violence, justice, health, housing and community services, alongside workforce pressures, housing constraints and challenges associated with service accessibility in regional areas. These factors can amplify the impacts of FDSV and create barriers to prevention, early intervention, recovery and healing. As the Second Action Plan is developed and implemented, it will be important to recognise and accommodate jurisdictional differences across Australia, ensuring that policy settings, funding approaches and implementation mechanisms are sufficiently flexible to respond to the unique characteristics, challenges and service delivery contexts of individual jurisdictions.

Key Messages

The following priorities should inform the Second Action Plan:

- Children and young people must be recognised as victim-survivors in their own right and placed at the centre of prevention, response, recovery and healing efforts.
- Improving outcomes requires systems that work together rather than operate in isolation. Stronger integration across justice, health, housing, education, child and family services and specialist family and sexual violence services will support earlier intervention, improve safety and create more seamless pathways through recovery and healing.
- Safe and secure housing is fundamental to safety, recovery and long-term wellbeing. Housing responses should be recognised as a critical enabler of FDSV reform and safety which supports both victim-survivors and efforts to address risks associated with people using violence.
- National policy and service responses must continue to evolve to address emerging forms of violence, including technology-facilitated abuse, coercive control and online harms affecting women, children and young people.
- Sustainable reductions in violence require a stronger focus on prevention and earlier intervention, including greater investment in respectful relationships education, community awareness, perpetrator accountability and evidence-based behaviour change programs.

- A capable, sustainable and skilled workforce remains critical to achieving the objectives of the *National Plan* and responding to increasing demand and complexity across service systems.
- All aspects of the Second Action Plan should prioritise accessible, culturally safe and inclusive responses that meet the needs of diverse communities.
- While maintaining a consistent national framework, the Second Action Plan must also recognise and accommodate jurisdictional differences across Australia.

Opportunities for National Investment and Innovation

Tasmania is well positioned to contribute to national reform efforts and help shape innovative responses to FDSV.

Targeted investment by the Australian Government in Tasmania has the potential to continue to deliver significant impacts, generate evidence for national reform and support the development of scalable models that improve outcomes for victim-survivors, children and young people, families and communities.

Opportunities exist to test and evaluate innovative approaches in areas including integrated service delivery, information sharing, housing and recovery responses, workforce capability, responses to people using violence, and emerging forms of harm such as technology-facilitated abuse.

Tasmania has already developed integrated and multidisciplinary initiatives that may provide lessons for national reform and future investment. These include, but are not limited to:

- **Safe at Home**, Tasmania's integrated criminal justice response to family violence. The model is supported by legislative information-sharing arrangements and strong collaboration across government agencies.
- The **Arch Centres**, which provide co-located multidisciplinary responses for people affected by sexual harm, offering an alternative setting for reporting sexual violence and accessing support. While the model continues to evolve, it has attracted national interest as an innovative approach to improving accessibility, coordination and victim-centred responses.

The Second Action Plan presents an opportunity to pilot nationally funded initiatives in Tasmania that strengthen integrated service delivery, improve system coordination and address areas of emerging need, while generating evidence to inform future national reforms.

Victim-Survivors of domestic, family and sexual violence

Tasmania supports an integrated approach that recognises safety, recovery and healing as shared responsibilities across the service system. Victim-survivors should

not have to navigate multiple disconnected services to access support, information, protection and justice.

People affected by FDSV frequently engage with a range of services, including but not limited to, police, courts, housing, health, child safety and specialist support services. Where these systems are fragmented or difficult to navigate, victim-survivors may experience additional trauma and face barriers to accessing justice and the support they need. Stronger integration between services can improve safety, reduce duplication and provide more coordinated pathways to recovery.

Safe and secure housing is fundamental to both safety and recovery. Access to crisis accommodation, transitional housing, community housing and longer-term housing options enables victim-survivors and children to establish stability and rebuild their lives following violence. The Tasmanian Government's Housing Strategy Action Plan 2023-27 commits to improving housing outcomes for women through expanded crisis and transitional accommodation, such as the new Safe Homes Program. Housing responses should be accompanied by wraparound supports that address recovery, wellbeing, health, disability and family needs. Where safe and appropriate, greater emphasis should be placed on enabling victim-survivors and children to remain in their homes and communities, while supporting alternative accommodation options for people who use violence. This can minimise disruption to housing, education, employment, support networks and community connections. Without appropriate housing pathways, victim-survivors may face increased pressure to remain in, or return to, unsafe environments.

The Second Action Plan should strengthen responses to emerging forms of violence, particularly technology-facilitated abuse. Technology-facilitated abuse is increasingly used as a mechanism to coerce, stalk, monitor, intimidate and control, and Tasmania is now seeing this as a routine feature of many family and sexual violence matters. As technology continues to evolve, legislative and policy responses should focus on the intent, harm, publication and distribution of abusive content and behaviours, rather than the specific technical methods used to create or facilitate them. The Tasmanian Government is prioritising legislative reform to address technology-facilitated harm, including covert tracking, covert digital surveillance and monitoring, and intimate image-based abuse (including digitally altered material and artificially generated material). It is intended that draft legislation for consultation will be released at the end of this year.

National responses should also recognise the investigative challenges associated with technology-facilitated abuse, including difficulties accessing evidence held by private technology companies and offshore platforms.

National responses should also recognise the role that systems abuse can play in perpetuating harm, including the misuse of legal, administrative and support service systems as a means of continuing coercion, control or post-separation abuse.

The Second Action Plan should also focus on reducing barriers to reporting and help-seeking. Shame, stigma, lack of awareness and concerns about system responses

or systems abuse can prevent victim-survivors from accessing support. Opportunities exist to improve awareness of available reporting, mechanisms to report and support options, ensuring that people affected by, or using, violence can more easily identify and access assistance when needed.

Services that are visible, culturally safe, trauma-informed and easy to navigate are more likely to be accessed and trusted by those experiencing violence.

Particular attention should be given to supporting population groups that may face additional barriers to safety and support. Effective service responses require flexibility to meet diverse needs, circumstances and pathways to support. Responses should be designed in genuine partnership with the communities they serve and recognise that experiences of violence can be shaped by multiple and intersecting factors, including culture, disability, age, sexuality, gender identity, geographic location and socioeconomic circumstances.

National reform should support tailored responses that recognise the diverse ways people experience violence and engage with support systems, providing accessible, inclusive and person-centred pathways to safety, justice, recovery and healing. This includes strengthening workforce capability, embedding culturally responsive and trauma-informed practice, improving service accessibility, and ensuring support can be delivered in ways that reflect individual circumstances, preferences and needs.

People with lived and living experience of violence should be meaningfully engaged in the design, delivery, evaluation and continuous improvement of policies, programs and services. Embedding lived experience perspectives in decision-making processes helps ensure responses are safe, effective and responsive to community needs. Tasmania's first Victim-Survivor Advisory Council is now firmly established and fully operational, ensuring lived experience directly informs reform, service planning and frontline responses.

Tasmania also sees opportunities to strengthen outreach, mobile and co-located service models that improve accessibility, particularly for people affected by sexual harm and those living outside major population centres.

Prevention and early intervention

Prevention and early intervention are essential to achieving the long-term objectives of the *National Plan*. Achieving our collective goal of ending gender-based violence in one generation requires action that addresses the drivers of violence, supports healthy relationships and identifies risk factors before violence escalates.

Ending violence requires a whole-of-community approach. Governments, schools, health services, employers, sporting organisations, community groups and families all have an important role in promoting respectful relationships, challenging harmful attitudes and responding to early signs of abusive and coercive behaviours.

Prevention efforts should begin early and continue throughout the life course.

Consistent respectful relationships education, opportunities to develop emotional

literacy and healthy relationship skills, and early engagement with children and young people can strengthen protective factors and help prevent violence before it occurs.

Prevention efforts should continue to focus on addressing gender inequality and other drivers of violence, while recognising the importance of broader social factors including housing insecurity, social isolation, harmful substance use, mental health and wellbeing challenges and experiences of childhood trauma and adversity.

Earlier identification of harmful behaviours and emerging risks presents a significant opportunity to prevent violence before crisis intervention is required. Schools, early childhood services, health settings and community organisations are often well placed to identify concerns, support vulnerable individuals and connect people to services before violence occurs and/or becomes entrenched. Expanding FDSV screening, identification and referral pathways across health, alcohol and other drug, gambling and community service settings may create additional opportunities to identify risk and provide early support before significant harm occurs.

Tasmania's experience suggests there are opportunities to strengthen referral pathways and coordinated service responses before a police intervention is required. Improved information sharing and earlier engagement across health, education and community services may help identify risk, connect individuals with support and reduce escalation before significant harm occurs.

National reform should strengthen opportunities for information sharing, coordinated referrals and earlier support pathways across service systems. Tasmania's experience with integrated information-sharing arrangements demonstrates the value of coordinated responses that identify risk earlier and connect individuals and families with the supports they need.

Effective prevention also requires greater investment in perpetrator intervention and behaviour change programs. Expanding evidence-based programs, particularly those that engage people before offending escalates, will support earlier intervention and improve long-term outcomes for individuals, families and communities.

The Second Action Plan should also recognise the growing importance of preventing online harms, including technology-facilitated abuse, harmful online content and other forms of digitally enabled violence. Prevention initiatives must evolve alongside changing technology and support people to safely navigate increasingly complex digital environments.

Children and young people in their own right

Tasmania strongly supports the recognition of children and young people as victim-survivors in their own right. Children who experience, witness or are exposed to FDSV can experience significant and long-lasting impacts on their safety, wellbeing, development, education and life outcomes.

National policy should ensure that children and young people are placed at the centre of prevention, early intervention, response, recovery and healing efforts. Children and young people should be recognised as active participants in decisions affecting their safety and wellbeing wherever appropriate. Their voices, experiences and perspectives should inform safety planning, service responses and recovery pathways. This requires systems that recognise and respond to children's experiences and needs, including within family law, child safety and parental decision-making processes, rather than viewing them solely through the experiences of adult victim-survivors.

Greater attention should also be given to the unique experiences of children who continue to live with a person using violence, as well as those who are required to relocate, change schools or leave their communities because of safety concerns. FDSV can significantly affect children's wellbeing, development, learning and connection to community, requiring coordinated responses across education, health, child safety and specialist support services.

Supporting families and caregivers to create safe, stable and nurturing environments is also critical to improving outcomes for children and young people. Healthy parenting, positive adult role models and strong support networks are critical protective factors that promote resilience and help reduce the impacts of violence and trauma. Recovery responses should also support children and protective caregivers to strengthen relationships, rebuild trust and heal together following experiences of violence.

Tasmania's extensive network of Child and Family Learning Centres (CFLCs) demonstrates the value of place-based integrated support for families. CFLCs provide safe, inclusive and welcoming places where families can access a range of services and wraparounds supports within their local community. By partnering with families and communities, CFLCs support the health, wellbeing and learning of children from pregnancy to five years of age and demonstrate the benefits of early, place-based intervention.

Children and young people benefit from responses that support early identification and intervention when violence or trauma is present. Schools, early childhood settings, health services and community organisations are often trusted environments where concerns may first be identified and where children can access support. Responses should be coordinated and child-centred, minimising the need for children and young people to repeatedly engage with multiple services or retell their experiences. Support should be delivered in ways that are inclusive, accessible and sensitive to children's developmental needs, ensuring they feel supported rather than singled out or different from their peers.

Earlier access to therapeutic and recovery supports for children and young people is critical. Timely support can help address the impacts of trauma, strengthen resilience and improve long-term wellbeing outcomes. Children should be able to access appropriate services regardless of where they live or which part of the service system first identifies a need for support.

The Second Action Plan should continue to strengthen children's understanding of healthy relationships, consent, respect, safety and help-seeking. Providing accessible information and opportunities for children and young people to develop these skills supports prevention, promotes healthy relationships and reduces vulnerability to future harm.

Emerging risks affecting children and young people require particular attention. Technology-facilitated abuse, harmful online content, online exploitation, image-based abuse, deepfakes and violence within peer and dating relationships are increasingly affecting younger cohorts. National responses should strengthen prevention, digital literacy and support services to help children and young people safely navigate online environments.

There is also a growing need to better understand and respond to family and sexual violence involving children and young people who use violence. Further research, evaluation and evidence-informed intervention pathways are needed to ensure responses are effective, developmentally appropriate and focused on preventing violence from continuing into adulthood.

Children and young people should also play a meaningful role in shaping solutions. Their lived experience, perspectives and expertise can inform policies, programs and services that better meet the needs of future generations.

People who use violence

Ending FDSV requires a sustained focus on accountability, behaviour change and early intervention for people who use violence.

While justice responses remain essential, long-term reductions in violence will require greater investment in evidence-based interventions that address harmful behaviours before violence escalates or becomes entrenched. National efforts should support a continuum of responses that includes prevention, early intervention, behaviour change and accountability.

Earlier identification of people at risk of using violence presents a significant opportunity for reform. There is a need to strengthen intervention pathways at critical points following incidents of violence, rather than relying solely on justice responses. Earlier engagement creates opportunities to interrupt patterns of behaviour, improve accountability and reduce future risk.

Current responses often occur after violence has already taken place or offending behaviour has become established. Expanding referral pathways and intervention opportunities across health, education, community and justice settings could enable earlier engagement and improve outcomes. Effective responses should also address factors that may intersect with the use of violence, including housing instability, mental health, alcohol and other drug use, financial stress and parenting challenges. Coordinated interventions that combine accountability with practical support can contribute to improved outcomes for individuals, families and communities.

For example, improving access to appropriate accommodation and support options for perpetrators may assist in reducing ongoing risk, support engagement with behaviour change interventions and enhance offender accountability. Such approaches may also enable victim-survivors and children to remain safely in their homes where appropriate, maintaining stability and connection to education, employment, community and support networks. These responses should complement, not replace, broader efforts to prioritise victim-survivor safety and wellbeing.

The Second Action Plan should strengthen access to perpetrator intervention and behaviour change programs, including programs tailored to different cohorts and levels of risk. Particular attention should be given to young people who use violence, recognising the importance of evidence-based responses that support accountability while addressing developmental needs and underlying drivers. Strengthening evidence-informed responses for children and young people using violence represents a significant opportunity for early intervention and prevention.

National reform should also continue to strengthen understanding of coercive control and patterns of abusive behaviour. Family and domestic violence often consists of ongoing patterns of coercion, intimidation and control rather than isolated incidents. Building workforce capability to identify and respond to these behaviours remains an important priority.

Effective responses to people who use violence require strong collaboration between justice, health, housing, education and community sectors. Shared responsibility across systems can improve accountability, strengthen intervention pathways and reduce the likelihood of future violence.

Greater community awareness of help-seeking pathways for people using violence may support earlier intervention and encourage engagement before behaviours escalate. Public awareness efforts should reinforce accountability while promoting access to support and behaviour change opportunities.

System integration and workforce

An effective response to FDSV depends on an appropriately skilled workforce and a service system that is coordinated, sustainable and responsive to community needs.

System integration is one of the most significant opportunities for reform. Improving outcomes requires coordinated responses across government, community and Australian Government-funded services, supported by policy, legislation, governance arrangements and funding models that encourage collaboration rather than siloed service delivery.

Victim-survivors frequently interact with multiple service systems throughout their journey, including police, courts, child safety, health, education, housing and specialist support services. Stronger integration between these sectors is critical to ensuring individuals and families receive timely, coordinated and holistic support,

while reducing the burden on victim-survivors to navigate complex and disconnected systems.

Tasmania's experience demonstrates the value of information sharing, multidisciplinary collaboration and integrated service delivery. Building on these approaches nationally could support earlier intervention, improve service coordination and strengthen risk assessment and safety planning. Opportunities exist to strengthen information sharing between FDSV, child safety, health, housing and justice systems, improve access to Family Law information and support nationally consistent approaches to information sharing and risk management across jurisdictions.

National investment in the evaluation of integrated and multidisciplinary service models would strengthen the evidence base for future reform and support the identification of approaches that can be scaled across jurisdictions.

Workforce attraction, retention and capability remain significant challenges across the FDSV sector. Workforce pressures are particularly evident in regional and rural communities where specialist services may be difficult to recruit and retain. Challenges relating to housing availability, workforce supply and service accessibility can further compound these pressures.

A coordinated national approach to workforce development should recognise the compounding challenges experienced in regional and rural communities, including workforce shortages, service demand pressures and housing availability.

Workforce capability should extend beyond specialist family and sexual violence services. Many people disclose violence to trusted professionals and community members working in health, education, housing, alcohol and other drug services, retail, construction and community services. Building capability across the broader workforce can support earlier identification, timely referrals and stronger community responses. Consistent FDSV training, improved understanding of risk indicators and greater confidence in responding to disclosures may strengthen community-wide capacity to identify and respond to violence. National reform should also support the integration of family violence knowledge and response capability within education, training and professional development pathways, helping to build a workforce that can identify violence early, respond appropriately and facilitate access to support across service systems.

The growing volume and complexity of FDSV matters is increasing demand across all sectors. Workforces must be equipped to respond to a broad range of presenting issues, including coercive control, technology-facilitated abuse, children as victim-survivors, high-risk and repeat offenders, and individuals experiencing intersecting health, housing and social challenges.

In response to these growing demands, the Second Action Plan presents an opportunity to consider a more coordinated and consolidated national approach to workforce development. Priorities may include workforce planning, specialist training,

capability building, wellbeing and retention initiatives, and strategies to strengthen regional service delivery. Workforce development initiatives should also recognise the impacts of family violence work on practitioner wellbeing, safety and retention.

Improved data quality, evaluation and evidence generation must also remain a priority. National investment in consistent data collection, information sharing, research and evaluation will strengthen understanding of emerging issues, support continuous improvement and ensure governments can measure progress against shared outcomes. Client, victim-survivor and service-provider feedback should also be used to inform service design, policy development and system improvement. As national expectations for data collection, reporting and evaluation continue to grow, jurisdictions and service providers must be appropriately resourced to collect, analyse and share high-quality data in a sustainable manner. Capacity and capability to collect data and measure outcomes varies across jurisdictions and service providers. National approaches should recognise these differences and support organisations to strengthen data capability and meet reporting requirements without detracting from frontline service delivery.

A nationally integrated, evidence-driven and sustainable service system will be essential to achieving the long-term objectives of the *National Plan* and improving outcomes for victim-survivors, children, families and communities.

Conclusion

The Tasmanian Government appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the development of the Second Action Plan under the *National Plan*.

Tasmania supports a Second Action Plan that strengthens prevention and early intervention, centres the experiences of victim-survivors and children, improves accountability and intervention for people who use violence, addresses emerging forms of harm, and builds a more integrated, accessible and sustainable service system.

The Tasmanian Government looks forward to continuing to work collaboratively with the Australian Government, states and territories, Aboriginal communities, the service sector, victim-survivors and other stakeholders to advance our shared commitment to ending violence against women and children.