

SAFE HOMES, SAFE FAMILIES

Tasmania's Family Violence
Action Plan 2015–2020



Tasmanian
Government

“I see family violence as the leading contributor to the many social issues that are prevalent in the Tasmanian community.”

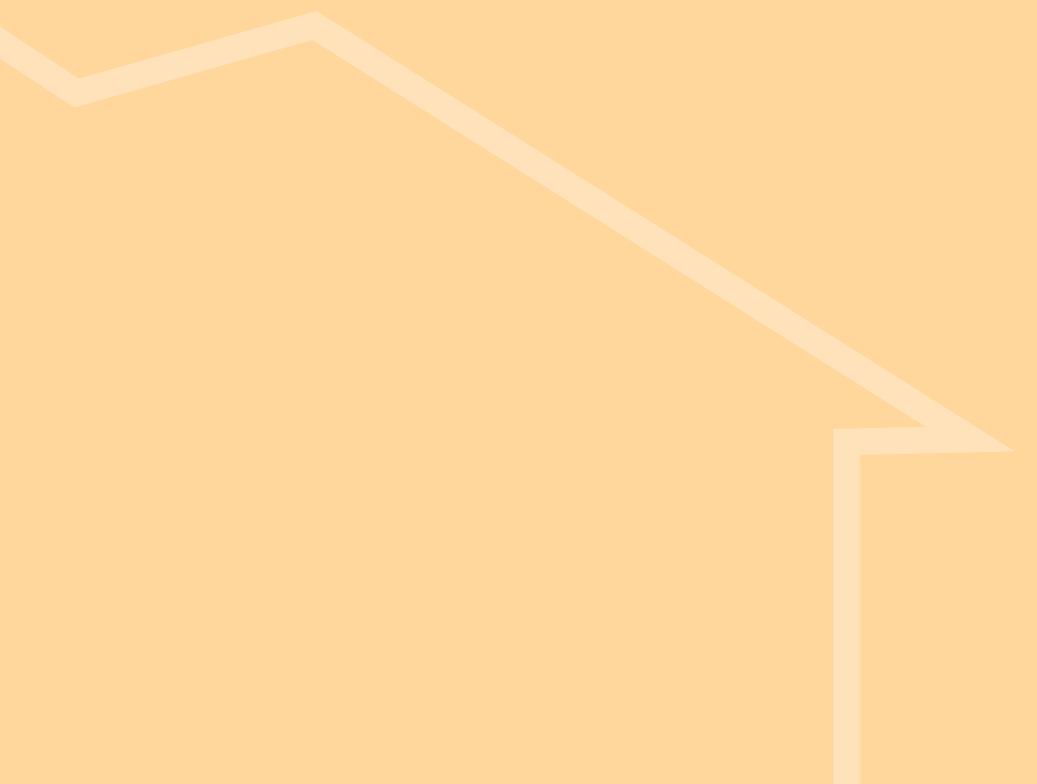
THE HON JACQUIE PETRUSMA MP, MINISTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN

“I want to tell people that family violence happens to anybody, no matter how nice your house is, no matter how intelligent you are.”

ROSIE BATTY, 2015 AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR

“Every day, Police hear the excuses made for family violence. Violence is always unacceptable and it is never the victim’s fault.”

DARREN HINE, COMMISSIONER, TASMANIA POLICE



FOREWORD

Eliminating family violence is a top priority for the Tasmanian Liberal Government. Violence against anyone, in any form, is unacceptable. I am committed to leading a whole of government response to help drive change.



Everyone has the right to live their life free from violence. Despite this, levels of family violence are disturbingly high. The impact of family violence is particularly

devastating: it damages the physical and mental health of the people who experience it, and it has significant short and long term negative impacts on children.

The Tasmanian Government is serious about our responsibility and will prioritise the safety and wellbeing of those affected by family violence, particularly women and children. We will invest in family violence prevention and early intervention, as well as holding perpetrators to account.

Safe Homes, Safe Families, Tasmania's Family Violence Action Plan 2015-2020 (the Action Plan), provides a coordinated approach to respond effectively to the issues associated with family violence.

We acknowledge that our plan will evolve to take account of the work being done across Australia to address family violence. We will draw upon advice from the Australian Government's Advisory Panel to Reduce Violence Against Women, the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence when its findings are released and the Senate Inquiry into Domestic violence in Australia.

The Action Plan recognises that the Government cannot prevent family violence on its own, everyone has a role to play. The increased focus on family violence at a national level and in the media, our workplaces and local communities provides a good starting point for strong Government leadership and action.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Will Hodgman'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

The Hon Will Hodgman MP
Premier



“There is a clear demand
for more action in the community
to address family violence.”

Submissions to the Family Violence
Action Plan ‘Call for ideas’ June 2015



OUR PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

The Tasmanian Liberal Government will provide strong leadership to progress key priorities and actions to address family violence.

We have identified these priorities as key to improving our response to family violence. This is the start of our long term commitment to the Tasmanian community. We want to keep listening, learning and acting to address family violence for the long term.

The Tasmanian Government spends \$16 million in direct and \$24 million in indirect funding to address family violence each year.

To build our response to family violence, we will allocate an additional \$25.57 million to new and direct actions over the next four years.

We developed the actions in consultation with stakeholders and the community. They are based on the best available research and evidence.

To address family violence in Tasmania we commit to the following actions:



Establishing Safe Families Tasmania

1. Bring together government agencies in a statewide collaborative unit to coordinate support services for victims and hold perpetrators to account



Changing attitudes and behaviours that lead to family violence

2. Develop and deliver a Respectful Relationships program in all government schools
3. Take a lead role in supporting the national campaign to reduce violence against women and their children

4. Join the national Our Watch organisation
5. Roll out White Ribbon's Workplace Accreditation Program across all Tasmanian Government agencies



Supporting families affected by violence

6. Support children affected by family violence in government schools and Child and Family Centres
7. Support children affected by family violence in non-government schools
8. Extend counselling services for children and young people experiencing family violence
9. Provide additional counselling services for adults experiencing family violence
10. Invest in crisis accommodation
11. Provide supported housing options



Strengthening our legal responses

12. Strengthen the legislative framework to address family violence
13. Extend legal assistance to people experiencing family violence
14. Appoint more specialist police prosecutors
15. Support perpetrator programs for low to medium risk offenders
16. Extend forensic medical examination to include victims of family violence
17. Develop a business case for a Criminal Justice Information Management System
18. Improve data collection and reporting



ESTABLISHING SAFE FAMILIES TASMANIA

The Tasmanian Government will commit over \$8 million to establish Safe Families Tasmania. We will bring together government agencies in a statewide collaborative unit to coordinate support services and provide the best available evidence about perpetrators and associated risks to their families.



Establish Safe Families

Tasmania, a nation leading program to hold perpetrators to account and coordinate support services for victims. It will bring the best available information from across government together in one place to ensure families at risk are identified and supported as early as possible.

Safe Families Tasmania is based on the Multi Agency Protection Service model that is operating successfully in South Australia. That model was derived from the child protection model of interagency work in the UK, called Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs.

Safe Families Tasmania will provide a service called *Safe Choices*, for people who are in violent relationships and those who want to exit those relationships. We know there are many barriers to leaving and we will provide people experiencing family violence with a wraparound service to meet their needs and circumstances at any stage of leaving or in choosing to stay. We will work in partnership with Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) to develop this new program. *Safe Choices* will be initially trialled in Southern Tasmania and then extended to the North and North West of the State.

SAFE FAMILIES TASMANIA WILL:

Co-locate officers from multiple government agencies, including the Department of Police and Emergency Management, the Department of Justice, the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education, in a single unit providing timely responses to family violence.

Collect the best available evidence across government to aid prosecution of offenders and support for people experiencing family violence.

Undertake interagency case assessment for families experiencing family violence.

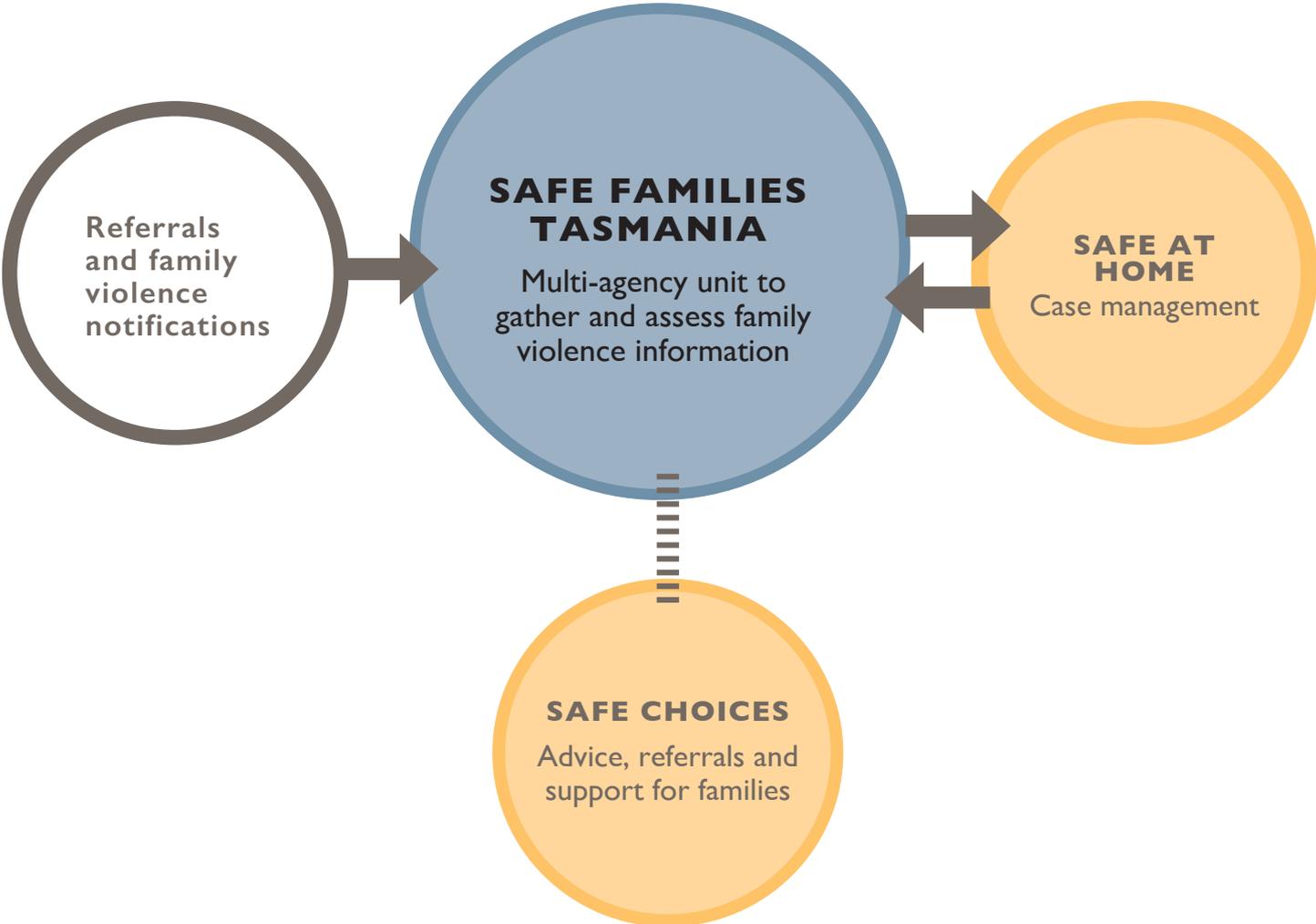
SAFE CHOICES WILL:

Work in partnership with NGOs.

Provide practical planning and support for people in or exiting violent situations.

Provide assistance to high risk groups, including women with disabilities, Aboriginal women, and women from culturally and linguistically diverse communities (CALD).

FIGURE I: *Safe Families Tasmania*





CHANGING ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS THAT LEAD TO FAMILY VIOLENCE

We are committing \$685 000 to actions which will change the attitudes and behaviours that lead to family violence, to complement the \$30 million national campaign to reduce violence against women and their children.

We want to achieve lasting change through the generations to come. To achieve this we will intervene early and maintain our effort. We will send a strong community message that family violence cannot be excused. It is never okay.

Promoting gender equality and respect in relationships is also vital if we are to prevent violence against women and their children.

The Tasmanian Government is committed to providing strong leadership in the roll out of the national campaign to help young people change their attitudes to violence and abuse.

This priority area focuses on:

- Supporting national campaigns and organisations to raise awareness and ensure long term change to attitudes and behaviours.
- Delivering a Respectful Relationships program to every government school within three years.
- Working with organisations and workplaces to provide leadership, advice and guidance in addressing family violence.
- Engaging with individuals and communities to reshape the beliefs, attitudes and behaviours that have allowed family violence to continue.

The Tasmanian Government is committed to taking a strong leadership role in government agencies and with the broader community.

2 Develop and deliver a Respectful Relationships program in all government schools

by providing \$355 000 to build respectful relationships throughout life and support attitudinal change to family violence. We will undertake a whole of school approach, which empowers teachers and professional support staff to help students experiencing family violence through resources and professional learning.

The Kindergarten to Year 12 program will be aligned to the Australian Curriculum and will be delivered to students in every school within three years.

We will also support non-government schools to deliver the program by making the Respectful Relationships program resources available.

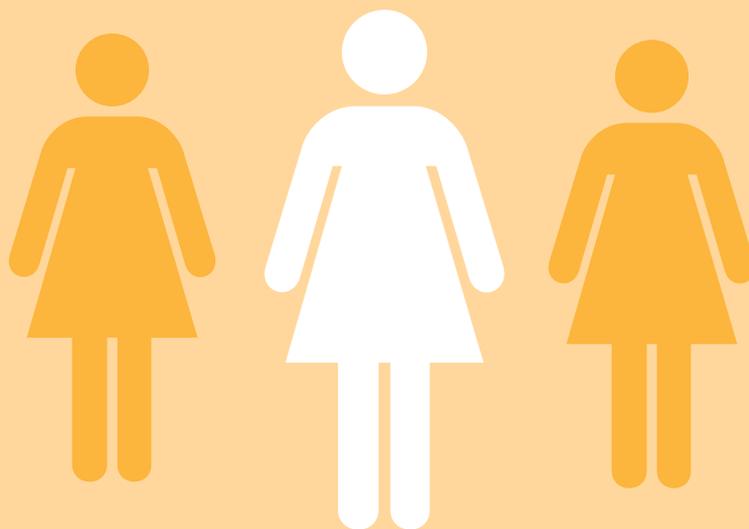
This commitment will align with the Tasmanian Government's recently announced \$17.75 million Learning in Families Together (LIFT) program to encourage greater cooperation between schools, students and their families to lift the educational outcomes of young Tasmanians in the greatest need.

3 **Take a lead role in supporting the national campaign to reduce violence against women and their children** to change community attitudes about gender equality and violence against women and their children to support long term change. We will provide \$330 000 to support the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) \$30 million initiative, with the Australian Government and states and territories working together.

4 **Join the national, independent, not for profit organisation Our Watch** to drive changes in the attitudes, behaviours, social norms and power imbalances that underpin or support violence against women and children. Our Watch has

four key areas of work: designing and delivering public campaigns that engage and educate individuals and the community; promoting a sustained and constructive public conversation; enabling organisations, networks and communities to effect change; and influencing public policy, systems and institutions. (\$88 000 –already committed)

5 **Roll out White Ribbon's Workplace Accreditation Program across all Tasmanian Government agencies** to support employees experiencing family violence and provide tools for employees to recognise and respond to family violence. Other Tasmanian organisations will also be encouraged to participate in the Program.



1 in **3**

Australian women have experienced
physical violence



SUPPORTING FAMILIES AFFECTED BY VIOLENCE

The Tasmanian Government will invest over \$12 million in practical programs and services to address the immediate needs of families affected by family violence.

We have listened to women and families affected by violence. The decision to leave a violent relationship is not simple. For many women it can take years to summon the courage to make a complaint about a partner and for some, they may never report it.¹

This priority area strengthens the support we provide to adults and children experiencing family violence. Support services provide information, advice and practical assistance to help victims make the best choices about their future.

By boosting support services now we are better placed to meet current and future demand. We know that demand for support services is likely to increase over time as attitudes change and reporting increases.

This priority area delivers:

- Targeted support for children in both government and non-government schools.
- Additional essential counselling services for children and adults.
- A greater investment in housing services to support victims and perpetrators who need to move away from the family home.

6 Support children affected by family violence in government schools and Child and Family Centres

by coordinating the care and support we provide to children and families. We will provide an additional six professionals, including, social workers and psychologists across the three regions for children in schools and Child and Family Centres. These additional staff will provide practical support to students and school staff. (\$3.14 million)

7 Support children affected by family violence in non-government schools

by providing funding assistance to ensure students at risk are identified and staff can intervene much earlier to support them. (\$500 000)

8 Extend counselling services for children and young people experiencing family violence

by improving access to services. Growing up in a violent home and being exposed to sexual assault can affect a child's learning, health, relationships, work prospects and participation in community life. There is a considerable wait list for counselling and this commitment will deliver up to ten additional counsellors and will be delivered in partnership with NGOs. (\$3 million)

9 Provide additional counselling services for adults

experiencing family violence by delivering services in partnership with NGOs and improving access to timely, dedicated counselling. This will assist in supporting groups of people within our community at higher risk, which includes women with disabilities, women from CALD communities, and Aboriginal women. (\$1 million)

10 Invest in crisis accommodation

by working with service providers to expand the provision of dedicated crisis accommodation for women and their children when there are no other accommodation options available. Funding will go towards additional beds. (\$2 million)

11 Provide supported housing options

through the lease of 50 rental properties to enable families to move out of crisis into secure and supported housing. The private rental market provides opportunities for those leaving crisis shelters to move into more secure accommodation. Outreach support services will be provided to help people experiencing family violence to remain in stable accommodation. We will build on the successful Rapid Rehousing program from New South Wales as a model for implementation in Tasmania. (\$2.4 million)

Reports estimate that children witness between 36 and 59 per cent of family violence incidents.²

It is estimated that 55 per cent of children who have witnessed family violence have also been subjected to physical abuse, and 40 per cent have been sexually abused.³





STRENGTHENING OUR LEGAL RESPONSES

The Tasmanian Government will invest over \$4 million to get tough on perpetrators and better support victims through the legal system.

In 2013-14, Tasmania Police attended over 2 219 family violence incidents and 1 562 family arguments.⁴

We need to ensure perpetrators are held accountable for their behaviour. This priority area targets those who have committed, or are at risk of committing, family violence and intervening to change their behaviour.

Our actions focus on:

- Ensuring victims of family violence are well supported and have access to legal advice and representation.
- Holding offenders to account and making sure there are adequate and appropriate consequences for their behaviour.
- Interventions to stop people at risk of offending or re-offending.

12 Strengthen the legislative framework to address

family violence by reinforcing that family violence offences are a serious issue and that appropriate responses could include creating a separate family violence offence or, on order of the court, recording that an offence occurs in the context of a family violence situation.

Legislative measures to recognise the seriousness of family violence offences requires full and further consideration. Our actions will be guided by the recommendations from the Sentencing Advisory Council report on family violence, expected to be released later in 2015.

This year we will amend the *Family Violence Act 2004* and consult on sentencing options for serious and repeat family violence offenders. We will work with the legal sector to improve court processes, resulting in a contemporary, evidence based, best practice legal framework.

13 **Extend legal assistance to people experiencing family violence** by providing additional resources to meet the complex legal needs of people affected by family violence. (\$1.2 million)

14 **Appoint more specialist police prosecutors** by appointing three additional dedicated police prosecutors to ensure consistent, specialised prosecution of family violence cases. There will be an additional prosecutor dedicated to each region of Tasmania. (\$1.2 million)

15 **Support perpetrator programs for low to medium risk offenders** by targeting offenders to participate in behaviour-change programs to address the underlying causes of their violence. Attendance at programs can be mandated by court. Perpetrator programs aim to reduce the risk of known perpetrators committing further offences. We will build on best practice examples, both nationally and internationally, to develop effective programs. (\$2 million)

16 **Extend forensic medical examination to include victims of family violence** by piloting a program to improve the documentation of injuries consistent with family violence. This will allow expert medico-legal reports to be used in court, which will enhance the evidence base for prosecution.

17 **Develop a business case for a Criminal Justice Information Management System** that ensures agencies have access to all the relevant information to assist the prevention of family violence, to support victims and hold perpetrators to account.

18 **Improved data collection and reporting** by improving the current system which is used by all Safe at Home partners, to ensure the effective management of family violence cases. (\$350 000)

80%

80 per cent of Australian women who experience violence from their current partner have never contacted the police.⁵

1 000

There were over 1 000 breaches of Family Violence Orders in 2014–2015.⁶



“What people don’t understand is that most of the time women don’t want to go. What they want is the abuse to stop and for the relationship to go back to being a good one.”

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TASMANIA'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE NATIONAL EFFORT

The Tasmanian Government is committed to working with the Australian Government on joint action to address family violence.

The Action Plan builds on, and complements, work being undertaken as part of the national effort.

All states and territories have agreed to a national cooperative effort to address family violence. The Prime Minister, Hon Tony Abbott MP, has established a COAG Advisory Panel to make recommendations on how governments can best respond to family violence. The Tasmanian Government has committed to participating in the following national actions:

- Delivering a \$30 million national campaign to influence and help young people, particularly males, to change their attitudes to violence and abuse.
- Establishing National Outcome Standards for Perpetrator Interventions to ensure perpetrators are held to account consistently across all jurisdictions.
- Enabling domestic violence orders issued in one jurisdiction to be automatically recognised and enforceable across Australia. Tasmania is leading the development of model legislation to underpin a National Domestic Violence Order Information Sharing System. Tasmania is also one of three sites, along with New South Wales and Queensland, to trial the roll out of the system in 2016.
- Delivering innovative approaches through the use of technology to keep people experiencing family violence safe and stop perpetrators from using technology to abuse victims.

The Tasmanian Government is also committed to working with other jurisdictions to implement the *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010-2022*. The National Plan is focused on delivering a sustained reduction in violence against women by 2022. We have agreed to work collaboratively to achieve the following national outcomes:

1. Communities are safe and free from violence
2. Relationships are respectful
3. Indigenous communities are strengthened
4. Services meet the needs of women and their children who experience violence
5. Justice responses are effective
6. Perpetrators stop their violence and are held to account

The Tasmanian Government has supported the development and release of the Daisy app, which connects women with support services from around the country. We also provide support for the Australian National Research Organisation for Women's Safety. This research underpins the development and delivery of policy and programs to respond to family violence.

The National Plan is being delivered through four, three-year Action Plans. The Second Action Plan has a strong focus on initiatives to improve the understanding of the diverse experiences of violence, such as the experiences of CALD women, Aboriginal women, and women with disability.





“Eliminating family violence is a top priority for the Tasmanian Liberal Government. Violence against anyone, in any form, is unacceptable.”

The Premier, Hon Will Hodgman MP

A decorative white line graphic in the bottom left corner, consisting of several connected segments that form a jagged, upward-pointing arrow shape.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The Action Plan is a coordinated approach to taking action to address family violence. Effective collaboration between the Tasmanian Government, NGOs, businesses and the community will be essential to successfully implement our actions.

To achieve good outcomes for families experiencing family violence we will:

- Take action to prevent family violence from occurring.
- Support a whole-of-society response to end family violence.
- Prioritise the safety and wellbeing of those affected by family violence, particularly women and children.
- Address the short and long term harm caused to children who are affected by family violence.
- Invest in family violence prevention and early intervention.
- Hold perpetrators accountable and support them to change their behaviour.
- Use flexible, integrated, coordinated and collaborative approaches.
- Listen to those who have experienced family violence and base our actions on what is proven to work.
- Monitor and report publicly on progress because outcomes matter.

Governance

We will deliver actions through a coordinated and collaborative effort between government agencies. The Family Violence Taskforce, led by the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC) and consisting of senior officials from key government agencies, will remain in place to support the Family Violence Cabinet Committee to deliver the Action Plan.

Implementation and Reporting

The Family Violence Taskforce will develop an implementation plan to clearly outline milestones, timelines and performance indicators for each action. We will continue to engage with stakeholders and the community on specific actions, including the National Plan Consultative Group.

DPAC will coordinate an annual progress report to Cabinet on the effectiveness of the actions. The report will outline achievements and identify future priorities.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Tasmanian Government’s commitment to stopping family violence means it is essential that we monitor and evaluate the key actions.

We will determine whether our actions are delivering the desired outcomes by undertaking evaluation and monitoring progress. This will underpin our flexible and responsive approach and enable us to tailor our programs to be most effective.

As greater knowledge and intolerance of violence leads to more openness

and reporting, incidents are likely to go up before they go down.

To help us track progress, we will source data from a combination of Tasmanian Government agencies, national data sources and service providers. We will report on these success measures in our annual progress report, and we will compare them to baseline data.

We have identified some questions that will help us measure success:

| AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT | MEASURE OF SUCCESS |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| SAFETY FOR FAMILIES | <p>Are incidents of family violence increasing or decreasing year by year across all communities?</p> <p>Are people affected by family violence able to regain safety following a family violence incident?</p> <p>Are fewer children exposed to family violence across all communities?</p> |
| BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE | <p>Is there evidence of behavioural change to family violence in families across all communities?</p> |
| PERPETRATOR ACCOUNTABILITY | <p>Are perpetrators of family violence accountable for their crimes?</p> <p>Are people able to access rehabilitation services to prevent incidents of family violence?</p> |
| SUPPORT SERVICES | <p>Are people able to access adequate support services at the time needed?</p> <p>Are people aware of the support services available to victims of family violence?</p> |



“Family violence is
a product of our society and, to
reduce it, our society needs to
address all of its causes.”

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“Family violence does not discriminate between where you live, how much money you have, your level of education or any of those factors. It can happen to anyone behind closed doors.”

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WHAT IS FAMILY VIOLENCE?

Family violence most commonly occurs between people who are in, or have been in, an intimate relationship.

However, it can occur between other family members. Family violence occurs across all socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. It can take many forms and can involve physical, sexual, verbal, psychological, emotional and financial abuse.

Family violence often involves a pattern of violent and threatening behaviour against a member of the perpetrator's family, to control or cause fear to that family member.

We acknowledge that men experience family violence, however the vast majority of violent behaviour that occurs in the home is committed by men against women. Some groups of women are at an even greater risk of experiencing violence and face particular challenges.

WOMEN AT GREATER RISK:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are 35 times more likely to be hospitalised due to family violence related assaults than other women.

Young women aged 18 to 24 years, experience significantly higher rates of physical and sexual violence than women in older age groups.

Women with disability are more likely to experience violence and the violence can be more severe and last longer than for other women. The violence often goes unrecognised.

People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds that experience family violence can face significant difficulties due to a lack of support networks, language barriers, socio-economic disadvantage and a lack of knowledge of their rights and Tasmanian laws.⁷

In 2013-14, Tasmania Police attended 2 219 family violence incidents and 1 562 family arguments.⁸

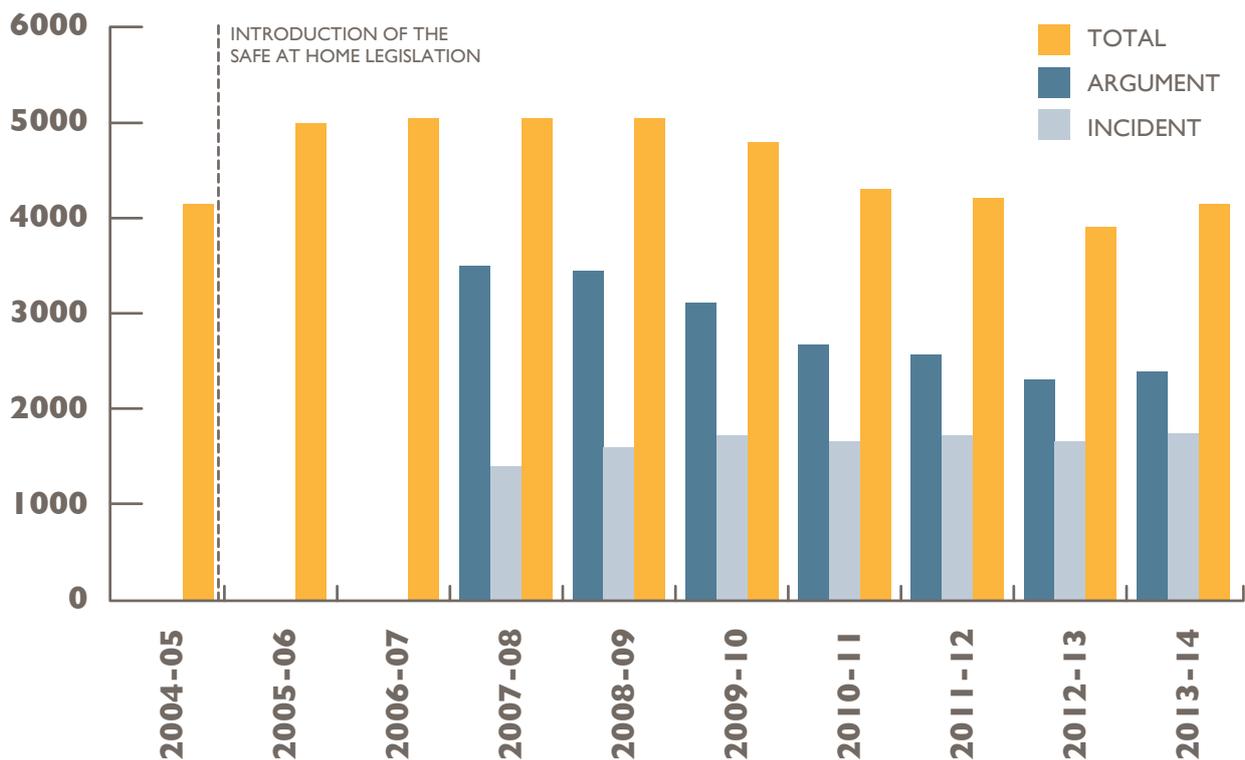
More recently, from July 2014 to May 2015, Tasmania Police attended 2 378 family violence incidents.⁹ Over 1 200 children were present at these incidents.

Offenders were affected by alcohol or drugs in over 700 of these incidents. In addition, police attended 1 657 family arguments during this period.

Anecdotally we know there is significant under-reporting by people affected by family violence in Tasmania.

By taking action, the Tasmanian Government will send a clear message to the community that family violence cannot be excused and should be reported.

FIGURE 2. Family violence trends in Tasmania¹⁰



THE IMPACT OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

The emotional and personal costs of family violence are very difficult to measure.

Growing up in a violent home can affect a child's learning, physical and mental health, relationships, attitudes and behaviours, work prospects and participation in community life.

Women are more likely than men to experience family violence. Family violence has a devastating impact on the health and wellbeing of women. Its consequences are long term and can include:

- poorer health;
- mental health issues;
- homelessness;

- financial difficulty;
- problems holding down a job;
- disruption to everyday living; and
- serious injury and death.

Violence not only affects the victims and the children who are exposed to it, but also their extended families, friends, work colleagues and ultimately the broader community.

Family violence has a significant economic cost to Australia, of around \$13.6 billion each year. Without action, this cost is predicted to rise to \$15.6 billion by 2022.¹¹



Australian women are most likely to experience physical and sexual violence in their home, at the hands of a male current or ex-partner.

FAMILY VIOLENCE FROM A VICTIM'S PERSPECTIVE

It is essential that we recognise the complexity that surrounds family violence and acknowledge that we cannot adopt a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to addressing it. Each individual victim faces a different set of circumstances. This will impact on their decision-making and the likelihood that they will seek help.

The decision to leave a violent relationship is not simple. There are many considerations that will impact on the victim's decision to remain in

the relationship or to leave. Even if the victim has decided to end the relationship, it may take some time to prepare for leaving, and victims may attempt to leave a number of times before they are successful.¹²

The barriers to leaving that may influence the victim include concerns for their own safety and that of their children and pets, difficulties in securing accommodation, financial barriers and lack of access to support.¹³

FAMILY VIOLENCE:

One in three Australian women has experienced physical violence since the age of 15. Almost one in five has experienced sexual violence.

Almost 17 per cent of women in Australia have experienced violence by a partner.

On average, one woman is killed every week at the hands of their partner.

CHARACTERISTICS OF OFFENDERS

It is known that people who have experienced family violence as children are at risk of becoming family violence offenders in adulthood.¹⁴ It is also known that exposure to violence in the family home can lead children to develop unhealthy behaviours and attitudes towards violence and aggression.¹⁵

Family violence offenders are also likely to have come into contact with police in connection with other offences.

Alcohol and drug use are significant risk factors for family violence. The involvement of alcohol may increase the seriousness of family violence incidents and severity of injuries resulting from the incident.¹⁶

Other situational factors that might contribute to the incidence of family violence include relationship problems, unemployment, financial problems and other recent stressful life events.



WE DEVELOPED OUR ACTION PLAN THROUGH COLLABORATION

The Premier, the Hon Will Hodgman MP, announced in May 2015 that he would lead a whole-of-government response to family violence. A Family Violence Cabinet Committee was established to provide high-level oversight of the development of the Action Plan.

The Cabinet Committee comprised:

- Hon Will Hodgman MP, Premier;
- Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP, Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Training;
- Hon Jacquie Petrusma MP, Minister for Women and Minister for Human Services;
- Hon Dr Vanessa Goodwin MLC, Attorney General and Minister for Justice;
- Hon Rene Hidding MP, Minister for Police and Emergency Management; and
- Hon Michael Ferguson MP, Minister for Health.

A Heads of Agency Steering Committee, led by the Secretary of DPAC, managed the development of the Action Plan by an inter-agency Family Violence Taskforce. This ensured a collaborative, coordinated approach to forming our Action Plan.

In developing the Action Plan, the Taskforce has:

- consulted with the community, NGOs and the Family Violence Plan External Consultative Committee;
- gathered relevant data;
- identified current best practice; and
- analysed evidence-based approaches.

We held a community forum in June 2015 to inform the actions. Eighty participants attended and they included:

- NGOs that deliver community services;
- survivors of family violence;
- business organisations; and
- government agencies.

The NGOs at the forum provide support, housing, legal services, counselling and financial assistance to victims of family violence.

We also called for written suggestions. The wider community contributed ideas and suggested actions to the Taskforce directly via an email address. The Taskforce received 33 confidential written responses.





“We need to change perceptions and ensure that, as far as possible, we reduce or eliminate the sources of people’s justifications for family violence.”

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OUR CURRENT RESPONSE TO FAMILY VIOLENCE

The Action Plan builds on the existing programs in Tasmania to address family violence. The Tasmanian Government provides approximately \$16 million in direct and \$24 million in indirect funding to address family violence each year.

Our current commitment includes direct funding for the provision of family violence counselling services, shelters and emergency accommodation, sexual assault services and specialist police in the Victim Safety Response Teams.

Indirect funding contributes to the delivery of broader services, such as school social workers and psychologists, and integrated family support services.

The 2015-16 Budget committed extra funding including:

- \$180 000 each year over four years to the Safe at Home program;
- \$88 000 to join Our Watch (a national organisation focusing on behaviour and attitudinal change); and
- \$100 000 each year to Victims Support Services.

The Action Plan is designed to complement the current national focus on family violence through, for example, the *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022* and the COAG agenda.

There are well-established programs currently operating in Tasmania that respond to, and aim to reduce, the incidence of family violence. In developing the Action Plan, we have considered opportunities to build upon and improve the existing programs. Some of these operate within single agencies, while others represent a whole-of-government approach.

EXISTING PROGRAMS

The government agency responsible for each program is shown in Figure 3.

Safe at Home is a whole-of-government criminal justice response to family violence and was introduced as a nation-leading model in 2004. Under Safe at Home a range of services work together to protect and provide support to people affected by family violence and their children. Tasmania Police provides the frontline response to family violence to ensure that perpetrators are held responsible for their behaviour.

Safe at Home was reviewed in 2014 to ensure that the program continues to meet its objectives and is based on current evidence-based best practice. The Tasmanian Government is adopting all of the review's 17 recommendations, which include:

- enhancements to police practices when dealing with family violence, including specialised training for police officers;
- research into models for evidence-based, best practice responses to and interventions for family violence;
- improved services for young people affected by family violence;
- investigation into the feasibility of a specialist Family Violence Court; and
- improving the functionality of the Safe at Home Information System (SIMS) to enable agencies to better work together.

Eight of the 17 recommendations have been implemented, six of the recommendations are reflected in the Action Plan, and the remaining will be addressed from within existing resources. All recommendations will be actioned.

Family Violence Act 2004 is the legislation that underpins Safe at Home. The definitions under the Act state that family violence includes physical, psychological, emotional and economic violence. It reinforces the criminal nature of family violence. The Act emphasises the importance of ensuring victims' safety and managing the risks they face. It also recognises the negative effect of family violence on children.

Victim Safety Response Teams are specialist teams of police officers tasked with responding to, investigating and prosecuting family violence incidents. There are three teams that operate across Tasmania to provide services to victims in crisis, and to help improve their safety.

Police Prosecutors include specialist prosecutors who support family violence victims and manage the presentation of evidence to the courts.

Family Violence Response and Referral Line is an information and referral service that operates 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. The experienced operators assess the victim's safety. On the basis of the assessment, the call will either be transferred to Tasmania Police, or to a counselling or support service if the victim's safety is not at immediate risk.

Family Violence Counselling and Support Service is a partner in the Safe at Home program and provides counselling and support to victims and children affected by family violence. The Service has two streams: the Children and Young Persons Program (CHYPP) and the Adult Program.

Court Support and Liaison Service is a Safe at Home service that assists victims of family violence as they progress through the legal and court processes.

Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania is a partner in the Safe at Home program. It provides legal assistance to victims of family violence.

Defendant Health Liaison Service is a service to assist offenders to access health and welfare services that are appropriate to their circumstances.

Child Protection Services is a service that intervenes in situations where children and young people are at risk of abuse or neglect. Child Protection Services works collaboratively alongside Safe at Home.

Family Violence Offender Intervention Program is a court-mandated cognitive behavioural program to reduce reoffending by high-risk family violence offenders. It is based on a risk assessment of the offender and uses a case management system.

Taking Action: Tasmania's Primary Prevention Strategy to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children 2012 – 2022 is one part of the Tasmanian Implementation Plan to complement the *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010 – 2022*. Tasmania contributed to the development of the National Plan, and the Tasmanian Implementation Plan supports the common long-term goal to significantly reduce violence against women and their children.

Relationships and Sexuality Strategy supports Tasmanian school communities to educate and provide information to students that enable them to develop respectful relationships and make informed decisions.

Professional support staff in schools provide support for students who may be victims of family violence.

FIGURE 3. Role of Tasmanian government agencies

| ROLE OF TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES | |
|--|--|
| ALL AGENCIES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family violence leave provisions under the <i>State Service Regulations 2011</i> and Employment Direction No 28 • Employee assistance programs |
| DEPARTMENT OF PREMIER AND CABINET | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy coordination • National policy contribution • Primary prevention • Tasmanian Training Consortium course – Family Violence: impacts at work • Communities, Sport and Recreation division supports a number of targeted population groups such as women, people with disability, Aboriginal people, migrants and refugees |
| DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Violence Counselling and Support Service • Child Protection Services • Shelters and emergency accommodation for women and their children • Defendant Health Liaison Services • Disability Services • Mental Health Services • Hospitals • Drug and Alcohol Services • Sexual Assault Support Services |
| DEPARTMENT OF POLICE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe at Home operational police response • Victim Safety Response Teams • Family Violence Response and Referral Line • Specialist police prosecutors for Safe at Home • Police Safe at Home Coordinator |
| DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe at Home Coordination Unit • Court Support and Liaison Service • Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania • Magistrates Court Family Violence Offender Intervention Program |
| DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School social workers and school psychologists assist children who are experiencing family violence • Child and Family Centres offer general support |



“Family violence intervention should be about supporting the whole family: the children, the women and the men.”

Submissions to the Family Violence
Action Plan ‘Call for ideas’ June 2015



DEFINITION

There are many definitions of family violence that are used for specific purposes, for example the Tasmanian legal definition under section 7 of the *Family Violence Act 2004* is:

7. In this Act – “family violence” means –

- (a) any of the following types of conduct committed by a person, directly or indirectly, against that person’s spouse or partner:
 - (i) assault, including sexual assault;
 - (ii) threats, coercion, intimidation or verbal abuse;
 - (iii) abduction;
 - (iv) stalking within the meaning of section 192 of the Criminal Code;
 - (v) attempting or threatening to commit conduct referred to in subparagraph (i), (ii), (iii) or (iv);or
- (b) any of the following:
 - (i) economic abuse;
 - (ii) emotional abuse or intimidation;
 - (iii) contravening an external family violence order (FVO), an interim FVO, an FVO, or a Police FVO.

For the purpose of the Action Plan, family violence is defined broadly to ensure that it applies to all instances of family violence that are experienced by women, children and men in Tasmania. Children are exposed to family violence if they:

- see or hear an incident of family violence;
- help to clean up after an incident of family violence; or
- comfort or assist a family member after an incident of family violence.

NOTES

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“I would like to thank the many organisations, businesses, government agencies, individuals and the community sector for their invaluable input into the development of *Safe Homes, Safe Families, Tasmania’s Family Violence Action Plan 2015-20*.

Family violence is a whole of community issue which requires a whole of community response. Your support is important if we are to make a real and lasting difference in people’s lives.”

THE PREMIER, HON WILL HODGMAN MP



Department of Premier and Cabinet

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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 or visit www.1800respect.org.au

In an emergency, always call 000

Specialist sexual assault support services are available by calling:

The Sexual Assault Support Service:

South: (03) 6231 1817 (24 hours)

Laurel House:

North: (03) 6334 2740 (8.30am-5pm) or 1800 697 877 after hours

North West: (03) 6431 9711 (9am-5pm) or 1800 697 877 after hours