



ANNUAL REPORT

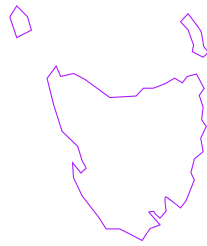
2024–2025

**Sexual
Assault
Support
Service**



Sexual Assault Support Service (SASS) acknowledges the Tasmanian Aboriginal peoples as the traditional and original custodians of Lutruwita. We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present, recognising that they possess deep knowledge, traditions and culture that can enrich our future. We extend our respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and acknowledge the effects of sexual violence through colonisation that continues to cause harm today.

We acknowledge and extend deep gratitude to victim-survivors whose expertise and wisdom guide our path forward in addressing and preventing child sexual abuse. Their insights shape our strategies and responses. Additionally, we honour and remember victims who are no longer with us. In their memory we commit to profound and meaningful change.



This document contains reference to sexual harm – including child sexual abuse and harmful sexual behaviours. We encourage readers to exercise care as they engage with the content. If the information in this document raises concern or distress, the following services can be contacted for support:

Statewide Sexual Assault Support Line

24/7 crisis support line
1800 697 877

1800RESPECT

24/7 counselling and information support for domestic, family and sexual violence
1800 737 732 / SMS 0458 737 732

13Yarn

24/7 crisis support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People
13 95 76

Kids Helpline

24/7 support for children and young people aged 5-25
1800 55 1800



Audrey Mills
Chair, SASS Board
of Directors

Welcome Letter From The Chair

2025 has been a year of challenge and progress — one marked by growing demand and a need for increased resources. Across Tasmania, the need for specialist support continues to rise as more people reach out for safety, dignity, and justice. Each call to SASS represents not only an individual in crisis but a community seeking change.

Amid this steady increase, SASS has strengthened its role as a trusted, evidence-informed organisation responding to both immediate needs and long-term reform. The Board's focus has been to ensure SASS remains strategically positioned, well-governed, and able to meet increasing demand without compromising quality, safety, or staff wellbeing.

A key milestone has been embedding the new Strategic Plan 2025–2030, setting a clear direction grounded in evidence, lived experience, and alignment with the Government's reform agenda following the Commission of Inquiry. It reaffirms that specialist sexual violence services are essential public infrastructure — central to Tasmania's wellbeing and recovery.

The Board has also advanced key governance initiatives to strengthen quality and accountability. This year, SASS commenced its transition from QIC accreditation to the National Safety and Quality Primary and Community Healthcare Standards, reflecting our commitment to best practice and the confidence of those who rely on our service. We have also focused on strengthening our internal systems to meet the growing demands and have revitalised our board subcommittees.

Financial sustainability has remained a priority. In a complex funding environment, we continue to steward resources carefully, ensuring stability while directing effort where it will have the greatest impact. Strong governance and social purpose remain the twin foundations of SASS's resilience and integrity. We will continue to advocate for resources necessary to create lasting change for individuals and communities affected by sexual violence.

On behalf of the Board, I extend sincere thanks to the CEO Shirleyann Varney for her leadership, advocacy, and dedication. The Board acknowledges and thanks our staff for their professionalism, passion, and commitment. Their expertise ensures SASS continues to provide trauma-informed care that changes lives and strengthens communities.

The Board extend our heartfelt appreciation to Phillip Curtis, who stepped down from the Board this year. We thank him for his commitment, insight, and valued contribution to SASS's governance and purpose. I also wish to acknowledge the dedication and collective wisdom of the SASS Board. Their governance, support, and advocacy continue to strengthen SASS's capacity to serve the community with integrity and compassion.

We also gratefully acknowledge the support of our funders, government partners, and philanthropic supporters, whose investment enables both stability and innovation. Your partnership helps us work toward a safer, more equitable Tasmania. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Her Excellency Professor the Honourable Barbara Baker AC, Governor of Tasmania, for her generous support and patronage of MRC Tas.

As SASS approaches its 40th year, we do so with gratitude and determination — honouring our past while shaping a future defined by compassion, collaboration, and courage.

**"Together, we continue to build a Tasmania
 free from sexual violence."**

A Letter From The CEO

This past year has been one of transformation and steady progress, as SASS strengthened its foundations, expanded its reach, and deepened its impact across Tasmania.

We began by stabilising and strengthening our **core programs** — our **24/7 Crisis Response Team**, the **Intake Program** for our intensive trauma-processing services supporting children, families, and adults, our **Redress Service** and **Forensic Team**, and Tasmania's statewide **Harmful Sexual Behaviours Program**, which provides primary, secondary, and tertiary support to young people and their families. Alongside these core services, our **Prevention Team** continued its vital work with schools, industry, and communities, supporting the development of safe, respectful cultures across the state.



Shirleyann Varney
CEO, SASS

We also continued to invest in our workforce capability and governance systems, enhancing safety, accountability, and service consistency. These efforts have enabled more clients to access timely, specialist support — ensuring services remain responsive and person-centred, even as demand continues to rise.

Operationally, we continued to innovate. We refined our intake and allocation processes, introduced brief interventions to support victim-survivors and their families on waiting lists, and enhanced our data systems to better understand service trends and needs. Our partnership in the Southern Arch Centre continues to demonstrate the power of collaboration in improving outcomes for victim-survivors.

Prevention remains central to our mission. Through initiatives such as **CaRE@School**, we are helping young Tasmanians understand consent, respectful relationships, and safety — addressing harm before it occurs. Prevention education is an investment in cultural change: when children and young people learn about rights, respect, and relationships, they become the generation that shifts attitudes and builds safety for others.

Our team continues to exemplify professionalism, compassion, and resilience — qualities that sustain SASS's reputation as a centre of excellence in trauma-informed practice. I want to express my deep gratitude to the entire SASS team for their integrity, care, and commitment to the people and communities we serve.

Looking forward, we will continue to build on these achievements through the Strategic Plan 2025–2030. Our priorities include advancing integration across programs, deepening partnerships, investing in workforce development, and strengthening our prevention and advocacy work. The coming year will also see continued effort to secure long-term funding, to ensure every Tasmanian — regardless of where they live — can access the support they need.

We extend our **heartfelt thanks** to our funding partners and community collaborators — including the Tasmanian Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC), the Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP), and the Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS). Your continued support enables our teams to provide trauma-informed care, prevention education, and advocacy that make a tangible difference for individuals and families across Lutruwita/Tasmania.

“When we invest in prevention, we invest in the next generation’s right to safety and respect.”

An Evolving Organisation, Preparing For The Future

As SASS approaches its 40th year, we are actively renewing our foundations to ensure we remain responsive, resilient, and ready for the future. This period of transformation has seen the implementation of a contemporary Clinical Governance Strategy and Framework, strengthening the quality, safety, and responsiveness of our therapeutic and tertiary prevention programs.

These changes support victim-survivors and their families to respond, recover, and heal, while also enabling us to meet the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations through a best-practice, trauma-informed model. Our evolving step-up, step-down approach ensures clients can access support at varying levels of intensity, tailored to their needs — an approach exemplified by our work at the multidisciplinary Southern Arch Centre.

Guided by our renewed Clinical Governance Strategy and a refreshed Strategic Plan to 2030, we are deepening our impact and strengthening our identity as a specialist organisation. This plan, shaped by the voices of victim-survivors and grounded in evidence, spans prevention, early intervention, response, recovery, and healing — each vital to breaking the cycle of sexual violence.

As we look ahead, we will continue to advocate for resources to meet the steady growing demand on all our services, as well as remaining focused on delivering services that are client-centred, future-ready, and aligned with our vision of a Lutruwita/Tasmania free from sexual violence.



Each element vital to breaking the cycle of sexual violence



Preventing Sexual Violence Is Ambitious, But It Is Possible

We recognise the reality: sexual violence continues to affect people across Tasmania. Yet evidence from decades of research tells us that violence can be prevented — when we commit to addressing not only its visible impacts, but also the deeper social and structural conditions that allow it to persist.

Prevention is about taking steps to stop harm before it occurs. It's about creating environments — in schools, workplaces, online platforms and communities — where respect, equity and safety are the norm. It's not about blaming individuals; it's about transforming the social, cultural and structural conditions that allow violence to occur in the first place.

This work cannot fall to one organisation or sector alone; it is a shared responsibility. It requires collective effort — from educators, parents, community leaders, businesses, governments and each of us in our everyday lives. Every time we choose respect, fairness and inclusion, we help lay the groundwork for a safer future.

Preventing sexual violence is a bold goal — but it is achievable. By staying anchored in the values that connect us — dignity, safety and respect — we can move forward together, toward a future where sexual violence is no longer part of our story.

SASS's work spans the full prevention continuum — from stopping sexual violence before it starts, to supporting early identification and intervention, providing trauma-informed clinical support, and driving systemic reform through survivor-led advocacy. These four pillars — Primary Prevention, Early Intervention, Clinical Services, and Advocacy — are deeply interconnected. Each reinforces the other to ensure a safer, more informed, and more responsive Tasmania.



Primary Prevention: Stopping Sexual Harm Before It Starts

SASS has specialist educators and practitioners dedicated to preventing sexual violence through evidence-based, best practice programs. Our work is gender transformative, underpinned by universal values, informed by intersectional theory, and shaped by the lived experiences of victim-survivors in our community. We know that whole-of-community engagement — including students, teachers, parents, and professionals — is essential to creating lasting cultural change and improving outcomes.

This year, our **CaRE@School** program was delivered across all regions of Lutruwita/Tasmania in **13 primary** and **14 secondary schools**, with **440 sessions** across the state. We also trained **443 staff** and delivered **11 parent sessions**, ensuring that prevention education is embedded across the environments where children and young people live, learn, and grow.

Beyond schools, our specialist educators trained **110 police recruits**, **113 medical students**, and participated in **21 community events** — building awareness, shifting attitudes, and fostering safer, more respectful communities. Prevention education is a powerful tool for cultural change, and every session brings us closer to a future free from sexual violence.

"The most valuable thing I learnt was that you have a right over your own body and you can change your mind whenever you want."

– Year 7 student, Nov 2024



"I truly believe that the information and education you have provided our students has kept them safe.

In one particular case, a student felt empowered to use her knowledge and understanding of consent to tell another student 'no' and to stop what he was doing and leave a situation she was not comfortable in.

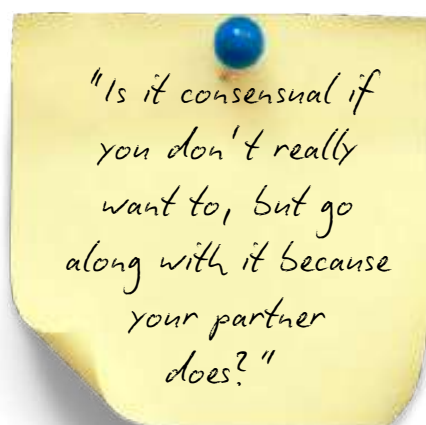
The work you do makes such a huge difference for our young people. We hope you can continue to do talks at our school in future as well as other schools — the more the better!"

*— High School Teacher,
2024*

Sticky Qs

In May 2025, Renae Pepper, State Clinical Lead and Manager of SASS's statewide Prevention Assessment Support Treatment (PAST) Program, presented at the NOTA International Conference in Belfast, showcasing the innovative **Sticky Qs** initiative — part of the **CaRE@School** program.

Sticky Qs invites students to anonymously submit questions about relationships, consent, and safety, which are then addressed in follow-up sessions by trained SASS educators. Analysis of over 1,000 questions collected in the first half of 2025 offers a powerful window into the concerns and curiosities of young people in our community.



The questions reflect a strong desire for clarity around consent, boundaries, and help-seeking. Notably, 43% of the questions analysed related to sexual harm, personal safety, and legal or ethical concerns — highlighting the importance of these topics for young people. Students sought guidance on real-life situations, such as:

"What should I do if I've been threatened about telling?"

"Is it coercion if someone is making you feel bad by not being in a relationship with them?"

These insights underscore the critical need for safe, trusted spaces — outside a young person's usual networks — where they can ask questions and receive accurate, supportive information.

CaRE@School creates those spaces. Through interactive, specialist educator-led sessions, students build trust, gain practical knowledge, and develop the confidence to seek help. As one student shared, *"Now I feel safer to go to a place and talk to someone — if I need to."*

The impact of *Sticky Qs* extends beyond the classroom. The **companion podcast** brings real student questions to life through expert interviews and accessible conversations for parents and caregivers. The podcast is helping families navigate complex topics with confidence — fostering safety and respect at home.

Together, *Sticky Qs* and CaRE@School demonstrate the importance of truly listening to young people and responding with care, clarity, and expertise. By equipping students with practical knowledge about consent, safety, healthy relationships, and help-seeking, the initiative fosters trust, reduces stigma, and strengthens protective factors — creating safer, more informed communities.

20
Episodes
1594
Downloads

"I thought I knew how to talk to my kids about consent and their bodies. But the hosts of this podcast gave an expert perspective on how to demonstrate and model consent conversations with kids that I really took a lot from."

– Parent, 2024



Partners In Prevention

Recognising that universities are not only places of academic learning, but also social environments that shape young adults' attitudes and behaviours, SASS partnered with the University of Tasmania (UTAS) and La Trobe University to adapt the CaRE@School program for the tertiary setting. The Partners in Prevention (**PiPs**) project embeds a trauma-informed, evidence-based initiative within the UTAS residential experience, guided by La Trobe's Sexual Violence Prevention Theory of Change. This partnership has strengthened CaRE's gender-transformative practice, values-based messaging, and inclusive co-design.

In May 2025, SASS hosted the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commissioner to present an overview of PiPs, with program delivery commencing in southern Tasmania in July. A key outcome of this collaboration will be the co-development of evaluation tools that will enable SASS to measure the long-term impact of our prevention programs — ensuring we continue to deliver effective, evidence-informed initiatives into the future.

Creating Safer Workplaces: Leading Change In Prevention

Over the past year, SASS expanded its prevention initiatives by supporting organisations to build confidence in reducing, responding to, and preventing sexual harm. Our **Creating Safer Workplaces education package** offers a tiered, adaptable approach tailored to the unique needs of leaders, supervisors, and employees across sectors.

A key milestone was the launch of the **Positive Duty for Leaders program** — an evidence-based initiative designed to strengthen executive leadership in driving cultural and organisational change. Throughout 2024–2025, leaders and managers from community services, aged care, manufacturing, and education and training sectors participated in workshops that enhanced their capacity to meet positive duty obligations and foster safer, more respectful workplaces.

In May 2025, six organisations engaged with the Positive Duty training, reflecting a growing commitment across sectors to building safer workplace cultures. SASS continues to work closely with partners to strengthen and adapt these initiatives, ensuring they remain responsive to the evolving needs of organisations and communities.

"I found both sessions to be very informative. I came away with much to reflect on and multiple tools to take back to my practice."

— Positive Duty Training participant, May 2025



“Together We Act, United We Change”

This year’s theme for Sexual Assault Awareness Month was **Together We Act, United We Change**, reinforcing the importance of shared responsibility in building safer communities, workplaces, and environments for everyone.

We were proud to be chosen as the charity partner by Taroona Football Club. Their commitment to fostering a culture of respect, both on and off the pitch, continues to inspire. By making space for reflection and staying true to their values, they are creating environments that are inclusive, safe, and enjoyable for all. The club raised valuable funds for SASS during Sexual Assault Awareness Month — an act of generosity that helps us continue providing vital services to those impacted by sexual violence.

“As senior players and as men in our club, we have a crucial role in sexual assault prevention and advocacy. To me, this means breaking down stigmas, starting conversations, and through our actions creating a safe space for all members of our club. Promoting SASS is important because it is a clear stance in relation to sexual assault; zero tolerance. It also hopefully brings awareness to SASS as an organisation and the valuable services they provide to those who may have otherwise been unaware.”

— **Fabian, Men’s Southern Championship Captain**



During Sexual Assault Awareness Month we also partnered with the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI) to help employers to create safe and respectful workplaces free from sexual harassment. Through this partnership we were able to help business take targeted, practical steps, not just meet legal requirements, but to lead the way in making safety and respect the new normal.

Primary Care Family And Sexual Violence (PCFSV) Pilot

Led by Engender Equality, the PCFSV pilot completed its initial implementation phase this year. Research shows that 28.1% of women visiting Tasmanian GPs are victim-survivors of family and sexual violence, with one in five disclosing for the first time in a primary care setting — highlighting the critical role of GPs in early intervention.

SASS supported the pilot by delivering specialist training, contributing to the PCFSV Support Practice Resources compendium, and conducting outreach to southern primary care providers. While our contracted role has concluded, we remain committed to the pilot’s vision and continue to collaborate with Engender Equality to ensure specialist sexual violence support remains visible and accessible within primary care.



Identifying And Responding To Harm Early

The PAST (Prevention, Assessment, Support, and Treatment) Program is Tasmania's Statewide program providing trauma-informed, evidence-based support for young people displaying Harmful Sexual Behaviours (HSB). With a focus on early intervention and family engagement, PAST helps address root causes and support change in behaviours.

Over the past year, the PAST program supported **191 clients**, reflecting its growing impact and reach. The program now operates from a **dedicated space on the lower level of Highfield House**, providing a stable and accessible environment for service delivery. In a significant development, the program has **partnered with Griffith University** to commission research that will inform **future service delivery models and government policy**, ensuring that the program continues to evolve in response to evidence and client needs.

Addressing HSB through early intervention is one of the most effective ways to disrupt the intergenerational and social cycles of sexual violence. By intervening early and providing therapeutic support to children and young people — many of whom have experienced abuse, neglect, or family violence — PAST helps reduce future harm and promote safer outcomes for individuals, families, and communities.

What makes this program particularly impactful is that **53% of referrals come from parents, carers, and schools**. By recognising and responding to concerning behaviours early, these trusted adults enable children and young people to access support before harm escalates. This pattern of referral reflects a growing community readiness to act early, respond with compassion, and foster a culture of safety and accountability.

Running alongside the PAST program is **Keeping Kids Safe**, a statewide education and prevention initiative. In 2024–2025, SASS delivered workshops to **275 professionals** across Tasmania, building their capacity to identify and respond to HSB. This evidence-based, trauma-informed training equips educators, support workers, and other professionals with practical tools, a deeper understanding of sexual harm, and strategies for effective response and safety planning. Adaptable to specialist contexts, the program also offers pathways to advanced training, reinforcing safer environments for children and young people.



Together, PAST and Keeping Kids Safe demonstrate the power of early intervention and education in preventing harm, supporting recovery, and building safer, stronger futures.



Healing For Those Impacted By Sexual Harm

Across our therapeutic programs, SASS supported **1,984** individuals impacted by sexual violence this year. Of these, **319 clients** were supported through our **Children and Families Program**, and **990 clients** accessed our **Adults Program**. When working with children, we engage safe caregivers where appropriate to provide wrap-around support, build understanding, and ensure consistent language — helping the whole family feel supported throughout the healing process.

Our therapeutic programs are evidence-based and trauma-informed, delivered within a clear scope of practice that ensures safety, consistency, and quality of care. Each episode of care is shaped by the individual's goals, pace, and circumstances — recognising that healing is not linear and that every person's journey is unique.

Guided by a client-centred, strengths-based approach, we focus on people's existing resilience and capabilities, rather than defining them by their trauma. By prioritising safety, choice, and empowerment, our practitioners create space for survivors to rebuild trust, regain control, and reconnect with their sense of self.

This structured yet flexible model enables SASS to respond to both the psychological and relational dimensions of trauma. It ensures that every interaction — every episode of care — contributes to recovery, reinforcing hope and resilience as foundations for lasting change.

Ensuring Safety And Support Around The Clock

Since its beginnings in 1986, SASS has provided after-hours crisis support. Today, this has grown into a **24/7 confidential crisis helpline** supported by local trauma specialists offering immediate, compassionate assistance to people impacted by sexual harm and violence. Whether in crisis or seeking guidance, callers are met with empathy, understanding, and practical support.

The service offers crisis counselling, face to face attendance for Forensic Medical Examinations (FMEs), police statements as emotional support—**ensuring that, at any time of the day or night, someone is available to listen, respond, and help navigate the next steps in a safe and trauma-informed way.**

In the 2024–2025 financial year, SASS responded to **319 after-hours calls** between 5pm and 9am and attended **44 FMEs**. During business hours (9am–5pm), our intake team continues to provide this vital support as part of our core service delivery.



Strengthening Our Intake Program

During 2024 and 2025, SASS expanded and enhanced our Intake Program to ensure that victim-survivors and their supporters receive timely, trauma-informed care and information. As the first point of contact, our Intake Team responds to crisis calls, walk-ins, self-referrals, and referrals from the community and loved ones — **providing a compassionate, clear, and structured entry point into our services.**

Through an intake process, clients are supported with trauma-informed screening, assessment, and guidance. Intake staff also coordinate referrals, liaise with statutory services — particularly for children and young people — and provide information about available support pathways.

- **Brief Intervention Sessions:** 1–3 targeted appointments offering early, focused support.
- **Groups Program:** Psychoeducation groups designed to provide timely, accessible support and build knowledge and resilience.

Demand for services remains high, and SASS continues to implement responsive, evidence-informed strategies to deliver high-quality, client-centred care within available resources.

The design of our service model has enabled victim-survivors and their families to receive timely, trauma-informed support. By offering immediate and short-term assistance — including crisis counselling, brief interventions, and psychoeducation groups — SASS ensures that individuals are not left unsupported during critical periods.

This approach helps bridge the gap between initial contact and intensive trauma processing, providing stability, information, and care when it's needed most.



Breaking Barriers To Support

Arch is a **collaborative, trauma-informed walk-in and referral service** where key agencies work together under one roof to support people affected by sexual harm. In Southern Tasmania, SASS is co-located with the **Police Sex Crimes Unit**, the **Family Violence Counselling and Support Service**, the **Strong Families Safe Kids Advice and Referral Line**, and the **Child Safety Service**.

This **integrated model** reduces the burden of navigating complex systems and ensures that survivors can access multiple forms of support in one **safe, welcoming space**. By offering **immediate, face-to-face assistance**, Arch removes some of the psychological and procedural barriers that often prevent people from seeking help. Through enhanced processes — including clear information, warm referrals, and personal introductions — Arch empowers individuals to make informed choices about their rights, reporting pathways, and support options. All of this takes place in a single, well-equipped and thoughtfully designed Arch site, eliminating the need to navigate multiple locations as required in previous service models.

Over the past year, Arch supported **243 clients**, including **72 walk-in clients** and **41 individuals** who received **more than 100 hours of support** during police statements — demonstrating the vital role of responsive, trauma-informed care in breaking down barriers to disclosure, engagement, and recovery.

When The System Is Complex, Compassion Matters

Throughout the year, **SASS Redress Support Team** supported **291 clients** from all parts of Lutruwita/Tasmania through the National Redress Scheme (NRS), with most referrals coming via self-referral or through the justice system. The scheme offers critical recognition and reparative support to victim-survivors of institutional sexual abuse. However, the application process remains complex, lengthy, and emotionally taxing — particularly for marginalised individuals.

Research evaluating the national program has identified key barriers to access, including low awareness, administrative complexity, and emotional burden. Survivors are required to recount traumatic experiences in detail, complete long forms, and navigate eligibility criteria, legal systems and processes — all of which can be re-traumatising and overwhelming. Many of our clients face additional challenges such as limited literacy, mental health issues, barriers in accessing support, or incarceration — with **over 60% of SASS redress clients currently in custody**.

An independent review of the scheme found that while it was built on strong intentions following the Royal Commission, it has struggled to deliver a truly trauma-informed, accessible process. SASS fills this critical gap by offering **trauma-informed, one-on-one emotional and practical support** throughout the redress process. We walk alongside clients from the earliest stages through to resolution, recognising that many would otherwise never complete their applications. While federally funded, the Redress Scheme addresses harm caused by local institutions, and it is through locally grounded support services that justice becomes accessible.

Everyone Deserves Access To Healing

SASS's **Forensic Therapeutic Services** provide trauma-informed psychological and practical support to victim-survivors of sexual harm involved in the criminal justice system. Unlike many services, our support continues as individuals return to the community — and resumes if they re-enter custody — offering vital continuity of care.

Consistent, trauma-informed support can **help interrupt cycles of harm**, reducing the risk of re-traumatisation and future offending. Our work supports some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of our community on their journey towards building healthier, safer lives by offering psychoeducation, emotional regulation strategies, prosocial coping skills, resilience-building, and trauma processing.

People who have experienced involvement with the criminal justice system often face multiple and intersecting challenges, combined with limited options and access to services and negative social judgments and biases, making accessing support more difficult. Because of these overlapping barriers, they are more likely to fall through the cracks of traditional service systems—despite having important needs and strengths. Everyone deserves access to support, regardless of criminal justice status.

This year, SASS received **85 referrals**, attended **3 health expos**, and **facilitated a wellbeing workshop at Mary Hutchinson Women's Prison**. By embedding therapeutic services both in custody and the community, we help break intergenerational cycles of abuse — benefiting individuals and the broader community.



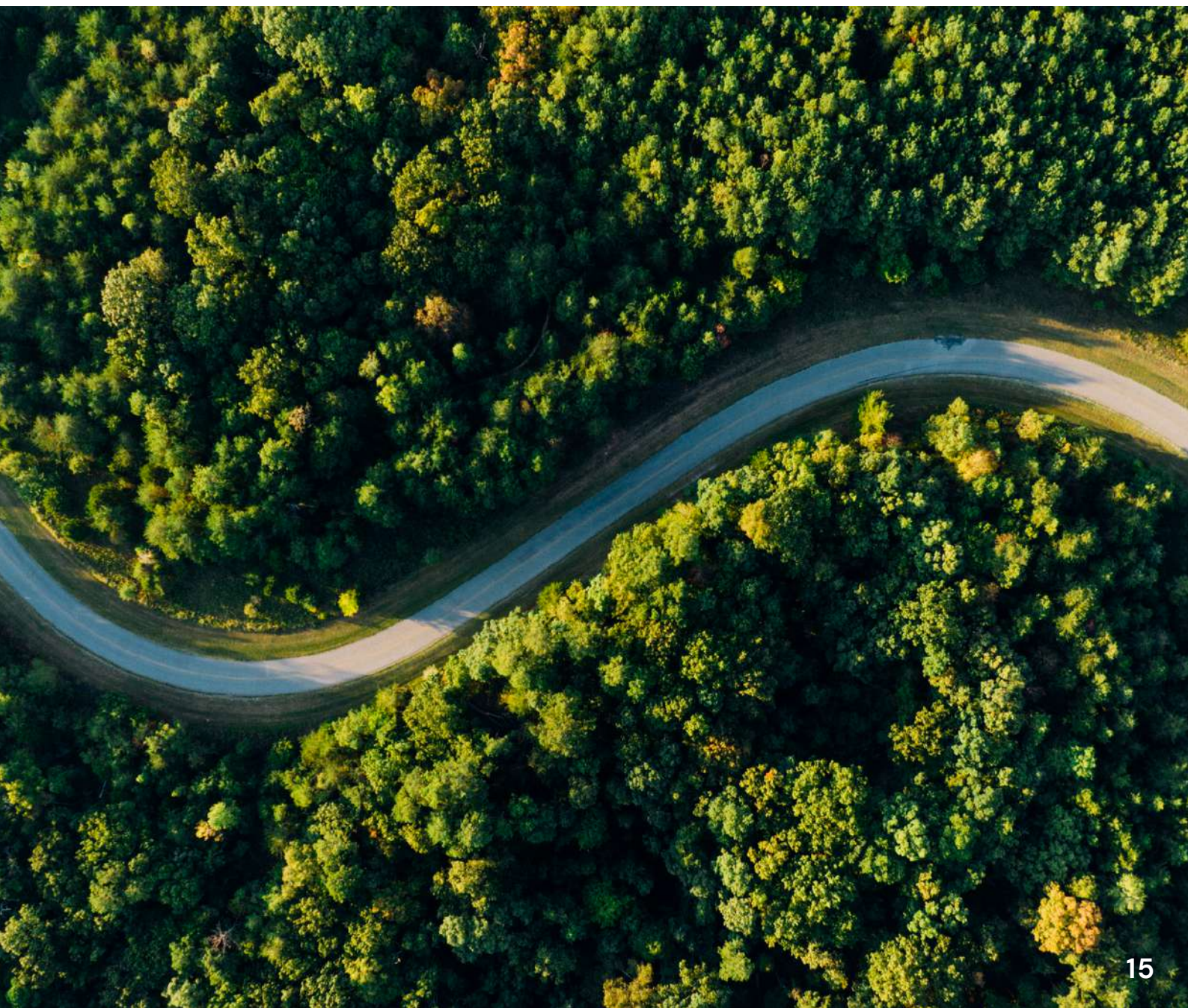
Advocacy: Driving Cultural And Systemic Change

In addition to our work across the prevention continuum, **we work to drive systemic and structural change through policy and advocacy**. We work closely with stakeholders to amplify the voices and experiences of victim-survivors and those who have been impacted by sexual harm, and draw on the practice wisdom of our specialist staff to influence policy, legislative, and practice reforms.

Over the past year, we have contributed to a range of reforms across child safety, family and sexual violence, preventative health, criminal legal and youth justice systems, and workforce development reform work.

Looking ahead, we will continue to champion reforms that are survivor-centred, evidence-based and transformative to deliver meaningful, lasting change.

As SASS approaches its 40-year milestone, we reflect with gratitude on the vision of the women who founded the service in 1986, recognising a critical gap in support for those impacted by sexual violence.



Responding to a Critical Need for Nearly 40 Years

1986 – SASS Began

In early 1986, Terese Henning, Christine Tilley, Jenny Wilson, and Michele Moseley secured a grant of over \$107,000 to establish the SASS Hobart service, overcoming significant challenges in shifting attitudes and building partnerships with health, police, and legal sectors. At its inception, the service operated after-hours with five part-time staff, providing support primarily to women aged 13 and over. While a small number of men accessed the after-hours service during this time, the day service was initially available only to women.

1995 – Trauma-Informed Training

Since 1995, SASS has delivered training to medical professionals, and since 1998, to police recruits – supporting trauma-informed responses across systems that intersect with people impacted by sexual harm.

1999 – Women in Prison

Throughout the 1990s, SASS continued to focus on supporting women and girls who had experienced sexual harm. We began delivering programs with women in prison, recognising the complex intersections between trauma, incarceration, and recovery.

2003 – Services for Men

A significant milestone came in late 2003, when SASS opened its day service to men for the first time. This reflected a growing awareness of the diverse experiences of sexual harm and the importance of inclusive, accessible support for all people affected. Around this time, demand for our services increased significantly, with client numbers doubling to 600 in a single year. By 2004, SASS was supporting over 1,000 individuals annually and advocating for increased government investment to meet a 320% rise in demand over two years.

2001 – Services for Children

In 2001, SASS expanded its services to include support for young children, acknowledging the importance of early intervention and developmentally appropriate therapeutic responses.

2013 – Redress

SASS began providing support to individuals engaging with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. In 2018, we commenced support for people applying to the National Redress Scheme continuing our commitment to walking alongside survivors seeking justice and healing.

2017 – CaRE Program Began

With funding from the Department of Education (now DECYP), SASS began delivering respectful relationships and consent education in schools – supporting young people to build healthy, safe relationships.

2023 – Launch of Arch Service

Launched Arch, a multidisciplinary initiative developed after years of advocacy. Arch brings together key services to improve the experiences and outcomes of people who have been subjected to sexual harm, ensuring a more coordinated, compassionate and trauma-informed response.

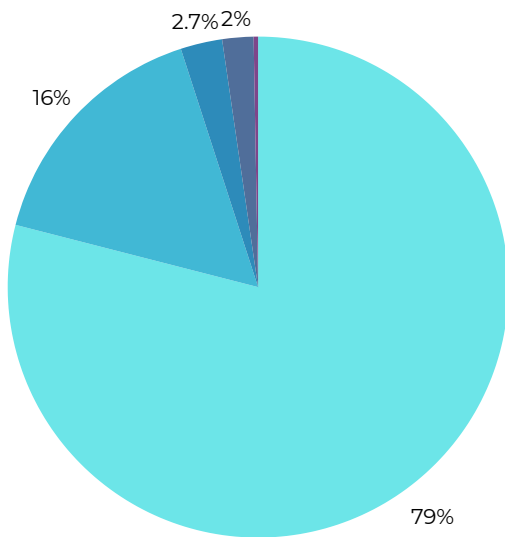
2021 – PAST Program

In 2005–06, SASS recognised the need for early, specialised intervention and began working with children aged 12 and under who were displaying Harmful Sexual Behaviours (HSB). This work has since grown into a significant part of our therapeutic services, in the Prevention, Assessment, Support and Treatment (PAST) program. In 2021, the PAST program expanded to a statewide service, increasing our capacity to support children and young people aged 17 and under who are engaging in HSB.

Maintaining Momentum Through Thoughtful Resource Management

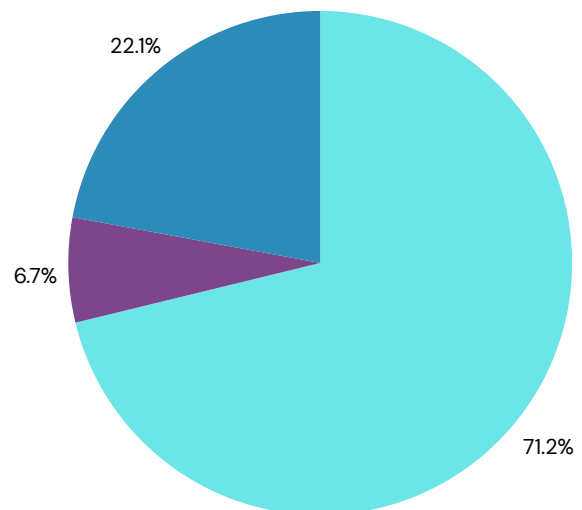
SASS continues to balance growing demand with careful values driven financial management. In a challenging funding environment we remain focused on directing every dollar to where it has the greatest impact – supporting safety, recovery and long-term community wellbeing.

Where our funding comes from:



- Tasmanian State Government
- Federal Government
- Other Grants
- Other Income
- Donations

How we use our funding:



- Clinical Therapeutic Services
- Primary Prevention Services
- Business Operations





SUPPORTED BY:



Australian Government
Department of Social Services