

SASS Election Priorities Statement

SASS call on all candidates and political parties to commit to: secure, sustainable funding to meet service needs at the Arch Centres; meaningful investment in primary prevention; and secure, sustainable service funding to realise a lutruwita/ Tasmania free from sexual violence.

About SASS

Sexual Assault Support Service Inc. (SASS) is a non-government, specialist sexual assault support service dedicated to promoting the safety, wellbeing, and agency of victim survivors, and those at risk of, or impacted by sexual violence. We envision a Tasmania free from sexual harm and sexual violence where safety, respect and consent are upheld.

We deliver services across the prevention continuum,¹ from primary prevention and early intervention across Tasmania, to response, recovery, and healing services in the south of the state. Our work is evidence-based and guided by a robust clinical governance framework, grounded in a commitment to continuous quality improvement and consistent with best-practice standards of trauma informed care.

In collaboration with government, non-government, and community stakeholders, we work to amplify the voices and experiences of victim survivors and their supports to inform legislative, policy, and sector reform that reflects the unique needs, complexities and impacts of sexual violence. We take a holistic approach, supporting individuals and families to heal from harm, while actively working to challenge the underlying drivers, structures, norms and attitudes that enable sexual violence.

[1] The 'prevention continuum' refers to: primary prevention – whole of population initiatives to address the drivers of sexual violence; secondary prevention or early intervention – aims to identify, address and respond to harm early and/ or before further harm occurs; tertiary prevention or response – focusses on responding to the impacts of abuse after it has occurred and to prevent future occurrences of harm; and recovery – supports people with lived experience of sexual violence to heal from harm.

Creating change...

Ending sexual violence is complex. It demands coordinated, sustained and evidence-informed action across all aspects of community and at every point of the prevention continuum.

The past few years in Tasmania are unprecedented. They have been marked by significant reform, driven by the Tasmanian Government's commitment to implement all recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings (the 'COI'); Commonwealth and state-based family, sexual violence and child safe reforms; and by the testimony, actions and advocacy of victim survivors, their supporters and allies.

This momentum has driven meaningful change, particularly in reforming institutional responses to child sexual abuse, and must be maintained. Yet evidence emphasises that a whole-of-community, public health approach is required to effectively prevent and respond to sexual violence. While we welcomed increased investment during and following the COI, future funding must reflect the real costs of delivering essential services.

To deliver meaningful and lasting change, we urge all political parties and candidates to commit to the policy solutions outlined below – not only to ensure that all Tasmanians can access the support they need, when they need it, but to create a safer Tasmania for generations to come.

1. Secure funding to meet service needs at the southern Arch Centre

SASS works in partnership with government and non-government services to deliver victim survivor-centred, and integrated responses to sexual violence through the southern Arch Centre. The successful pilot which concluded in 2023, emphasised the strengths and challenges associated with the multi-disciplinary, walk in model.

Through the 2024-25 State Budget, the Tasmanian Government reinforced its commitment to the Arch Centres by allocating ongoing operational funding to Tasmania Police. However, this commitment has not extended to the non-government partners who are critical to the model's success. Instead, funding for SASS' involvement at Arch, remains short-term and insufficient to meet baseline service demand, let alone projected growth in client numbers. This risks undermining the responsive and collaborative approach across service delivery models and that is central to the Arch model.

SASS calls on the next state government to:

- Provide secure, sustainable funding to ensure SASS is properly resourced to meet service need at the southern Arch Centre.

2. Meaningful investment in primary prevention

Preventing sexual violence requires a sustained, whole of community, and whole of government effort to shift the underlying social, cultural and structural conditions – the harmful attitudes, norms and behaviours – that enable it. It is critical to reduce the prevalence of sexual violence.

Primary prevention is a long-term project. Measurable change takes time and extends well beyond the scope of the COI reform project. Achieving meaningful progress requires coordinated, appropriately resourced and supported action across all setting where Tasmanians live, work, learn and interact – guided by evidence, informed by lived experience and grounded in a robust monitoring, evaluation and learning framework.

SASS calls on the next state government to continue to invest in:

- Evidence-based primary prevention initiatives, including whole of school Consent and Relationships Education (CARE)², and workforce training initiatives such as Keeping Kids Safe³ and Elevate – Understanding and Responding to Sexual Harm.⁴
- Ensure the Infrastructure to support and coordinate prevention activities, including:
 - Policy and governance mechanisms to strengthen coordination, to drive cross-sector and cross-portfolio collaboration, and promote consistent, evidence-based approaches across jurisdictions and settings.
 - A monitoring, evaluation and learning framework that tracks progress, measures impact and outcomes, and enables continuous improvement.
 - Prevention workforce development, including training, capability building, and career pathways to support a skilled and sustainable workforce.
 - Dedicated funding streams that are long-term, flexible and specifically for primary prevention activities – not reliant on short-term project grants.
 - Community-led prevention initiatives, with resourcing for place-based, culturally safe, and tailored programs led by those who are best placed to engage with their communities in this work.

[2] SASS' CARE program is delivered statewide through a whole of school (grades 3 – 12), developmentally appropriate approach to consent and respectful relationships education. Sessions are specifically tailored for different cohorts and are delivered to students, parents, guardians, caregivers, and teachers to ensure that learning and supported discussions don't stop at the classroom door.

[3] SASS' Introductory and Advanced Keeping Kids Safe training, offers comprehensive, two-day professional development to equip professionals working with children to prevent, identify and respond to children displaying harmful sexual behaviours.

[4] SASS' elevate training is tailored to a range of professions from medical professionals, emergency responders, community organisations, government agencies and corporate teams to build trauma-informed, survivor-centred responses to sexual violence. It enhances staff capability to prevent and identify risks, respond appropriately to disclosures, and support victim-survivors with sensitivity and care.

3. Secure, sustainable service funding

Through core and program funding, we support people to prevent, identify, respond to and heal from sexual violence. This work is complex, specialised and often intensive. As trauma is not linear, support must be timely, accessible, flexible and responsive to the diverse needs of those with lived experience, to ensure that people have access to the support they need, when and where they need it.

Investing in secure, sustainable funding is not just a response to immediate need – it is a long-term commitment to the safety and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities. While we welcomed funding for specialist sexual assault support services in the 2025–26 Tasmanian State Budget and forward estimates, existing funding mechanisms – particularly short term and under-indexed contracts – limit ongoing opportunities to appropriately plan for the future, to attract and retain a skilled and specialised workforce and to provide continuity of care.

In contrast, secure, sustainable funding mechanisms foster conditions for collaboration, system improvements, improved trust and stronger more equitable outcomes for victim survivors.

In line with TasCOSS Community Services Industry Sustainably election priorities,⁵ SASS calls on the next state government to:

- Fast track the implementation of five-year funding contracts across the community services industry, accompanied by a funding review process that starts at least six months before the end date of a contract.
- Consult with the industry on the development of an indexation formula that reflects the true cost of doing business.

[5] [TasCOSS 2025 Tasmanian Election Priorities](#).