

Inquiry into Tasmania Police responses to allegations of officer misconduct

Laurel House
Submission

September 2026



Acknowledgement of Country

Laurel House acknowledges and pays respect to the Palawa, who are the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters of Lutruwita. We pay respects to Elders past and present. We particularly acknowledge the resistance and resilience of those Aboriginal people who have experienced sexual violence.

Acknowledgement to Victim-Survivors

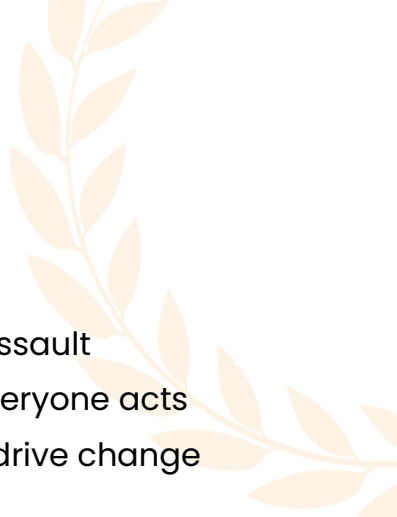
Laurel House also honour and acknowledge the victim-survivors of child sexual abuse and other forms of sexual violence. We recognise the immense strength it takes to confront and heal from these traumatic experiences. We commit to amplifying your voices, advocating for change, and standing side by side on the path to healing and recovery.

Disclaimer:

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This document was written by Elise Whitmore (Policy Officer) and Dr. Luce Mercer-Mapstone (Policy, Advocacy, and Lived Experience Lead) with input from Laurel House staff.

About Laurel House

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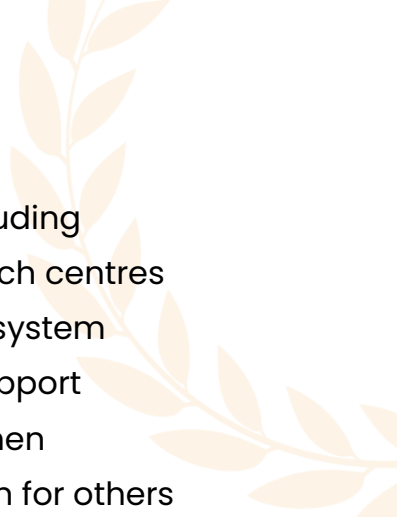
Laurel House — the North and North-West Tasmanian Sexual Assault Support Service — was established in 1988. Our vision is that everyone acts to prevent and respond to sexual harm, and our purpose is to drive change through counselling, education and advocacy.

We are a not-for-profit, community-based specialist service providing trauma-informed, evidence-based therapeutic support to victim-survivors of sexual assault, as well as their families and supporters. Our services include face-to-face counselling across Launceston, Devonport and Burnie, outreach throughout the North and North-West regions, and 24/7 telephone support, including assistance with police and forensic medical processes.

Laurel House partners with the Tasmanian Government to deliver the Arch Centres—multidisciplinary hubs for victim-survivors. The Northern Arch opened in 2023, and the North West Arch Centre opened in early 2026. With Engender Equality, we deliver the Primary Care Family and Sexual Violence program, supporting primary health professionals to better respond to family and sexual violence, including child sexual abuse.

We also provide specialist programs for children and young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours with tailored place-based programs designed for the North and North-West. In 2026, we commenced a partnership with Women's Legal Service Tasmania to deliver justice-navigation and restorative justice initiatives under the Commonwealth's new specialised sexual violence legal service pilot.

Our team delivers community education, prevention and capacity-building programs that promote respectful relationships and consent, build knowledge and skills to prevent sexual harm and strengthening safe, confident responses to disclosures, concerns and other indicators of sexual harm.

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Laurel House also plays a key role in policy and advocacy, including through our Lived Experience Engagement Program (LEEP), which centres victim-survivor expertise in shaping our services and broader system reform. LEEP includes trauma-informed advocacy and peer support streams, enabling victim-survivors to influence policy, strengthen organisational practice, and provide connection and validation for others through peer-led support.

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Introduction

Sexual violence and under-reporting

Sexual violence, including child sexual abuse (CSA), is widespread in Australia and Tasmania and have significant and enduring impacts on victim-survivors, families and communities. Nationally, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW, 2026) reports that 14% of Australians aged 18 years and over, approximately 2.8 million people, have experienced sexual violence since the age of 15. This includes more than one in five women (22%) and 6.1% of men. Sexual violence is also frequently perpetrated by someone known to the victim-survivor, rather than by a stranger.¹

The Tasmanian context reflects this broader national picture. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), an estimated 26%, one in four, of Tasmanian women (approximately 58,400) had experienced sexual violence since the age of 15. In 2024, 567 sexual assault victims were recorded by police in Tasmania; 85% were female, 35% were aged between 10 and 17 years, 91% knew the offender, and 50% of recorded sexual assaults were family violence related.^{2 3}

The prevalence of child sexual abuse is similarly significant. The Australian Child Maltreatment Study (ACMS) found that nearly one in three Australians (29%) had experienced child sexual abuse, including 37% of women and 19% of men. Most people who experienced child sexual abuse

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2026). Sexual violence.

<https://www.aihw.gov.au/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence/types-of-violence/sexual-violence>

² Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2023). *Personal Safety, Australia, 2021–22 financial year*.

<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/personal-safety-australia/latest-release>

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2025). *Recorded Crime—Victims, 2024*.

<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/recorded-crime-victims/latest-release>

experienced it more than once.⁴ The AIHW also reports that child sexual abuse is substantially under-reported to police, with 99% of men who experienced childhood sexual abuse stating that their first experience of CSA was never reported to police.⁵

Evidence on police-perpetrated violence

There is currently no reliable national or Tasmanian prevalence estimate of police-perpetrated family or sexual violence. This absence of reliable prevalence data should not be interpreted as evidence that such violence is uncommon. Rather, it reflects a significant gap in research, data collection and visibility. A 2025 scoping review of Australian and international research identified 54 relevant publications on police-perpetrated family violence and found substantial gaps in understanding its prevalence, nature and jurisdictional distribution. The review also identified police officers' particular access to professional knowledge, training, weapons and policing systems as factors that can enable abuse of power and create barriers to protection and redress for victim-survivors.⁶ To our knowledge, no comparable broad review exists for police perpetrated sexual violence. Indeed, there is a concerning lack of research on this topic specifically, meaning we draw heavily on family violence research in this submission. This is, however, likely to be insufficient given the drivers of sexual violence can be distinct from family violence, and

⁴ Mathews, B., Pacella, R., Scott, J. G., Finkelhor, D., Meinck, F., Higgins, D. J., Erskine, H. E., Thomas, H. J., Lawrence, D. M., Haslam, D. M., Malacova, E., & Dunne, M. P. (2023). The prevalence of child maltreatment in Australia: Findings from a national survey. *Medical Journal of Australia*, 218(6 Suppl), S13–S18. <https://doi.org/10.5694/mja2.51873>

⁵ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2026). *Child sexual abuse*. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence/types-of-violence/child-sexual-abuse>

⁶ Anderson, B., Farmer, C., & Tyson, D. (2025). Police-perpetrated domestic and family violence: A scoping review of Australian and international scholarship. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, 14(4), 45–64. <https://doi.org/10.5204/ijcjsd.3582>

while family violence does often include sexual violence, sexual violence also happens outside of family violence contexts.⁷

Australian research is only beginning to provide greater insight into the experiences of victim-survivors when the perpetrator is a police officer. A 2026 study involving victim-survivors of officer-involved family violence found that the officer's professional status could significantly affect risk, help-seeking, reporting, information sharing and accountability. The study identified the fact that the perpetrator was a police officer as a significant barrier for victim-survivors, including because police perpetrators may be able to draw upon their professional knowledge, reputation, relationships and understanding of policing systems.⁸

This is particularly significant given that sexual violence is already substantially under-reported. The AIHW reports that only 7.7% of women who experienced sexual assault by a male in the preceding ten years contacted police themselves about their most recent incident.⁹ Police-recorded statistics therefore are likely to represent only a very small proportion of sexual violence occurring within the community.

Police authority and barriers to disclosure

These prevalence figures are important when considering allegations of sexual misconduct involving police. Police officers are members of the broader population and are also capable of perpetrating family or sexual violence. Their institutional authority and community trust facilitates easy

⁷ This is especially the case in Tasmania, as the definition of family violence in the *Family Violence Act 2004 (Tas)* is limited to spousal and significant relationships, and does not extend to other family relationships.

⁸ Reeves, E., Fitz-Gibbon, K., Meyer, S., & Walklate, S. (2026). "The fact that he was a police officer was probably my number 1 challenge": Victim-survivor experiences of officer-involved domestic violence in Australia. *Violence Against Women*, 32(3-4), 887-909. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012251319761>

⁹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2026). *Sexual assault reported to police*. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/family-domestic-and-sexual-violence/responses-and-outcomes/police/sexual-assault-reported-to-police>

access to vulnerable people, creates an inherent power dynamic, and builds greater barriers to reporting – for example, victim-survivors of police perpetrated family violence have said the fact that their perpetrator was a police officer was the number one challenge.¹⁰

Where police status or authority is used to facilitate sexual misconduct, the power imbalance is particularly acute. A uniform, weapons, police vehicle, access to information, knowledge of investigative processes or professional relationships with other officers may be used to gain access, trust or compliance, reduce scrutiny, or discourage reporting. Responses to police-perpetrated sexual violence must therefore recognise police authority not merely as part of the surrounding context, but as a potential means through which sexual violence, grooming and abuse may be facilitated or concealed.

Police may become aware of alleged misconduct through a direct report from a victim-survivor; a disclosure to a family member, friend or professional; information provided by another victim-survivor; a colleague or witness raising concerns; an unrelated investigation; professional standards processes; external agencies; or through the identification of patterns across multiple incidents. In cases involving grooming or serial offending, the broader significance of individual reports may only become apparent when information is brought together across time, people and settings. The perpetration of CSA and grooming by Tasmania Police officer Paul Reynolds demonstrates the importance of this issue: the Weiss Independent Review found evidence of grooming and sexual abuse of teenage boys extending over more than 30 years, with up to 52 young boys

¹⁰ Reeves, E., Fitz-Gibbon, K., Meyer, S., & Walklate, S. (2026). "The fact that he was a police officer was probably my number 1 challenge": Victim-survivor experiences of officer-involved domestic violence in Australia. *Violence Against Women*, 32(3–4), 887–909. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012251319761c>

identified as having been groomed, some of whom were sexually abused.¹¹

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Tasmanian context and institutional learning

The potential for institutional dynamics to affect reporting and accountability has been an important part of Tasmania's recent history. The Tasmanian Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings ('Commission of Inquiry') was informed by extensive evidence from victim-survivors and considered the ways in which institutional cultures and structures can contribute to abuse remaining hidden or inadequately addressed.^{13 14}

The Commission of Inquiry's findings concerning Paul Reynolds provide an important context for this Inquiry. Tasmania Police acknowledged that the Commission had identified failings in the initial investigation into allegations of child sexual abuse against Reynolds, as well as in the decision to hold a police funeral following his death in 2018.¹⁵

The subsequent Weiss Independent Review provided a more detailed examination of Reynolds' offending and the organisational learnings arising from it. The Review found that police culture and the 'Blue Code of

¹¹ Weiss, R. (2024). *Weiss Independent Review into Paul Reynolds: Final report*. Tasmania Police. https://www.police.tas.gov.au/uploads/FINAL_Weiss-Review-Report_24July2024.pdf

¹² Tasmania Police. (2024). *Weiss Independent Review*. <https://www.police.tas.gov.au/commission-of-inquiry/weiss-independent-review/>

¹³ Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings. (2023). *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings*. <https://www.commissionofinquiry.tas.gov.au/report>

¹⁴ Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings. (2021). *Scope of the inquiry*. <https://www.commissionofinquiry.tas.gov.au/scope-of-the-inquiry>

¹⁵ Tasmania Police. (2023, October 6). *Commission of Inquiry—Paul Reynolds*. <https://www.police.tas.gov.au/news-events/media-releases/commission-of-inquiry-paul-reynolds/>

Silence', while diminished over time, had influenced the Reynolds matter, including evidence that concern about damage to Reynolds' reputation had, at that time (in 2008), been prioritised over the risk posed to teenage boys in the community.¹⁶

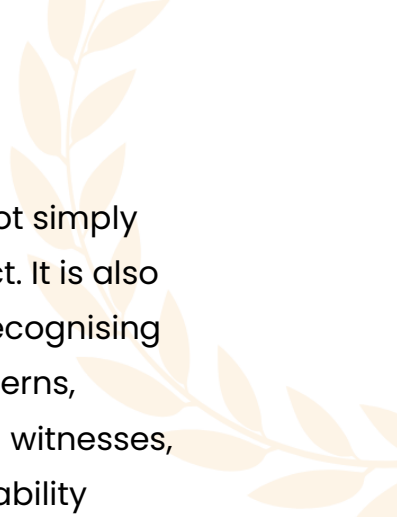
The Weiss Review therefore provides a useful illustration of the distinction between the existence of reporting mechanisms and the existence of a culture in which people feel safe and supported to use them. These concerns are particularly relevant when the person reporting misconduct is themselves a police employee, where reporting may carry perceived or actual consequences for employment, workplace relationships, reputation, career progression and belonging within the organisation.

Recent oversight work in New South Wales provides further evidence of the organisational risks involved when police investigate allegations of family violence involving police officers. In 2026, the NSW Law Enforcement Conduct Commission reviewed 67 complaints concerning the NSW Police Force's responses to police officers involved in family violence incidents. The review identified weaknesses including inconsistent documentation of conflicts of interest and risk assessments, and recommended stronger independent oversight and management arrangements where police officers are involved in family violence.^{17 18}

¹⁶ Weiss, R. (2024). *Weiss Independent Review into Paul Reynolds: Final report*. Tasmania Police. https://www.police.tas.gov.au/uploads/FINAL_Weiss-Review-Report_24July2024.pdf

¹⁷ Law Enforcement Conduct Commission. (2026). *Review of NSW Police Force investigations of police officers involved in domestic and family violence incidents*. <https://www.lecc.nsw.gov.au/publications/publications>

¹⁸ Parliament of New South Wales. (2026). *Report of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission entitled "Review of NSW Police Force investigations of police officers involved in domestic and family violence incidents"*. <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/parliamentary-business/tabled-papers-details?id=193252>



Taken together, this evidence demonstrates that the issue is not simply whether an individual police officer has committed misconduct. It is also whether the systems surrounding that officer are capable of recognising harm, receiving and responding to disclosures, identifying patterns, managing conflicts of interest, protecting victim-survivors and witnesses, investigating allegations appropriately, and ensuring accountability regardless of rank, reputation or organisational status.

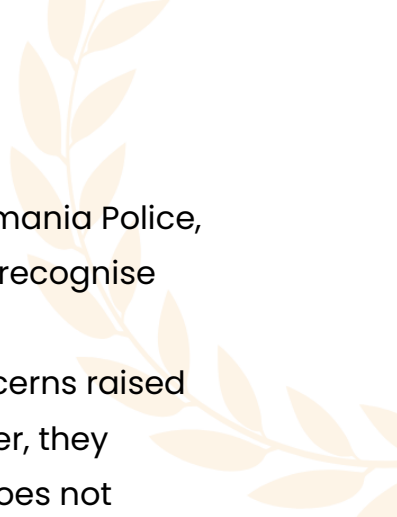
Institutional power, disclosure and accountability

A victim-survivor may already face significant barriers to disclosure and justice, and those barriers can be compounded when the alleged perpetrator is a police officer or when the victim-survivor is themselves a police employee. The power imbalance is not simply interpersonal; it is institutional.

Laurel House therefore considers that an effective response to police misconduct must begin from an understanding of the full pathway from harm to recognition, disclosure, reporting, investigation and accountability, and to recovery and healing. Reform cannot focus solely on what happens after a formal complaint is made. It must also address the conditions that determine whether a victim-survivor, police employee or witness feels safe enough to speak, whether the information they provide is recognised as potentially significant, whether apparently isolated concerns are connected into patterns, and whether the institution is capable of scrutinising its own members without allowing culture, loyalty, hierarchy or institutional reputation to displace the safety and rights of victim-survivors.

Laurel House's perspective

Laurel House welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this Inquiry. Our submission draws on Laurel House's specialist expertise in responding to sexual violence and child sexual abuse, our experience supporting victim-survivors through police and justice processes, our working relationship with Tasmania Police, and direct consultations with people affected by sexual misconduct involving current or former police officers.

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Laurel House has an established working relationship with Tasmania Police, including through the North and North-West Arch Centres. We recognise the commitment of police officers who respond professionally, compassionately and in a trauma-informed manner. The concerns raised in this submission are not intended to diminish that work. Rather, they demonstrate the importance of ensuring that good practice does not depend on the individual officer involved. Trauma-informed responses must be consistently embedded across Tasmania Police and supported by effective policies, accountability mechanisms and institutional safeguards.

Consultation with Victim-Survivors

To inform this submission, Laurel House consulted with people who had experienced sexual violence perpetrated by current or former Tasmania Police officers. Participants were recruited through consultation with members of Laurel House's Lived Experience Engagement Program (LEEP), a public call for participants on social media, and referrals from participants who knew others with relevant experiences.

The timeframe for preparing this submission was limited and the experiences being sought were highly specific. This necessarily constrained both the time available to identify and engage potential participants and our capacity to undertake more targeted outreach across communities and geographic locations. We recognise that some communities may not have been reached through the approaches used, and that meaningful engagement with some victim-survivors requires more time, trusted relationships and culturally and contextually appropriate ways of reaching out.

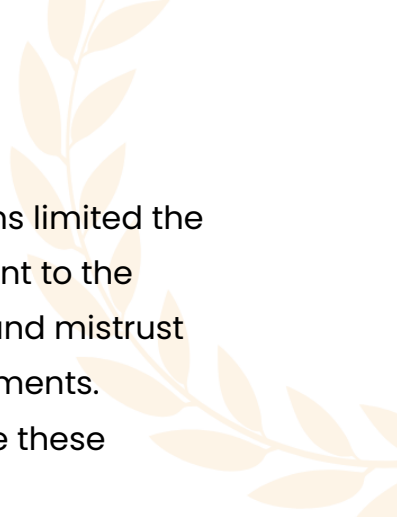
Given the sensitive nature of these experiences, some victim-survivors will have needed more time to develop the trust and sense of safety necessary to come forward or participate in an interview. There are therefore likely to be people with relevant experiences who were not reached, did not feel able to come forward within the available timeframe, or needed more time before they could consider participating. Not everyone who contacted

Laurel House was interviewed. Some people decided not to participate, while others did not fall within the defined scope of the consultation.

Laurel House conducted confidential, semi-structured interviews with six people, and there was no interview that didn't contain a lived-experience element, with some participants also bringing in other skills, knowledge and expertise where relevant. We used open-ended questions that allowed participants to identify the issues they considered most important and describe their experiences in their own words. Participation was voluntary, and participants were remunerated for their time and expertise in accordance with Laurel House's lived experience participation policy. All quotes used in this submission, unless otherwise indicated, are from victim-survivors.

We acknowledge that the participant group was not as diverse as we would have hoped, including in relation to cultural and racial identity, LGBTIQ+ identity, disability, and age, and did not adequately represent people from communities that experience particular stigma, including people living with addiction, mental illness, and sex workers. Given more time, Laurel House would have sought targeted consultation with relevant stakeholders and people from these communities. We consider that such consultation would likely have further illuminated how stigma and marginalisation affect experiences of police-perpetrated sexual violence, and decisions about reporting. The experiences reflected in this submission should therefore not be understood as representing the full range of people affected.

Privacy and anonymity were extremely important to participants. No demographic information about participants was asked for or is included in this report given the critical need for anonymity and confidentiality for participants. Identifying information has been removed, and some direct quotes have been amended to redact or alter identifying information. Even with these protections, many participants feared being identified from the circumstances of their experiences or experiencing repercussions from

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Tasmania Police for speaking with Laurel House. These concerns limited the detail that could safely be included and are themselves relevant to the Inquiry's consideration of police culture, institutional betrayal and mistrust and the adequacy of existing reporting and oversight arrangements. Participants considered it a high risk undertaking even to share these stories anonymously.

Laurel House **sincerely thanks each participant** for their willingness to place their trust in us and for the courage involved in sharing their experiences. We hope this submission does justice to their stories and their commitment to improving responses and reducing the risk of similar harm to others.

Term of Reference 1

Term of Reference 1: *The adequacy of systems, processes and oversight arrangements for responding to allegations of serious misconduct within Tasmania Police, including sexual misconduct and family violence*

Independent reporting and investigations

Victim-survivors of police-perpetrated sexual violence should not be required to report directly to Tasmania Police. All participants in Laurel House's consultations consistently stated they feared that the alleged perpetrator's colleagues (other police officers) would minimise the conduct, misuse police information or processes, breach confidentiality, retaliate against them, or place greater weight on the officer's account.

"I do not have faith in police to be able to adequately investigate themselves because time and time again, it's been proven that they simply cannot do it." –Anonymous Participant

These concerns are heightened in Tasmania's small policing jurisdiction, where professional and personal relationships often overlap.

"I didn't know how to report. How do you report a police officer? You have to go to police... I thought, **they know each other,**" ... they're going to trust the person they know." –Anonymous Participant

"He was a serving police officer. His friends are police officers. **He understood police systems, processes, and the culture in a way that I did not.**" –Anonymous Participant

"I assumed that any station I approached would contain people who knew him, had worked with him or knew his family. As a result, **the interconnected nature of policing in Tasmania made reporting feel unsafe.**" –Anonymous Participant

Victim-survivors with experiences of marginalisation or stigma may face additional barriers. Previous experiences of discrimination, criminalisation or harmful responses from police and other systems may contribute to

distrust and fears that their identity, circumstances or history will be used to undermine their credibility. An independent external reporting pathway is therefore necessary to provide victim-survivors with a safe and credible alternative.

Existing external reporting pathways

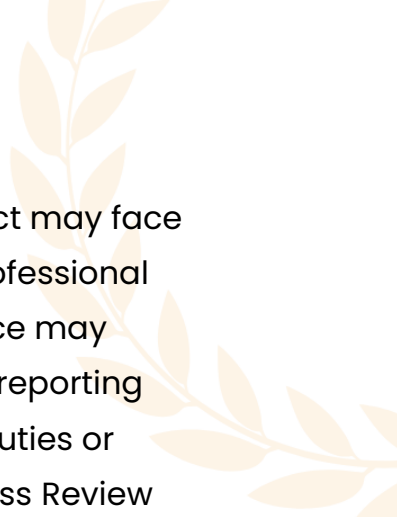
Existing oversight bodies do not currently provide a complete alternative. The Ombudsman principally only reviews administrative action and complaint handling. While the Integrity Commission can investigate serious misconduct, it may refer matters to, or receive assistance from, Tasmania Police in the investigative process.

If the role of either body is expanded to include an independent external investigative branch when it comes to police officers, it must be adequately resourced and empowered to receive reports and undertake independent investigations. This would require appropriate investigative powers and expertise, alongside specialist sexual and family violence knowledge and trauma-informed, culturally safe and accessible practices.

Police reporting on each other

The issues facing police employees are not the same as those facing civilian victim-survivors who report police misconduct. Laurel House spoke specifically for this submission with a person who has internal knowledge of police investigation procedures. Their information highlighted a further and distinct cohort: police employees who are themselves victim-survivors of sexual or family violence perpetrated by another police officer.

These police employee victim-survivors may be required to navigate both a serious violence response and an employment relationship with Tasmania Police. They may also encounter the person they have reported, their colleagues, supervisors or investigators within the same insular and interconnected organisation. Their needs must be distinguished both from civilian victim-survivors reporting police and from police employees who report misconduct they have witnessed. Each group requires a safe, clearly communicated and appropriately independent pathway.



Police employees who experience or witness sexual misconduct may face complex barriers to reporting. Hierarchical structures, close professional relationships, and the interconnected nature of Tasmania Police may create fears that a report will not remain confidential, that the reporting employee will be identified or ostracised, or that their career, duties or opportunities for promotion will be adversely affected. The Weiss Review found that some serving officers did not consider existing internal mechanisms safe from repercussions, identification or retaliation.¹⁹ Weiss (2024, p. 49) found that:

“What remains a live issue for some serving police officers the Independent Reviewer spoke to is that the mechanisms for internal reporting is, to them, not a place where they feel they could safely report without fear of repercussions...The fact that Tasmania is a small jurisdiction also brings with it complexities and impediments including that police do not feel confident that they can safely report about suspected misconduct of other police officers without being singled out or identified.”

Police employees should have access to confidential reporting options outside their usual chain of command through the independent external pathway. This reporting pathway should be available regardless of whether the conduct meets the threshold for a ‘protected disclosure’ under the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2002* (Tas). Behaviour that may not, in isolation, amount to professional misconduct or illegality under the Act may still establish a pattern of grooming, harassment, or other concerning behaviour that is likely to escalate and should be capable of being reported safely and securely.

¹⁹ Weiss, R. (2024). *Weiss independent review into Paul Reynolds: Final report*. Tasmania Police. https://www.police.tas.gov.au/uploads/FINAL_Weiss-Review-Report_24July2024.pdf

Police employees who receive disclosure or report misconduct

Police employees who witness misconduct, receive a disclosure from a colleague, or hold concerns about another officer may occupy an especially difficult position. They may have professional reporting obligations while also being a trusted colleague or support person to the victim-survivor. The person with internal knowledge who spoke with Laurel House for this submission emphasised the risk that an employee can be placed in a conflicting role. A reporting employee should not be expected to act as an investigator, persuade a colleague to make or sign a statement, or choose between their professional obligations and maintaining a safe, supportive relationship with a victim-survivor.

Protections against reprisal must extend to formal and informal adverse consequences, such as bullying, isolation, unfavourable postings, performance action or lost career opportunities.

Police employees who have experienced sexual violence by a police officer

A police employee who is a victim-survivor of sexual or family violence perpetrated by a police officer requires a distinct response. The matter should not be treated simply as an internal complaint, workplace dispute, occupational health and safety, or employment-management issue. The person with internal knowledge who spoke with Laurel House for this submission raised concerns that, when both parties are police officers, the response may move quickly into internal processes and away from the specialist family and sexual violence practices, options and safeguards that would ordinarily be available to a civilian victim-survivor.

This can create particular risks. A police employee victim-survivor: may feel pressured to make, complete or sign a statement before they are ready; may not be permitted to have a trusted support person present; may fear being stood down, isolated or forced to leave their employment; and may perceive that the institution is more focused on managing organisational risk than supporting their safety and recovery. These dynamics can cause further harm and may deter police employees from reporting violence by colleagues.

Information provided to Laurel House also raises concern that an internal investigation involving a police employee victim-survivor may not consistently receive specialist sexual and family violence expertise. Professional Standards investigators may have substantial investigative experience, but an internal misconduct process should not displace specialist knowledge about trauma, delayed disclosure, coercion, family violence dynamics, victim-survivor choice and the effects of trauma on memory and communication.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Establish an accessible, trauma-informed pathway, independent of Tasmania Police, for reporting and investigating allegations of sexual misconduct involving current and former police officers. The pathway should be available to civilian victim-survivors, police employees who experience sexual or family violence perpetrated by another police officer, and police employees who witness or receive disclosures of such conduct, in the form the Committee determines most appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Require the design, implementation and evaluation of the independent reporting pathway to be informed by genuine, ongoing and adequately resourced consultation and co-design with victim-survivors, particularly those who experience marginalisation and stigma, and specialist family and sexual violence support services.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Establish a dedicated, trauma-informed protocol for police employees who experience sexual or family violence perpetrated by another current or former police officer. The protocol should:

- (a) provide immediate access to independent specialist sexual and family violence support, separate from management, Professional Standards Command and internal wellbeing services;
- (b) ensure the employee is offered an independent reporting option and is not required to rely solely on an internal misconduct pathway;
- (c) distinguish any obligation to assess risk or investigate from pressure on the victim-survivor to provide, sign or continue a statement;
- (d) enable the victim-survivor to have a trusted support person of their choice, unless there is a clear, lawful and documented reason otherwise; and
- (e) require employment, welfare and operational decisions, including any decision to stand down either officer, to be made separately from the investigation and reviewed for their impact on the victim-survivor's safety, career and wellbeing.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Require sexual misconduct allegations involving a current or former police officer, where the victim-survivor is a police employee, are assessed and investigated by personnel with demonstrated specialist expertise in sexual and family violence, trauma-informed practice and victim-survivor-centred interviewing.

Independent specialist support

Two distinct forms of assistance are required for victim-survivors of police-perpetrated sexual violence: victim management²⁰ within Tasmania Police for those who report; and independent counselling, advocacy and support regardless of whether they wish to engage with police.

Victim management within Tasmania Police

Recommendation 4 of the Weiss Review calls for a dedicated, properly resourced victim management team, operating separately from Professional Standards Command, to support people who report sexual offending or misconduct by current or former police officers.²¹

Tasmania Police advised Laurel House, in discussions held in relation to this submission, that it considers the recommendation complete and intends to rely on support available through Arch centres rather than establish a separate team. While Arch provides an important multidisciplinary response, it is Laurel House's view that this doesn't reflect the model

²⁰ **Terminology:** While Recommendation 4 of the Weiss Review uses the term "victim management", Laurel House does not recommend adopting this terminology. The phrase risks positioning the victim-survivor, rather than the institutional response and processes surrounding them, as something to be "managed". This is particularly problematic in the context of police-perpetrated sexual violence, where power and authority are central concerns. Laurel House recommends terminology such as **"victim-survivor liaison"** or **"victim-survivor support"**, which better reflects a trauma-informed, person-centred function focused on support, information, advocacy and navigation of relevant processes.

²¹ Recommendation 4 of the Weiss Review states that Tasmania Police establish a dedicated victim management team which is funded and resourced to operate separately of the Professional Standards Command to support victims of reported sexual offending or misconduct where the perpetrator is a current serving or previously serving police officer, and which:

- i. is staffed by sworn and unsworn police members with specialised victim-centric trauma-response training specific to dealing with victims of police offending or misconduct;
- ii. is housed in a physical location separate from the Professional Standards Command and is accessible to victims statewide; and
- iii. provides ongoing support to victims before, throughout and after any Professional Standards investigation.

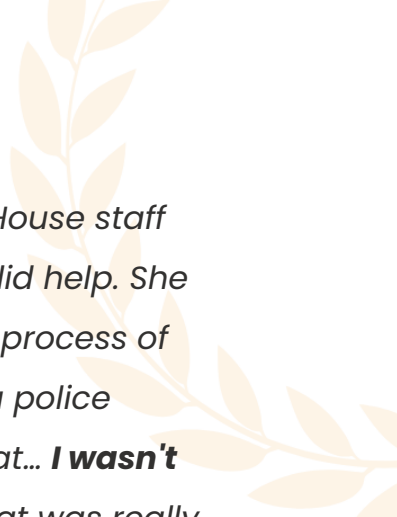
envisaged by the recommendation. Police are co-located within Arch, reports of police sexual misconduct would still be referred to Professional Standards Command, and Arch partners have received no additional resources for this complex work.

If Arch forms part of the response to Recommendation 4 of the Weiss Review, clear and appropriately resourced arrangements are needed to separate victim management from investigations and define the responsibilities of Tasmania Police and Arch partners.

The need for a separate victim-management function is particularly acute where the victim-survivor is a serving police employee. In those matters, the victim-survivor may be dealing simultaneously with the effects of sexual or family violence, the prospect of continued contact with colleagues connected to the alleged perpetrator, uncertainty about workplace safety and duties, and fear that seeking support will affect their career. A victim-management function must therefore be able to support police employee victim-survivors independently of Professional Standards Command. It cannot assume that an Arch-based model, designed principally around civilian reporting pathways, will meet those distinct needs, especially if an external reporting pathway is established (as Arch include members of Tasmania Police).

Support outside police reporting processes

A victim-survivor's experience of a Tasmania Police misconduct process does not begin or end with their direct involvement with police. Victim-survivors require a supportive environment before, during and after any police reporting process, enabling them to obtain information, understand their options and decide whether, when and how they wish to engage. This was raised by some participants, who spoke about not being fully ready to engage with Police, not understanding the reporting process, or not yet recognising the harm they had experienced.



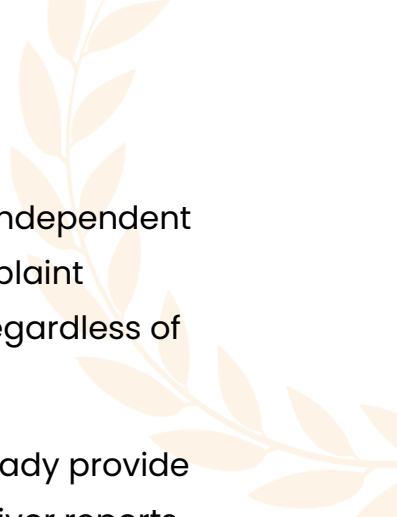
*"I think the fact that I was able to speak with the Laurel House staff member before I went into much detail with the police did help. She [Laurel House counsellor] was able to explain the whole process of what was about to happen, because I had never done a police interview before. I'd never gone through anything like that... **I wasn't alone** in a room with just two police officers. Because that was really daunting. It was so much for me, mentally, to sit in that room with them. But to have [a Laurel House counsellor] there, even though I just met her, **it was like having a friend there with me. It was what I needed to actually disclose.**" – Anonymous Participant*

Some elements of this support are already available when a person makes a criminal report through an Arch centre, as the above participant described. Other participants who had engaged with Arch services were generally positive about their experiences, especially the therapeutic supports.

*"When I did my statement through Arch... I felt **that was a positive experience**...Having [a Laurel House counsellor] there was really valuable." – Anonymous Participant*

However, a victim-survivor generally must engage with at least two Arch service delivery partners (e.g., Laurel House AND child safety services etc.) to be considered an Arch client; access is not automatic for everyone. In cases that involve sexual misconduct by a police officer, this means the victim-survivor must be engaged with both Laurel House *and* Tasmania Police. A victim-survivor who only wants confidential counselling, information, advocacy or an options discussion, and is not ready or does not wish to report to police or engage another Arch partner, may therefore fall outside the Arch model.²² Specialist sexual violence services, including

²² Laurel House does have some discretion to decide to see a victim-survivor at the Arch when they don't meet this criteria if it is in their interests to do so.



Laurel House, should be adequately resourced to provide this independent support, including through training on police misconduct complaint processes and procedures. This support should be available regardless of whether a victim-survivor chooses to make a police report.

Specialist sexual violence services, including Laurel House, already provide trauma-informed support regardless of whether a victim-survivor reports to police. However, supporting victim-survivors of police-perpetrated sexual violence is more complex where police misconduct and Professional Standards processes are unclear or differ from ordinary reporting pathways. Consistent with Recommendation 4 of the Weiss Review, clear information and appropriate resourcing are needed so specialist services can independently support victim-survivors who have experienced sexual violence or abuse by a police officer to understand and navigate these processes.

The importance of access to independent information and advocacy extends to victim-survivors who have some contact with police. One participant interviewed by Laurel House described approaching Tasmania Police for information to support a Victims of Crime (VOC) Assistance application. She was instead offered therapeutic support directly financed through police, but was not advised that delay in making a VOC application could make it more difficult for her application to be accepted in the future. She explained that she followed the police officer's guidance because:

*"[the Police Officer] presented themselves as **someone to trust** and someone to care and look out for me through the process."* –

Anonymous Participant

Laurel House has been advised that some victim-survivors of police-perpetrated sexual violence have been offered a limited number of psychology sessions funded by Tasmania Police, including EMDR. While EMDR is an established trauma treatment, therapeutic support in the context of an active or potential criminal matter can raise unique legal

risks. This highlights the importance of specialist sexual violence services providing care, as they are experienced in navigating the intersection between therapeutic support and justice processes.

These issues require related but distinct responses. The arrangements adopted for Recommendation 4 of the Weiss Review should provide an appropriately separated, specialised and resourced victim management function for people who report to police. Separately, specialist sexual violence services should receive dedicated funding to provide independent counselling, advocacy and support to victim-survivors, regardless of whether they make or pursue a police report.

RECOMMENDATION 5

That Tasmania Police fully implement Recommendation 4 of the Weiss Review by establishing a dedicated and appropriately resourced victim management function that:

- (a) operates separately from Professional Standards Command and the investigation of the alleged conduct;
- (b) provides specialised, trauma-informed and continuous support to victim-survivors throughout the police process;
- (c) where delivered through Arch centres, clearly defines and resources the respective responsibilities of Tasmania Police and Arch partner organisations;
- (d) Includes a distinct, independently supported response for serving police employees who are victim-survivors of sexual or family violence perpetrated by another police officer; and
- (e) Ensures victim-survivors are provided with clear information about reporting, support, workplace-safety and employment options, including the role and limits of Arch centres, Professional Standards Command and internal wellbeing services.

RECOMMENDATION 6

That the Tasmanian Government provide dedicated and sustainable funding to specialist sexual violence services to deliver independent, counselling, advocacy and support to victim-survivors of sexual violence perpetrated by current or former police officers.

RECOMMENDATION 7

That the Tasmanian Government undertake, in consultation with specialist sexual violence and family violence services and victim-survivors, a dedicated scoping process to determine the service model, resourcing and referral pathways required to provide independent counselling, advocacy and support to victim-survivors of sexual violence and abuse perpetrated by police officers, including those who do not wish to report to or engage with police.

Recognising patterns of misconduct

The Weiss Review demonstrated that Paul Reynolds' conduct spanned his professional, private and sporting roles, forming part of a sustained pattern of grooming and abuse. Allegations and concerns arising in an officer's professional and private capacities should therefore be recorded and considered together where relevant to safeguarding or misconduct risk.

More broadly, an officer's policing role may intersect with relationships and activities in other settings, meaning relevant conduct cannot always be understood by considering each context in isolation.

*"I think he specifically targeted me because I was young. And none of that's been taken into consideration... I don't know how they **recognise patterns** if they don't look at these intersecting events."* –

Anonymous Participant

All Tasmania Police personnel should receive specialist-informed training that recognises grooming and coercion as a cumulative pattern of behaviour, and can occur in circumstances where the victim-survivor is an

adult or a child. Conduct that appears unremarkable in isolation may acquire a different significance when considered alongside other interactions, boundary violations or uses of police authority.

Recognising patterns also requires systems capable of bringing together information that may have been received at different times, through different reporting pathways, or in relation to conduct occurring in different contexts. A concern about an officer's conduct in the workplace, for example, may acquire greater significance when considered alongside separate concerns arising from their private, sporting or community activities.

This does not mean that Tasmania Police should investigate matters internally. Rather, Tasmania Police should maintain appropriate systems for recording and identifying potentially related concerns, with clear protocols governing when cumulative conduct, boundary violations, and reportable conduct must be referred to an independent body for assessment or investigation. The body responsible for investigating a particular allegation should have access to relevant information about other allegations or concerns necessary to identify patterns of behaviour.

*"It's a **unique part of grooming as a police officer** to be able to use that position...You've got this preconceived idea that police can't do the wrong thing, and you've then got a police officer telling you that what's happening isn't wrong."* –Anonymous Participant

Numerous participants consulted by Laurel House emphasised that grooming by a police officer may be particularly difficult to recognise, including for the victim-survivor. Police officers are entrusted to uphold the law, protect the community and exercise authority for legitimate purposes. Their conduct may therefore be presumed to be appropriate, protective or lawful, even where authority and presumed trust, are being used to create dependency, erode boundaries or facilitate abuse. This presumption of legitimacy, combined with the inherent power imbalance between an

officer and a member of the community, may enable grooming to continue without being identified or challenged.

RECOMMENDATION 8

Tasmania Police ensure that its complaint, conduct and safeguarding systems enable relevant information concerning individual personnel to be identified and considered cumulatively across professional, private and community contexts, including information held across Professional Standards, operational, family and sexual violence, workforce and safeguarding systems

RECOMMENDATION 9

Tasmania Police and relevant independent oversight and regulatory bodies establish clear referral and information-sharing protocols so that concerns are referred to the body with the appropriate jurisdiction and, where lawful and necessary, relevant information can be shared to enable cumulative patterns of serious misconduct, sexual misconduct, grooming or safeguarding risk to be identified and appropriately investigated or managed.

RECOMMENDATION 10

All Tasmania police personnel receive specialist-developed and co-delivered training, in partnership with independent non-police sexual violence and family violence specialists training to identify and respond to patterns of grooming, coercion, boundary violations, and abuse of authority.

Registration to Work with Vulnerable People

Police officers are currently exempt from Registration to Work with Vulnerable People (RWVP) when acting in their official capacity.²³ Laurel

²³ Section 15(2)(b)(i) of the *Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013 (Tas)*

House considers this exemption impossible to justify given the significant authority exercised by police, the vulnerability that can arise whenever a civilian is subject to police power, and the statistical likelihood that vulnerable people are more likely to interact with police.

Tasmania Police advised Laurel House (during consultations for this submission) that officers are accountable to Professional Standards and subject to conduct requirements as high as, or higher than, those applying to RWVP cardholders. It also advised that Professional Standards makes appropriate notifications concerning risks to children and that misconduct or risk recorded in the State Service Management System would inform the Registrar. While Tasmania Police considers registration unlikely to make a practical difference, it stated it is not necessarily opposed to the requirement and noted some usefulness in the prospect.

Laurel House maintains that requiring Police to hold registration under the RWVP Scheme would provide additional safeguards and demonstrate publicly that police are subject to the same minimum screening and monitoring requirements as others working with vulnerable people. The notification arrangements described also appear focused on risks to children and may not adequately account for misconduct affecting other people made vulnerable by their identities, circumstances or interactions with police.

In any event, the effectiveness of these arrangements depends on information being promptly recorded, shared and acted upon.

Information-sharing has historically been inconsistent in Tasmania, and Laurel House staff are aware of matters outside policing in which months elapsed before a RWVP registration was suspended following allegations involving children. Whether those delays occurred before or after information reached the Registrar, they demonstrate the danger of relying on information-sharing systems without mandatory requirements, clear timeframes and effective oversight.

RWVP registration should therefore form part of a broader framework of initial and ongoing screening, timely information-sharing, continuous monitoring and independent oversight. It is a minimum safeguard, not a substitute for the systemic reforms required to prevent and respond to police misconduct.

RECOMMENDATION 11

The Tasmanian Government amend section 15(2)(b)(i) of the Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013 (Tas) to remove the exemption for police officers, so that are subject to the same registration, risk-assessment, monitoring and ongoing disclosure requirements as other people working with vulnerable people.

Investigations following resignation, retirement, or death

Serious misconduct investigations should not automatically end because the officer concerned resigns, retires or dies. Although departure from Tasmania Police may limit the disciplinary action available, it does not remove the need to establish what occurred, identify institutional failures, assess whether other people were involved or remain at risk, and provide victim-survivors with an appropriate outcome.

*“[I was told] **he’s resigned**, so the conduct report and investigation isn’t going to go anywhere. [I thought] that just doesn’t make sense, I just don’t think that’s right. They will surely need to do more to unpack some of his **patterns of behaviour**.”* –Anonymous Participant

The *Police Service Act (Tas) 2003* permits complaints about conduct committed while a person was a police officer, including where the person is no longer serving. It also requires complaints to be registered and provides for their investigation and determination. However, the legislation does not establish sufficiently clear requirements for completing a serious misconduct investigation when an officer resigns, retires or dies. This creates a risk that departure from the Police Service will operate, in

practice, as an accountability gap and be felt as a failure or betrayal for the victim-survivor.

The purpose of continuing an investigation in these circumstances is not limited to imposing a disciplinary sanction. A completed investigation can:

- acknowledge the experiences of victim-survivors and provide an evidence-based outcome;
- identify criminal conduct or information requiring referral to another authority;
- determine whether other officers, employees or institutional practices contributed to the harm;
- identify continuing risks to individuals or the community;
- preserve an accurate organisational and employment record;
- inform decisions concerning honours, funerals, memorials, references or post-service appointments; and
- support systemic reform and public confidence.

Victim-survivors should be kept informed through a trauma-informed and culturally safe process. They should be advised when an officer's departure or death affects the investigation, what this means for the investigation and any available pathways, the reasons for any decision about how the matter will proceed, the anticipated timeframe, and the final outcome. Information should be provided routinely throughout the process where the victim-survivor consents to receiving it.

RECOMMENDATION 12

Amend section 46 of the *Police Service Act 2003 (Tas)* to require that an investigation into alleged serious misconduct is not discontinued solely because the subject officer resigns, retires, otherwise ceases to be a police officer, or dies before the investigation is completed. The investigation should, so far as reasonably practicable, be completed for the purposes of establishing the relevant facts, identifying systemic issues and patterns of behaviour, assessing any continuing risks, and informing organisational learning and safeguarding responses.

RECOMMENDATION 13

Amend section 47 of the *Police Service Act 2003 (Tas)* to provide for findings to be made and recorded following an investigation concerning a former or deceased police officer, notwithstanding that disciplinary action under section 43(3) is no longer available.

Code of Conduct Breaches

Section 42 of the *Police Service Act 2003* does not expressly identify sexual misconduct, sexual violence, child sexual abuse or grooming as breaches of the Police Code of Conduct. Instead, sexual misconduct is only able to be addressed indirectly through general provisions concerning integrity, misuse of police authority, or conduct likely to bring discredit on the Police Service. This seems like a significant oversight.

This approach risks that sexual misconduct will be minimised, misidentified or missed. Broad misconduct terminology can obscure the nature and seriousness of sexual violence, including grooming and other conduct that may not meet a criminal or reportable threshold. It can also result in responses that focus on institutional reputation rather than the safety, autonomy and credibility of victim-survivors.

The Code of Conduct also contains gaps in its application to conduct outside official duties. The honesty and integrity obligation in section 42(1)²⁴ applies only “*in the course of*” police duties. Although section 42(11)²⁵ applies to a police officer’s conduct “*at any time*”, its concern is not the harm caused to a victim-survivor. The provision is engaged only where the conduct is likely to prejudice or bring discredit on Tasmania Police. This framing places the reputation and interests of the institution at the centre of the assessment, rather than the victim-survivor’s experiences of violence, abuse and trauma.

Reliance on section 42(11) therefore requires sexual misconduct to be characterised by its likely effect on Tasmania Police, rather than recognised as inherently harmful conduct incompatible with holding police office. It also creates scope to argue that conduct occurring privately, or unlikely to become publicly known, does not meet the threshold for a breach because it is not likely to prejudice or discredit the Police Service where it is not a public matter. This is particularly inadequate where grooming, child sexual abuse or other sexual violence occurs in private, community, sporting or online settings.

Other provisions are also too limited, including:

- Section 42(8)²⁶ may not adequately capture the use of police status, authority or information to facilitate or conceal sexual misconduct

²⁴ 42(1) A police officer must behave honestly and with integrity **in the course of his or her duties in the Police Service**.

²⁵ 42(11) A police officer must not, **at any time**, conduct himself or herself or act in a manner that is likely –

- (a) to be prejudicial to the Police Service; or
- (b) to bring discredit on the Police Service.

²⁶ 42(8) A police officer must not make improper use of –

- (a) information gained in the course of his or her duties in the Police Service; or
- (b) the duties, status, power or authority of the police officer –

because it requires an intention to obtain a “*gift, benefit or advantage*”; and

- Section 42(12)²⁷ protects only **police officers** who report Code breaches, leaving victim-survivors, family members, witnesses and other reporters without express protection.

RECOMMENDATION 14

Amend section 42 to include a distinct prohibition on sexual misconduct by a police officer at any time, including conduct occurring in a private capacity.

RECOMMENDATION 15

Define sexual misconduct to include, without limitation, child sexual abuse, sexual assault, sexual violence, sexual harassment, grooming, sexual exploitation, online or electronic facilitation of sexual abuse, and attempting or assisting such conduct. The definition should capture relevant non-criminal conduct, including grooming, coercion, and serious boundary violations.

RECOMMENDATION 16

Amend section 42(8) to prohibit a police officer, at any time, from using police information, status, authority, equipment, relationships or processes to facilitate, commit or conceal sexual misconduct, intimidate a victim-survivor, interfere with reporting or avoid accountability. Proof that the officer sought a separate “*gift, benefit or advantage*” should not be required.

in order to gain, or seek to gain, a gift, benefit or advantage for the police officer or for any other person.

²⁷ 42(12) A police officer must not victimise or discriminate against another **police officer** because that other police officer has reported a breach of a provision of the code of conduct.

RECOMMENDATION 17

Expand section 42(12) to protect victim-survivors, complainants, witnesses, family members, advocates, support people and any other person who reports or assists an investigation. The prohibition should expressly cover intimidation, harassment, pressure not to report, adverse treatment, interference and retaliation.

Transparency, reporting, and systemic oversight

Independent oversight cannot be effective without sufficient public reporting to identify whether complaints result in meaningful accountability and to detect recurring or systemic concerns. Tasmania Police publishes an annual *Professional Standards Complaints and Outcomes Summary Statement*,²⁸ which provides de-identified information about finalised Level 2 and Level 3 complaints and internally raised matters, including the relevant Code of Conduct provision, outcome and action taken. However, the categories used are often too broad to reveal the nature of the alleged conduct. Descriptions do not indicate whether the underlying conduct involved sexual misconduct, grooming, harassment, family violence or another form of abuse.

The statement also records some matters as “Resigned – No DN”, meaning that the officer resigned before a determination could be made, without explaining why the investigation was not completed or what steps were taken to establish the facts and identify any broader risks or institutional failures. An officer’s resignation should not prevent serious allegations from contributing to organisational learning, risk management and the identification of patterns involving the officer or others.

²⁸ Tasmania Police. (2026). *Professional standards complaints and outcomes summary statement 2025*. <https://www.police.tas.gov.au/uploads/Professional-Standards-complaints-and-outcomes-summary-statement-2025.pdf>

Transparency remains limited in relation to matters involving the Integrity Commission. The Commission received 48 complaints concerning Tasmania Police officers in 2024–25, representing 29 per cent of all complaints received.²⁹ However, its register of finalised matters generally describes the relevant body only as a “*state service agency*” or “*public authority*”.³⁰ It is therefore not possible to identify which finalised matters concern Tasmania Police or to determine the time taken, findings made, disciplinary consequences imposed, or whether officers resigned or had their employment terminated during an investigation.

RECOMMENDATION 18

Require Tasmania Police to strengthen its existing public reporting on police misconduct by publishing regular, de-identified information about complaints, including the nature of the alleged conduct, whether it involved sexual misconduct, grooming, harassment, family violence or misuse of authority, investigation timeframes, findings, outcomes, disciplinary action, referrals for prosecution and subsequent prosecution outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION 19

Require the Integrity Commission to report specifically on its oversight of Tasmania Police, including the number and nature of matters referred, monitored, audited or independently investigated, the outcomes of that oversight, any recommendations made and any action subsequently taken.

²⁹ Integrity Commission Tasmania. (2025). *Annual report 2024–25*.

https://www.integrity.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/833371/integrity-commission-annual-report-2024-25.pdf

³⁰ Integrity Commission Tasmania. (2026, April 29). *Finalised matters*. Retrieved from

<https://www.integrity.tas.gov.au/investigating/updates/finalised-matters>

Information provided to victim-survivors and complainants

Public reporting is distinct from the obligation to keep individual victim-survivors and complainants informed about their own matters. Laurel House heard from victim-survivors who were not provided with adequate updates about the progress or outcome of investigations into their complaints. In some cases, particularly where alleged conduct did not result in a criminal charge and was instead addressed under the Code of Conduct, victim-survivors were told that they would need to make a Right to Information request to learn what had occurred. Requiring a victim-survivor to initiate a separate statutory process to obtain basic information about the investigation of their complaint is inaccessible, procedurally unfair, and may compound their distress and sense of exclusion from the process.

RECOMMENDATION 20

Establish an enforceable right for victim-survivors and complainants to receive information about the progress and outcome of investigations arising from their complaints, including reasons for decisions not to investigate or continue an investigation, relevant findings and any disciplinary or other action taken, subject only to necessary limitations relating to privacy, safety and procedural fairness. Access to this information should not depend upon making a Right to Information request.

Time Limit for Making Complaints

Section 44(2)(b)³¹ of the *Police Service Act 2003 (Tas)* requires a complaint about a police officer to be made within six months after the conduct becomes known to the complainant, unless the Commissioner is satisfied

³¹ 44(2)(b) A Complaint must be made within 6 months after the conduct became known to the complainant

that “*special circumstances*” justify accepting it later. The Act does not define special circumstances or expressly recognise barriers that may delay reporting sexual misconduct, including trauma, grooming, fear of retaliation, concerns about not being believed and the authority of the alleged perpetrator.

“I couldn’t go through with actually telling anyone what had happened.” –Anonymous Participant

Laurel House spoke with numerous participants who made statements to Police about the sexual violence they had experienced and all of them made their reports after the 6-month time limit set out in section 44(2)(b) of the *Police Service Act 2003 (Tas)*. Some participants spoke about not understanding the nature of what had happened to them, about fear of approaching police, or about only coming forward once their perpetrator was being investigated for other conduct of a similar nature.

*“I needed someone to offer to help me **identify the harm** that had happened to me. Because, when I look back, I think I’ve probably under-reported some of it at the time, because I was still making sense of it.”* –Anonymous Participant

People from marginalised or stigmatised communities may face additional barriers, including fear of discrimination, previous negative experiences with police and concern that their identity or circumstances will be used to undermine their credibility.

A six-month limit is particularly inappropriate for child sexual abuse, which may not be disclosed until many years after the abuse occurred. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse³² found that

³² Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. (2017). *Final report: Preface and executive summary*. Commonwealth of Australia. Retrieved from https://www.royalcommission.gov.au/system/files/2021-08/final_report_-_preface_and_executive_summary.pdf

survivors who participated in its private sessions took, on average, 23.9 years to tell someone about the abuse, with some victim-survivors never disclosing at all. Recent proposed family violence reforms provide a useful point of comparison. The *Family Violence Reforms Bill 2026* proposes a two-year limitation period for the new summary coercive control offence, reflecting recognition that trauma, fear, safety concerns and ongoing coercion may delay disclosure and engagement with legal processes. Similar barriers arise in relation to police sexual misconduct, particularly where the alleged perpetrator holds police authority, supporting a more consistent approach to limitation periods.

RECOMMENDATION 21

Amend section 44 of the *Police Service Act 2003 (Tas)* to:

- (a) Remove the time limit entirely for complaints involving allegations of child sexual abuse;
- (b) Extend the 6month time limit to two years; and
- (c) Specify that sexual misconduct constitutes “*special circumstances*” for accepting a complaint outside any limitation period.

Access to Victims of Crime Assistance

Currently, section 5(3A) of the *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 1976 (Tas)*³³ states:

The Commissioner shall not make an award to a person if that person has failed to do any act or thing which, in the opinion of the Commissioner, that person should reasonably have done to assist in the identification, apprehension, or prosecution of any person

³³ *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 1976 (Tas)* s 5(3A). Retrieved from <https://www.legislation.tas.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1976-032#GS5@EN>

alleged to have committed the criminal conduct or alleged criminal conduct for which compensation is claimed.

In practice, people working in the victims-of-crime assistance system advise that Commissioners generally interpret this provision as requiring an applicant to make a report to police. The Department of Justice has recently indicated to Laurel House that a police report is not necessarily required, and that other forensic or supporting evidence may be substituted. However, the Department of Justice website in relation to victims of crime assistance explicitly states that, “*Any offence should be reported to police.*”³⁴ If there are alternative ways of satisfying section 5(3A), they are not publicly known or accessible to victim-survivors and their advocates.

This lack of clarity is particularly significant for victim-survivors of sexual violence, who experience distinct barriers and harms within the justice system. As documented by the Australian Law Reform Commission “*Safe, Informed, Supported*” report,³⁵ these barriers include disbelief, victim-blaming, persistent myths about sexual violence, repeated recounting of trauma, loss of control, and retraumatisation. Barriers to reporting are heightened where the alleged perpetrator is or has been a police officer.

³⁴ Department of Justice. (2025, September 2). *Financial assistance*. Victims Support Services. <https://www.justice.tas.gov.au/victims/financial-assistance>

³⁵ Australian Law Reform Commission. (2025). *Safe, informed, supported: Reforming justice responses to sexual violence* (ALRC Report No. 143). Sydney, NSW: Author. Retrieved from <https://www.alrc.gov.au/publication/jrsv-report-143/>

RECOMMENDATION 22

That section 5(3A) of the *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 1976* be amended to recognise circumstances in which it may not be reasonable for a victim-survivor of sexual violence to report to police or participate in an investigation or prosecution where the alleged perpetrator is or was a member of Tasmania Police, or a police officer in any other jurisdiction.

RECOMMENDATION 23

That the Tasmanian Government publish clear, trauma-informed guidance on Victims of Crime Assistance eligibility, alternative forms of supporting evidence, and applications for extensions of time, including for victim-survivors alleging sexual violence by a current or former police officer.

Term of Reference 2

Term of Reference 2: *The culture of Tasmania Police in relation to matters or allegations of misconduct*

Misuse of police authority

Police officers occupy a position of exceptional public trust. Their authority extends beyond formal statutory powers. It includes the credibility associated with police status, access to sensitive information, knowledge of investigative and court processes, professional relationships within the justice system, and an ability to influence how other people perceive risk and credibility.

*“You grow up and you’re told the **police are the ones you can trust**; if you need help, find a police officer.”* – Anonymous Participant

These attributes can be misused to groom, coerce, intimidate, silence or discredit victim-survivors and others who might report misconduct.

*“My perpetrator [of child sexual abuse] had almost unlimited access to me because he was a cop... **police have positions of trust** within the community, of course no one’s going to second guess if you’ve put a vulnerable child with them.”* – Anonymous Participant

The misuse of police authority should therefore be understood as a distinct form of misconduct and, where it occurs in an intimate, family or sexual context, as a potential form of coercive control and systems abuse. It may occur on or off duty and does not depend on an officer exercising a formal police power.

*“I held this strong trust in police and the values I associated with the profession, like **professionalism, integrity, and being fair**. That’s what I thought a police officer was. And I have met people [police officers] that are the exact opposite of that.”* – Anonymous Participant

An officer may cause significant harm merely by creating the impression that they can access information, influence an investigation, enlist the support of colleagues, damage a person's credibility or ensure that a complaint will not be acted upon.

RECOMMENDATION 24

Require all Tasmania Police personnel to undertake regular, scenario-based training on police power, privilege and bias, including how police status can create or intensify power imbalances in professional, personal, and sexual relationships.

Police Authority and Consent

The relevance of police authority extends to whether a person freely consents to sexual activity. Section 2A of the *Criminal Code Act 1924* (Tas) defines consent as “*free agreement*”. It expressly provides that a person does not freely agree to an act if they agree or submit because they are “*overborne by the nature or position of another person*”.³⁶

Multiple participants interviewed by Laurel House described feeling pressured by a police officer, even where physical force was not used. Their accounts highlight that the absence of force does not necessarily establish consent as defined above. Police status may carry an implicit authority that affects whether a person feels able to refuse or withdraw consent. This may be particularly significant where the officer has previously exercised police powers in relation to the person, knows sensitive information about them, has presented themselves as a protector or source of assistance, or has created the impression that they can influence how police or other justice agencies will respond. Other situations where this is also particularly

³⁶ *Criminal Code Act 1924* (Tas) s 2A.

<https://www.legislation.tas.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1924-069#JSI@GS2A@EN>

significant include where there is a greater power asymmetry due to the vulnerability of the (potential) victim, such as with people who experience marginalisation.

Police status will not, by itself, determine whether consent was absent in a particular case. However, the statutory definition requires genuine consideration of whether a victim-survivor agreed or submitted because they were overborne by the officer's position. Investigations and charging decisions should therefore examine the operation of authority and power, rather than treating the absence of physical force or an express verbal refusal as evidence of consent. There may also be cases where consent was given but, due to the nature of the power imbalance, it could not by its very nature be given freely.

RECOMMENDATION 25

The Committee investigate whether any current or former Tasmania Police officer has been charged with a sexual offence on the basis that a victim-survivor did not freely agree because they were overborne by the officer's position, within the meaning of s 2A(2)(e) of the *Criminal Code Act 1924* (Tas). If no such charges have been brought, the Committee should examine whether legislative, investigative, prosecutorial, training or broader cultural reforms are required to ensure that the operation of police authority is properly considered when assessing consent.

RECOMMENDATION 26

Should an independent investigative process be established, as proposed in Recommendation 1, the guidelines governing investigations should explicitly address the definition of consent in s 2A(2)(e) of the *Criminal Code Act 1924* (Tas), including whether a victim-survivor's capacity to freely consent was overborne by the officer's position, status or authority.

Accountability for conduct while on duty

Multiple participants described sexual misconduct or other inappropriate behaviour by police officers who were on duty, in uniform, carrying firearms or driving police vehicles. These visible features of police work conveyed significant power and authority. They could make an officer's actions appear official, legitimate, threatening, or difficult to question or resist. Participants reported officers arriving at their homes in police vehicles, pulling up beside them in public and asking them to get into marked police vehicles, and engaging in sexual misconduct while on duty.

*"Most of the time he was in uniform. It was **during a shift**. He would come over. He would be driving an unmarked police car."* –

Anonymous Participant

*"I knew he had a gun. I knew he had access to a weapon... When someone's there, and there's **force and pressure**, plus a gun, it changes the power dynamics even more."* – Anonymous Participant

The participant we spoke to who is familiar with police internal processes indicated that, informally, there were assumptions made about tracking and monitoring police officer's movements and activities along the lines that the more senior the officer, the less oversight or safeguarding was needed. We know that abuse of power is not limited to those with less power, indeed many of the public cases of serial child sexual abuse have been perpetrated by those in positions of significant power and trust – positions they used to facilitate such abuse.

These accounts raise serious questions about how officers' movements, use of police vehicles and contact with members of the public are supervised. Participants questioned how officers could engage in this conduct without attracting attention, whether anyone knew where they were or who they were meeting, and whether supervisors were expected to notice and act on unexplained movements or contact. Such oversight should not be limited to lower rank officers. The use of police resources and the visible authority of police office to facilitate sexual misconduct points

not only to individual wrongdoing, but also to gaps in oversight and organisational safeguards.

RECOMMENDATION 27

Tasmania Police strengthen and routinely audit systems for supervising and recording all officers' movements regardless of rank, use of police vehicles (whether marked or unmarked) and contact with members of the public while on duty, including clear processes for identifying, investigating and responding to unexplained activity, unauthorised contact and patterns that may indicate grooming or sexual misconduct.

Inconsistent responses to victim-survivors

Almost every participant described at least one or two police officers who responded to them with trauma-informed care, skill, and professionalism. For example, these officers met victim-survivors away from police stations where appropriate, used unmarked vehicles and wore plain clothes, offered them food or a drink, listened with genuine curiosity and concern, communicated clearly, and avoided victim-blaming language. They also understood that sexual violence may be reported after a significant delay, asked appropriate questions, followed through on commitments, provided practical assistance, connected victim-survivors with support services and kept them informed about investigations and court proceedings.

*"Because you're not dealing with just everyday Joe Blow survivors here. You're dealing with someone who has had their **trust** **decimated** by the very people that are supposed to uphold the law."*

-Anonymous Participant

A collective theme emerged in speaking with participants, which was that the justice "process" was equally, if not more important, than the justice "outcome." Police responses were crucial to how participants experienced

the justice system, including whether they felt positive about proceeding, or re-traumatised by the process.

*“Sometimes telling your story is all that we want... Sometimes, whether or not that [justice] is achieved through the courts, **just telling our story and feeling heard, validated and believed** can be enough to lighten the load.”* – Anonymous Participant

However, these positive experiences were not consistent. Participants described receiving an appropriate response as a matter of “luck of the draw”, dependent on the individual officer rather than a reliable organisational approach.

*“What I would like them to understand is that the impact of what they do cannot be understated; whether that's good or bad. I've had a terrific experience with [redacted] and feel so validated and understood and supported [by them]. But then **the officials in the police service have been dismissive, disorganised, disrespectful and that just added to the trauma.**”* – Anonymous Participant

Almost all participants also reported harmful or inadequate responses, including being misidentified as the predominant aggressor in family violence matters, being told that referrals had been made when they had not, receiving little or no information about an investigation, and not being supported to explain what had occurred.

*“I do think they thought I was a **dumb little girl** with a vexatious complaint.”* – Anonymous Participant

One participant said that, because she did not use the words “sexual violence”, police did not recognise what she was describing and failed to ask questions that may have assisted her to disclose it.

“I didn't think my situation for a long, long time was actually what it was because it wasn't violent.” – Anonymous Participant

The contrast between these experiences shows that Tasmania Police already has officers capable of providing respectful and trauma-informed responses, but that this practice is not embedded consistently across the organisation.

There is currently a risk that specialist family and sexual violence roles are filled through routine rotation or redeployment, rather than through processes that assess an officer's suitability, commitment and capability for this distinct area of policing. This can result in inconsistent practice and officers entering specialist roles without the necessary skills or approach. Existing recruitment pathways may also deter people who would be well suited to FSV policing but do not wish to pursue a broader policing career. Specialist FSV services, including Arch partners, also have limited formal involvement in decisions about appointments to Arch, Sex Crimes and related leadership roles.

Some participants also questioned whether services and review processes presented as separate from the investigating officers, including Arch, were sufficiently independent. Whether or not those concerns reflect the formal arrangements, they demonstrate a lack of trust and a need for greater clarity about each body's role, membership, decision-making powers and relationship with Tasmania Police.

The Family and Sexual Violence Involving Police Review Committee

Laurel House also has concerns about the Family and Sexual Violence Involving Police Review Committee. Tasmania Police describes the Committee as independently chaired and responsible for impartial review of police responses to family and sexual violence involving police personnel. However, its Terms of Reference do not appear to be readily publicly available, limiting transparency about its role, powers and processes.

The Committee's composition also raises questions about the extent of its independence. It is chaired by the Secretary of the Department for Education, Children and Young People, while its identified members and

advisers are otherwise Tasmania Police personnel. Specialist family and sexual violence representatives and victim representatives may be invited, but do not appear to have permanent membership, and the Committee is not a decision-making body.

An external Chair provides some separation from Tasmania Police, but does not equate to independent community oversight. Laurel House considers the Committee should include permanent specialist family violence and sexual violence representation and an independent community member, alongside greater transparency about its review processes, powers, conflicts of interest and how its recommendations are acted upon.

ALRC Safe, Informed Supported Recommendations

The experiences of participants who spoke with Laurel House are consistent with the findings of the Australian Law Reform Commission's 2025 report, *Safe, Informed, Supported: Reforming Justice Responses to Sexual Violence*.³⁷ The ALRC identified inconsistent communication, conflicting information and procedures, and retraumatising police practices as contributors to negative experiences of the criminal justice system. It recommended that all police officers receive evidence-based education about trauma, memory, grooming, coercive control and myths and misconceptions about sexual violence, together with training in trauma-informed and culturally safe communication and engagement (ALRC Recommendations 11 and 12).

The ALRC also recommended that police agencies review and update their guidelines for responding to sexual violence, including requirements concerning appropriate responses to complainants, referrals to support

³⁷ Australian Law Reform Commission. (2025). *Safe, informed, supported: Reforming justice responses to sexual violence* (ALRC Report 143). Australian Government.

<https://www.alrc.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/JRSV-Final-Report-Book-for-Web-final-20250211.pdf>

and legal services, interviewing practices, communication and regular updates, timeframes, the intersection between family and sexual violence, and review and complaint processes (ALRC Recommendation 18). Importantly, those guidelines should be implemented across police agencies, regularly reviewed and, where not operationally sensitive, made publicly available.

RECOMMENDATION 28

Tasmania Police implement Recommendations 11, 12 and 18 of the Australian Law Reform Commission's *Safe, Informed, Supported: Reforming Justice Responses to Sexual Violence*, by:

- (a) Actively partnering with specialist sexual violence services in the development, implementation and review of police responses to sexual violence;
- (b) Establishing and enforcing universal, consistent and specialist-informed standards for responding to reports of sexual violence, including where the alleged perpetrator is a current or former police officer; and
- (c) Requiring those standards to include trauma-informed and culturally safe communication, appropriate questioning, accurate referrals, clear explanations of processes, reliable follow-up, and regular updates to victim-survivors.

RECOMMENDATION 29

Tasmania Police mandate regular and repeated specialist-delivered education and training for all police employees who may respond to sexual violence, consistent with ALRC Recommendations 11 and 12. Training should include trauma, memory and responsive behaviour; myths and misconceptions about sexual violence; grooming and coercive control; trauma-informed and culturally safe practice; best-practice communication; minimising retraumatisation; and the experiences of groups disproportionately affected by sexual violence.

RECOMMENDATION 30

Tasmania Police routinely audit implementation of, and compliance with, any standards and guidelines implemented under these reforms.

RECOMMENDATION 31

The Tasmanian Government should implement ALRC Recommendation 6 by establishing an independent, centralised mechanism through which victim-survivors can provide confidential feedback about their experiences of the criminal justice system, with that feedback used to identify systemic issues and inform ongoing reform.

RECOMMENDATION 32

The Tasmanian Government clearly explain, and independently review, the roles, governance and operational independence of Arch and any Tasmania Police committee involved in reviewing family or sexual violence matters, including how conflicts of interest are identified and managed when allegations concern police personnel.

RECOMMENDATION 33

Tasmania Police reform recruitment, selection and deployment processes for specialist family and sexual violence roles to prioritise demonstrated suitability and specialist capability, reduce reliance on routine rotation, explore pathways for direct entry into FSV policing, and provide a formal role for specialist FSV services, particularly Arch partners, in relevant selection processes.

RECOMMENDATION 34

Reform the Family and Sexual Violence Involving Police Review Committee to strengthen its independence, transparency and specialist expertise, including by providing permanent representation from the specialist family violence and sexual violence sectors and an independent community member, publicly releasing its Terms of Reference, and clearly setting out its review powers, conflict-of-interest processes and how its recommendations are considered and acted upon.

Culture of silence, protection and accountability

There is a strong theme across the experiences shared with Laurel House that the barriers to reporting police misconduct are not only about the availability of reporting mechanisms. They are also about whether victim-survivors believe that the institution they are approaching will act with integrity when the person they are reporting is one of its own.

Participants described a deep lack of trust that police would investigate police fairly. They feared that colleagues of an alleged perpetrator would know and protect one another, minimise the seriousness of the conduct, or place greater weight on the account of a fellow officer.

This concern extends beyond an individual fear of not being believed. It reflects a broader perception that police culture can prioritise loyalty to colleagues and protection of the institution over accountability for misconduct. The participant consultations described a culture in which people may see concerning behaviour but feel unable or unwilling to challenge it because the person involved is a colleague. As one participant explained:

"The fish rots from the head down. It's a behaviour that's filtered through the ranks [to] junior constables coming through. They may see something that does not sit right with them, but they're feeling powerless to do anything. Before you know it, five years have

passed. They've now become more than just a passive bystander.

They've probably become people that cover it up as well." –

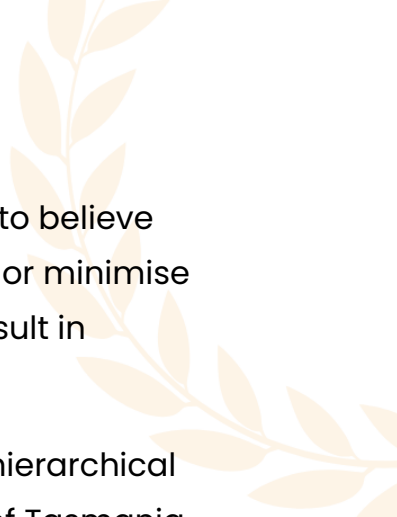
Anonymous Participant

This account is particularly significant because it illustrates how organisational culture can reproduce itself. Silence does not necessarily begin with an active decision to conceal misconduct. It can begin with a junior employee observing concerning behaviour, believing that nothing will happen if they report it, or fearing consequences for challenging a colleague or superior. Over time, that silence can become normalised, and people who initially felt uncomfortable with the behaviour can become part of the system that permit and perpetuates it.

For victim-survivors, the consequences of this culture are profound. A person deciding whether to disclose sexual violence is already making a highly consequential assessment of whether they will be believed, supported and safe. Where the alleged perpetrator is a police officer, that assessment must also include whether the institution will protect the person who caused the harm rather than the person reporting it. This can create a powerful disincentive to disclosure.

The concern is particularly acute because police occupy an unusual position of public trust. This is compounded by the historical legacy of mistrust associated with policing and institutional abuse. As Laurel House noted earlier in this submission, many people, particularly people from marginalised communities, may hold perceptions of police abuse of power based on historical experiences of institutional injustice and violence. Those perceptions cannot be dismissed as irrational or treated as a failure of community confidence. The existence of this historical legacy means that contemporary police conduct is experienced within a much longer history of institutional trust and betrayal.

The Inquiry should therefore consider institutional mistrust itself as an outcome of police culture and accountability arrangements, rather than simply as a problem for victim-survivors to overcome. A reporting system



may be formally independent, but if victim-survivors continue to believe that police will protect their colleagues, manipulate processes or minimise allegations, the existence of that system will not necessarily result in increased reporting.

The same cultural problem affects police employees. Existing hierarchical structures, close professional relationships and the small size of Tasmania Police can create fears of identification, ostracism, retaliation and career consequences for employees who report colleagues. Laurel House has already heard evidence that some employees may feel caught between their professional obligations and their role as a trusted colleague or support person to a victim-survivor. A culture in which reporting is understood as disloyalty therefore places employees in an impossible position: they may have to choose between professional integrity and their perceived obligation to protect colleagues.

The cultural objective should be to fundamentally reverse this dynamic. Reporting misconduct by a colleague must not be understood as an act of betrayal or disloyalty. It must be understood as an essential professional responsibility and an expression of loyalty to the purpose and integrity of policing. Protecting a colleague from accountability is not protecting the Police Service. It undermines public trust, places other people at risk, and damages the many police employees who act ethically and professionally.

Tasmania Police therefore needs to move from a culture in which loyalty can operate as a mechanism of silence to one in which accountability is itself a core component of professional identity and organisational loyalty. This requires more than training or statements from senior leadership. Officers need to see, consistently and over time, that reporting concerning conduct is expected, that reports are acted upon, that people who raise concerns are protected and rewarded, and that rank, reputation, relationships or length of service do not shield an officer from scrutiny.

Ultimately, victim-survivors should not have to make a judgement about whether they have found a “good” police officer before deciding whether it

is safe to disclose. The consultation indicated that positive responses can be highly validating, but that appropriate treatment remains a gamble. A culture of accountability means making integrity, transparency and willingness to challenge misconduct systemic characteristics of policing, rather than individual characteristics of particular officers.

RECOMMENDATION 35

Require Tasmania Police to develop and implement a comprehensive culture and accountability strategy, independently monitored and evaluated, to shift organisational culture from loyalty-based protection of colleagues towards active accountability for misconduct. The strategy should:

- (a) establish clear expectations that reporting, challenging and preventing misconduct by colleagues is a professional responsibility and not an act of disloyalty;
- (b) require leaders at all levels to demonstrate and actively reinforce these expectations, including through performance, promotion and leadership accountability mechanisms;
- (c) establish explicit consequences for concealing, minimising, facilitating or failing to appropriately report misconduct, including interference with reporting or investigative processes;
- (d) provide enforceable protections against formal and informal reprisals for employees who report or challenge misconduct;
- (e) include regular, independent assessment of police employees' perceptions of psychological safety, willingness to report misconduct, confidence in reporting pathways and experiences of reprisal or organisational pressure;
- (f) incorporate confidential feedback from victim-survivors and specialist sexual violence services into the assessment of cultural change; and
- (g) require the Tasmanian Government to publicly report on progress against measurable indicators of cultural change, including reporting behaviour, employee confidence in internal and external reporting mechanisms, identified reprisals, outcomes of misconduct investigations, and victim-survivor confidence in police responses.

Term of Reference 3

Term of Reference 3: *The response from Tasmania Police and the Tasmanian Government to the Paul Reynolds matter – including the limited scope of inquiry into his conduct prior to the Weiss Review, and the decision to hold a police funeral*

Failure to investigate the underlying warning signs

The Weiss Review found that Tasmania Police first received a formal report concerning Reynolds in 2008. That report contained several indicators of potential risk. However, the resulting inquiry focused principally on whether senior police officers had described Reynolds as a paedophile. When those officers disputed that account, no further investigation was pursued.

This approach failed to test the substance of the concerns that had prompted the report. Potential witnesses, young people, families and relevant sporting organisations do not appear to have been approached. The response also appears to have placed considerable weight on the potential reputational consequences for Reynolds, without giving equivalent attention to the possibility that children were at risk.

The matter was therefore treated primarily as a question about what had been said between police officers, rather than as a safeguarding concern requiring a broader assessment of Reynolds' behaviour, relationships and access to children. A properly framed investigation should have examined the underlying conduct, sought information from relevant community and sporting settings, and considered whether the reported behaviours formed part of a wider pattern.

RECOMMENDATION 36

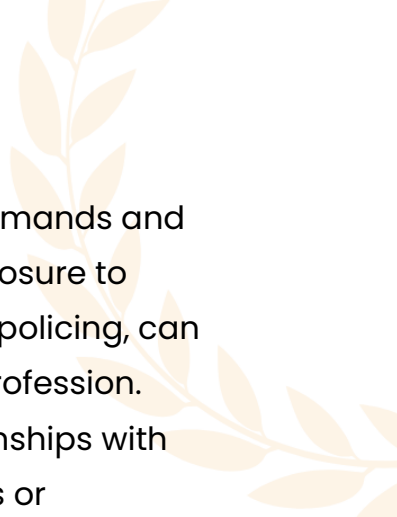
Require the Family and Sexual Violence Involving Police Policy to provide that reports indicating possible grooming or sexual misconduct must be assessed for underlying safeguarding concerns and patterns across professional, community, sporting and digital settings, and must be reviewed by the Family and Sexual Violence Involving Police Review Committee before an investigation is narrowed or closed.

Institutional closedness and internal accountability

The *Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings* (Commission of Inquiry) identified that less open institutions are generally at greater risk of child sexual abuse because they are less accountable to the broader community. It observed that closed institutions can become “*alternative moral universes*”, in which cultural norms are created and maintained internally and may differ from those of the broader community.³⁸ Hierarchy and expectations of obedience can also make staff and others feel less able to report or act on abuse.

Tasmania Police is not a closed institution in the same sense as a residential institution exercising control over every aspect of a child's life. However, the Commission of Inquiry recognised that institutional closedness exists on a continuum. Features associated with policing, including strong hierarchy, internal loyalty, specialised authority and reliance on internal complaint processes, can create similar risks of insularity and discourage scrutiny from outside the institution.

³⁸ Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings. (2023). *Who was looking after me? Prioritising the safety of Tasmanian children*. Hobart, Tasmania: Author. Retrieved from https://www.commissionofinquiry.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/file/0011/724439/COI_Full-Report.pdf



These features may also extend beyond the workplace. The demands and culture of policing, including shift work, irregular hours and exposure to experiences that may be difficult to share with people outside policing, can contribute to strong social and personal networks within the profession. Police officers may form close friendships and intimate relationships with other police officers, and policing may span multiple members or generations of a family. As a result, for some officers there may be considerable overlap between their professional, social and family networks. While these relationships are not inherently problematic, this overlap can heighten institutional closedness and make it more difficult to disclose misconduct, seek support outside policing, or feel confident that a disclosure will remain separate from professional and personal networks.

These concerns remain current, with a former Tasmania Police cadet recently alleging a “toxic” and misogynistic culture at the Police Academy, although Tasmania Police denied those allegations.³⁹

The narrow framing of the 2008 complaints against Paul Reynolds illustrates the danger of allowing an institution’s internal understanding of an allegation to determine the boundaries of the investigation. Where allegations concern the conduct of a police officer, external scrutiny is necessary to guard against institutional assumptions, conflicts of interest and an undue focus on protecting the reputation of the officer or the institution.

³⁹ Wilson, A. (2026, August 5). Former police cadet claims ‘toxic, misogynistic’ culture at Tasmania Police academy. *The Mercury*. Retrieved from <https://www.themercury.com.au/truecrimeaustralia/police-courts-tasmania/former-police-cadet-claims-toxic-misogynistic-culture-at-tasmania-police-academy/news-story/2d12589222eb4b3c9db6ed891f6ac6ae>

RECOMMENDATION 37

Require and adequately resource independent external oversight of decisions to scope, narrow or close investigations into alleged sexual violence by police officers.

Grooming, abuse, and the misuse of police authority

The Reynolds matter demonstrates why grooming must be understood as a cumulative **pattern of behaviour** rather than as a single communication or incident. Grooming may involve building trust with a child, family or community, creating dependency, testing boundaries, providing special attention, increasing isolation, sexualising interactions, and using professional or community authority to gain access and reduce scrutiny.

Police officer status carries institutional credibility, public trust and an expectation that they will protect children and others from harm. An officer may exploit these attributes to gain the confidence of a child or family, normalise increasing involvement in a child's life, discourage questions about their conduct or undermine concerns raised by others. This makes the misuse of police authority directly relevant to understanding how grooming can occur and remain undetected.

Tasmania's criminal law does not adequately recognise this context. Section 125D of the *Criminal Code Act 1924* (Tas)⁴⁰ criminalises a **communication** made with the intention of procuring a person under 17 to engage in an unlawful sexual act. Although commonly described as a grooming offence, it does not define grooming as a cumulative **course of conduct**.

Sections 124A–124C separately criminalise specified sexual conduct against a child by a “*person in a position of authority*”. The definition in

⁴⁰ *Criminal Code Act 1924* (Tas). Retrieved from <https://www.legislation.tas.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1924-069>

s124A(1) includes teachers, parents, instructors, religious officials, health professionals, social workers and certain other persons who exercise authority in relation to a child, but does not expressly identify police officers. Although the definition is inclusive rather than exhaustive, this seems like an important oversight and expressly including police officers would recognise the inherent authority attached to police status.

Criminal offences establish the threshold for criminal liability, not the threshold for protective action. Tasmania Police policies and professional standards processes must require cumulative patterns of grooming and misuse of authority to be identified and addressed before conduct escalates to a criminal offence.

RECOMMENDATION 38

Require Tasmania Police policies, risk assessments and misconduct investigations to define and assess grooming as a cumulative pattern of behaviour, including conduct through which police status or authority is used to gain access, trust or compliance or to reduce scrutiny.

RECOMMENDATION 39

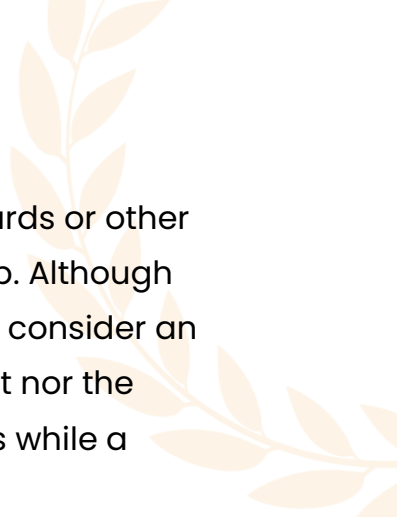
Review s 125D of the *Criminal Code Act 1924* (Tas) to determine whether it adequately captures cumulative and preparatory grooming conduct, including conduct directed towards families, organisations and communities to facilitate access to a child.

RECOMMENDATION 40

Amend s 124A(1) of the *Criminal Code Act 1924* (Tas) to expressly include a police officer within the definition of “*person in a position of authority*”.

Institutional recognition and promotions

As of October 2023, the Police Manual was updated to require the Commissioner to consider any current or relevant professional standards or conduct matters before approving a police funeral. However, the update



did not establish an equivalent framework for promotions, awards or other forms of institutional recognition. This is a significant policy gap. Although the *Police Service Act 2003 (Tas)* permits the Commissioner to consider an officer's conduct when determining promotion,⁴¹ neither the Act nor the Police Manual provides clear criteria for making such decisions while a serious misconduct investigation remains active.

*"He has faced **zero ramifications** whatsoever. In fact, while he was under investigation... he was promoted."* –Anonymous Participant

This gap has profound consequences for victim-survivors as well as for the reputation of the institution and the resulting trust communities place in the institution. Participants consulted by Laurel House described their bewilderment and sense of betrayal upon learning that police officers had been promoted while under active investigation. For victim-survivors, such decisions convey that professional advancement is prioritised over accountability, that their reports are not being taken seriously, and that the institution responsible for investigating their concerns is instead rewarding the officer concerned.

RECOMMENDATION 41

Require Tasmania Police to adopt a clear policy that defers promotion, award and other recognition decisions where an officer is subject to an active investigation into misconduct involving sexual violence.

RECOMMENDATION 42

Amend section 18(5) of the *Police Service Act 2003 (Tas)* to require the Commissioner, when considering a police officer for promotion, to take into account any current or previous misconduct investigations, their outcomes, and any pattern of complaints or concerning conduct.

⁴¹ Section 18(5) of the *Police Service Act 2003 (Tas)* states, "In determining whether to promote or recommend the promotion of a police officer, the Commissioner **may** take into account the conduct of the police officer."

Term of Reference 4

Term of Reference 4: *Any other related matters*

Conflict with policing duties

Police-perpetrated sexual violence is fundamentally incompatible with an officer's duties to receive reports of sexual violence, investigate alleged offences, assess victim-survivor credibility, exercise coercive powers and support prosecutions. Where an officer accused of sexual misconduct continues to perform these functions, an actual or perceived conflict arises between their professional responsibilities and the conduct alleged against them.

Appropriate interim action does not require a concluded finding of misconduct. It is a precautionary measure that recognises the seriousness of the allegation, protects victim-survivors and the integrity of police processes, and avoids placing colleagues in the position of managing an unresolved conflict informally.

RECOMMENDATION 43

Tasmania Police establish a policy requiring an immediate risk and conflict-of-interest assessment whenever an officer is alleged to have committed sexual violence or sexual misconduct. Until the allegation is resolved, the officer should not perform duties involving victim-survivors, sexual or family violence, children or other people experiencing vulnerability.

Inadequate policy response to sexual violence

The Family Violence and Sexual Abuse (Including Child Sexual Abuse) Involving Police Policy appears to have been developed principally as a family violence policy and subsequently expanded to include sexual abuse following the Commission of Inquiry. This history is reflected in its continued

reliance on family violence definitions, classifications, systems and response mechanisms.

Significantly, the policy does not define either “sexual abuse” or “child sexual abuse”. Its key definitions are drawn from the *Family Violence Act 2004 (Tas)* and the Tasmania Police Family Violence Manual, neither of which provides a comprehensive basis for responding to sexual abuse occurring outside family violence definitions (which in Tasmania are especially narrow). The policy does not make clear whether its scope includes grooming and preparatory conduct, sexual misconduct falling below the criminal threshold, technology-facilitated and image-based abuse, abuse of police authority for a sexual purpose, or patterns of concerning behaviour.

Although the inclusion of sexual abuse is welcome, simply extending the scope of an existing family violence framework does not provide a sufficiently clear or comprehensive response to the distinct dynamics, investigative requirements and victim-survivor needs associated with sexual violence, child sexual abuse and grooming.

RECOMMENDATION 44

Require Tasmania Police, in consultation with victim-survivors and specialist sexual violence services, to develop a distinct and comprehensive policy for responding to sexual violence, child sexual abuse and grooming involving police members.

Implementation of the Weiss Review recommendations

The Office of the Independent Monitor's Annual Report 2024–25⁴² states that, as of 30 April 2025, none of the five Weiss Review recommendations had been completed.

Weiss Recommendations 1 & 2

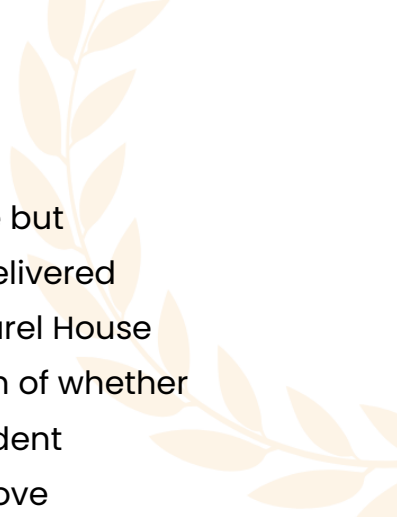
The Department of Justice has recently advised Laurel House that work on Recommendations 1 and 2 is progressing beyond initial scoping. Its Survivor Support service has provided practical, psychological and referral support to people affected by the Reynolds matter, including assistance to explore redress, compensation and legal options. Justice is considering a state-based redress option, while continuing to advocate for an extension of the National Redress Scheme. It is also developing a standalone restorative engagement framework, separate from financial redress, which would be available to a broader cohort, including people who were adults when harmed. However, there is no public timeframe or clear public explanation of the intended model, eligibility or pathway to access support.

Laurel House maintains that the framework should not depend on National Redress Scheme eligibility or a person having been a child at the time of the abuse. A restorative response must be survivor-led, trauma-informed and capable of being delivered independently of Tasmania Police. Clear public communication is needed so affected people understand what support is currently available, what is being developed, and how they can safely make contact.

Weiss Review Recommendation 3

Recommendation 3 concerns engagement with vulnerable communities and sport and recreation organisations. Tasmania Police recently advised

⁴² Office of the Child Safety Reform Implementation Monitor. (2025). *Child Safety Reform Implementation Monitor annual report 2024–25: Who is looking after me? Child safety reform monitoring and oversight*. Hobart, Tasmania: Author. Retrieved from https://oim.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/831800/OIM-Annual-Report-2024-25-Part-1_web-accessible.pdf



Laurel House that they consider recommendations 3 complete but “ongoing.” They have established the *Poli* outreach van, and delivered seven joint education sessions. However, they also advised Laurel House that there is currently no independent monitoring or evaluation of whether these initiatives are effective. In particular, there is no independent assessment of whether they increase reporting to police, improve community trust and satisfaction, or maintain the safety of children and young people in settings where police participation is increasing. The number of activities delivered is not, by itself, evidence that the engagement is safe or achieving its intended outcomes

Weiss Review Recommendation 4

See **Independent Specialist Support** section, above.

Weiss Recommendation 5

The OIM Annual Report confirms scoping had commenced, but funding and timeframes remained subject to government consideration, with stakeholder resourcing identified as a structural barrier.

Child Safety Reform Implementation Monitor

The Weiss Review recommendations have now been referred to the Child Safety Reform Implementation Monitor for independent monitoring. Laurel House welcomes this oversight. However, the existence of independent monitoring does not displace the responsibility of the Tasmanian Government and relevant agencies to report openly and transparently on their own progress, including implementation timeframes, funding commitments and outstanding actions.

RECOMMENDATION 45

That, alongside independent monitoring by the Child Safety Reform Implementation Monitor, the Tasmanian Government publicly report on the implementation of all five Weiss Review recommendations, including clear completion timeframes, committed funding and the safeguarding measures applying to community outreach involving children and vulnerable people.

RECOMMENDATION 46

Require Tasmania Police community outreach initiatives to be governed by clear safeguarding standards and subject to independent evaluation against measurable outcomes, including reporting rates, community trust and satisfaction, and the safety of children and young people.

List of recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1	21
Establish an accessible, trauma-informed pathway, independent of Tasmania Police, for reporting and investigating allegations of sexual misconduct involving current and former police officers. The pathway should be available to civilian victim-survivors, police employees who experience sexual or family violence perpetrated by another police officer, and police employees who witness or receive disclosures of such conduct, in the form the Committee determines most appropriate.....	21
RECOMMENDATION 2	21
Require the design, implementation and evaluation of the independent reporting pathway to be informed by genuine, ongoing and adequately resourced consultation and co-design with victim-survivors, particularly those who experience marginalisation and stigma, and specialist family and sexual violence support services.	21
RECOMMENDATION 3	22
Establish a dedicated, trauma-informed protocol for police employees who experience sexual or family violence perpetrated by another current or former police officer. The protocol should:.....	22
(a) provide immediate access to independent specialist sexual and family violence support, separate from management, Professional Standards Command and internal wellbeing services;	22
(b) ensure the employee is offered an independent reporting option and is not required to rely solely on an internal misconduct pathway;	22
(c) distinguish any obligation to assess risk or investigate from pressure on the victim-survivor to provide, sign or continue a statement;	22
(d) enable the victim-survivor to have a trusted support person of their choice, unless there is a clear, lawful and documented reason otherwise; and	22
(e) require employment, welfare and operational decisions, including any decision to stand down either officer, to be made separately from the investigation and reviewed for their impact on the victim-survivor's safety, career and wellbeing.	22
RECOMMENDATION 4	22
Require sexual misconduct allegations involving a current or former police officer, where the victim-survivor is a police employee, are assessed and investigated by personnel with demonstrated specialist expertise in sexual and family violence, trauma-informed practice and victim-survivor-centred interviewing.....	22
RECOMMENDATION 5	27

That Tasmania Police fully implement Recommendation 4 of the Weiss Review by establishing a dedicated and appropriately resourced victim management function that:	27
(a) operates separately from Professional Standards Command and the investigation of the alleged conduct;	27
(b) provides specialised, trauma-informed and continuous support to victim-survivors throughout the police process;	27
(c) where delivered through Arch centres, clearly defines and resources the respective responsibilities of Tasmania Police and Arch partner organisations;.....	27
(d) Includes a distinct, independently supported response for serving police employees who are victim-survivors of sexual or family violence perpetrated by another police officer; and	27
(e) Ensures victim-survivors are provided with clear information about reporting, support, workplace-safety and employment options, including the role and limits of Arch centres, Professional Standards Command and internal wellbeing services.....	27
RECOMMENDATION 6	28
That the Tasmanian Government provide dedicated and sustainable funding to specialist sexual violence services to deliver independent, counselling, advocacy and support to victim-survivors of sexual violence perpetrated by current or former police officers.....	28
RECOMMENDATION 7	28
That the Tasmanian Government undertake, in consultation with specialist sexual violence and family violence services and victim-survivors, a dedicated scoping process to determine the service model, resourcing and referral pathways required to provide independent counselling, advocacy and support to victim-survivors of sexual violence and abuse perpetrated by police officers, including those who do not wish to report to or engage with police.	28
RECOMMENDATION 8	30
Tasmania Police ensure that its complaint, conduct and safeguarding systems enable relevant information concerning individual personnel to be identified and considered cumulatively across professional, private and community contexts, including information held across Professional Standards, operational, family and sexual violence, workforce and safeguarding systems	30
RECOMMENDATION 9	30
Tasmania Police and relevant independent oversight and regulatory bodies establish clear referral and information-sharing protocols so that concerns are referred to the body with the appropriate jurisdiction and, where lawful and necessary, relevant information can be shared to enable cumulative patterns of serious misconduct, sexual	

misconduct, grooming or safeguarding risk to be identified and appropriately investigated or managed.....	30
RECOMMENDATION 10	30
All Tasmania police personnel receive specialist-developed and co-delivered training, in partnership with independent non-police sexual violence and family violence specialists training to identify and respond to patterns of grooming, coercion, boundary violations, and abuse of authority.....	30
RECOMMENDATION 11	32
The Tasmanian Government amend section 15(2)(b)(i) of the Registration to Work with Vulnerable People Act 2013 (Tas) to remove the exemption for police officers, so that are subject to the same registration, risk-assessment, monitoring and ongoing disclosure requirements as other people working with vulnerable people.....	32
RECOMMENDATION 12	34
Amend section 46 of the Police Service Act 2003 (Tas) to require that an investigation into alleged serious misconduct is not discontinued solely because the subject officer resigns, retires, otherwise ceases to be a police officer, or dies before the investigation is completed. The investigation should, so far as reasonably practicable, be completed for the purposes of establishing the relevant facts, identifying systemic issues and patterns of behaviour, assessing any continuing risks, and informing organisational learning and safeguarding responses.....	34
RECOMMENDATION 13	34
Amend section 47 of the <i>Police Service Act 2003 (Tas)</i> to provide for findings to be made and recorded following an investigation concerning a former or deceased police officer, notwithstanding that disciplinary action under section 43(3) is no longer available.....	34
RECOMMENDATION 14	36
Amend section 42 to include a distinct prohibition on sexual misconduct by a police officer at any time, including conduct occurring in a private capacity.	36
RECOMMENDATION 15	36
Define sexual misconduct to include, without limitation, child sexual abuse, sexual assault, sexual violence, sexual harassment, grooming, sexual exploitation, online or electronic facilitation of sexual abuse, and attempting or assisting such conduct. The definition should capture relevant non-criminal conduct, including grooming, coercion, and serious boundary violations.....	36
RECOMMENDATION 16	36
Amend section 42(8) to prohibit a police officer, at any time, from using police information, status, authority, equipment, relationships or processes to facilitate, commit or conceal sexual misconduct,	

intimidate a victim-survivor, interfere with reporting or avoid accountability. Proof that the officer sought a separate “gift, benefit or advantage” should not be required.....	36
RECOMMENDATION 17	37
Expand section 42(12) to protect victim-survivors, complainants, witnesses, family members, advocates, support people and any other person who reports or assists an investigation. The prohibition should expressly cover intimidation, harassment, pressure not to report, adverse treatment, interference and retaliation.	37
RECOMMENDATION 18	38
Require Tasmania Police to strengthen its existing public reporting on police misconduct by publishing regular, de-identified information about complaints, including the nature of the alleged conduct, whether it involved sexual misconduct, grooming, harassment, family violence or misuse of authority, investigation timeframes, findings, outcomes, disciplinary action, referrals for prosecution and subsequent prosecution outcomes.....	38
RECOMMENDATION 19	38
Require the Integrity Commission to report specifically on its oversight of Tasmania Police, including the number and nature of matters referred, monitored, audited or independently investigated, the outcomes of that oversight, any recommendations made and any action subsequently taken.....	38
RECOMMENDATION 20	39
Establish an enforceable right for victim-survivors and complainants to receive information about the progress and outcome of investigations arising from their complaints, including reasons for decisions not to investigate or continue an investigation, relevant findings and any disciplinary or other action taken, subject only to necessary limitations relating to privacy, safety and procedural fairness. Access to this information should not depend upon making a Right to Information request.	39
RECOMMENDATION 21	41
Amend section 44 of the <i>Police Service Act 2003 (Tas)</i> to:.....	41
(a) Remove the time limit entirely for complaints involving allegations of child sexual abuse;	41
(b) Extend the 6month time limit to two years; and.....	41
(c) Specify that sexual misconduct constitutes “special circumstances” for accepting a complaint outside any limitation period.....	41
RECOMMENDATION 22	43
That section 5(3A) of the <i>Victims of Crime Assistance Act 1976</i> be amended to recognise circumstances in which it may not be	

reasonable for a victim-survivor of sexual violence to report to police or participate in an investigation or prosecution where the alleged perpetrator is or was a member of Tasmania Police, or a police officer in any other jurisdiction.....	43
RECOMMENDATION 23	43
That the Tasmanian Government publish clear, trauma-informed guidance on Victims of Crime Assistance eligibility, alternative forms of supporting evidence, and applications for extensions of time, including for victim-survivors alleging sexual violence by a current or former police officer.....	43
RECOMMENDATION 24	45
Require all Tasmania Police personnel to undertake regular, scenario-based training on police power, privilege and bias, including how police status can create or intensify power imbalances in professional, personal, and sexual relationships.....	45
RECOMMENDATION 25	46
The Committee investigate whether any current or former Tasmania Police officer has been charged with a sexual offence on the basis that a victim-survivor did not freely agree because they were overborne by the officer's position, within the meaning of s 2A(2)(e) of the <i>Criminal Code Act 1924</i> (Tas). If no such charges have been brought, the Committee should examine whether legislative, investigative, prosecutorial, training or broader cultural reforms are required to ensure that the operation of police authority is properly considered when assessing consent.	46
RECOMMENDATION 26	46
Should an independent investigative process be established, as proposed in Recommendation 1, the guidelines governing investigations should explicitly address the definition of consent in s 2A(2)(e) of the <i>Criminal Code Act 1924</i> (Tas), including whether a victim-survivor's capacity to freely consent was overborne by the officer's position, status or authority.....	46
RECOMMENDATION 27	48
Tasmania Police strengthen and routinely audit systems for supervising and recording all officers' movements regardless of rank, use of police vehicles (whether marked or unmarked) and contact with members of the public while on duty, including clear processes for identifying, investigating and responding to unexplained activity, unauthorised contact and patterns that may indicate grooming or sexual misconduct.....	48
RECOMMENDATION 28	52

Tasmania Police implement Recommendations 11, 12 and 18 of the Australian Law Reform Commission's <i>Safe, Informed, Supported: Reforming Justice Responses to Sexual Violence</i> , by:.....	52
(a) Actively partnering with specialist sexual violence services in the development, implementation and review of police responses to sexual violence;	52
(b) Establishing and enforcing universal, consistent and specialist-informed standards for responding to reports of sexual violence, including where the alleged perpetrator is a current or former police officer; and	52
(c) Requiring those standards to include trauma-informed and culturally safe communication, appropriate questioning, accurate referrals, clear explanations of processes, reliable follow-up, and regular updates to victim-survivors.	52
RECOMMENDATION 29	52
Tasmania Police mandate regular and repeated specialist-delivered education and training for all police employees who may respond to sexual violence, consistent with ALRC Recommendations 11 and 12. Training should include trauma, memory and responsive behaviour; myths and misconceptions about sexual violence; grooming and coercive control; trauma-informed and culturally safe practice; best-practice communication; minimising retraumatisation; and the experiences of groups disproportionately affected by sexual violence.	52
RECOMMENDATION 30	53
Tasmania Police routinely audit implementation of, and compliance with, any standards and guidelines implemented under these reforms.	53
RECOMMENDATION 31	53
The Tasmanian Government should implement ALRC Recommendation 6 by establishing an independent, centralised mechanism through which victim-survivors can provide confidential feedback about their experiences of the criminal justice system, with that feedback used to identify systemic issues and inform ongoing reform.....	53
RECOMMENDATION 32	53
The Tasmanian Government clearly explain, and independently review, the roles, governance and operational independence of Arch and any Tasmania Police committee involved in reviewing family or sexual violence matters, including how conflicts of interest are identified and managed when allegations concern police personnel.	53
RECOMMENDATION 33	53
Tasmania Police reform recruitment, selection and deployment processes for specialist family and sexual violence roles to prioritise demonstrated suitability and specialist capability, reduce reliance on routine rotation, explore pathways for direct entry into FSV policing, and	

provide a formal role for specialist FSV services, particularly Arch partners, in relevant selection processes.....	53
RECOMMENDATION 34	54
Reform the Family and Sexual Violence Involving Police Review Committee to strengthen its independence, transparency and specialist expertise, including by providing permanent representation from the specialist family violence and sexual violence sectors and an independent community member, publicly releasing its Terms of Reference, and clearly setting out its review powers, conflict-of-interest processes and how its recommendations are considered and acted upon.	54
RECOMMENDATION 35	58
Require Tasmania Police to develop and implement a comprehensive culture and accountability strategy, independently monitored and evaluated, to shift organisational culture from loyalty-based protection of colleagues towards active accountability for misconduct. The strategy should:	58
(a) establish clear expectations that reporting, challenging and preventing misconduct by colleagues is a professional responsibility and not an act of disloyalty;.....	58
(b) require leaders at all levels to demonstrate and actively reinforce these expectations, including through performance, promotion and leadership accountability mechanisms;	58
(c) establish explicit consequences for concealing, minimising, facilitating or failing to appropriately report misconduct, including interference with reporting or investigative processes;	58
(d) provide enforceable protections against formal and informal reprisals for employees who report or challenge misconduct;	58
(e) include regular, independent assessment of police employees' perceptions of psychological safety, willingness to report misconduct, confidence in reporting pathways and experiences of reprisal or organisational pressure;.....	58
(f) incorporate confidential feedback from victim-survivors and specialist sexual violence services into the assessment of cultural change; and	58
(g) require the Tasmanian Government to publicly report on progress against measurable indicators of cultural change, including reporting behaviour, employee confidence in internal and external reporting mechanisms, identified reprisals, outcomes of misconduct investigations, and victim-survivor confidence in police responses.....	58
RECOMMENDATION 36	60
Require the Family and Sexual Violence Involving Police Policy to provide that reports indicating possible grooming or sexual misconduct must be assessed for underlying safeguarding concerns and patterns across professional, community, sporting and digital settings, and must be	

reviewed by the Family and Sexual Violence Involving Police Review Committee before an investigation is narrowed or closed.....	60
RECOMMENDATION 37	62
Require and adequately resource independent external oversight of decisions to scope, narrow or close investigations into alleged sexual violence by police officers.....	62
RECOMMENDATION 38	63
Require Tasmania Police policies, risk assessments and misconduct investigations to define and assess grooming as a cumulative pattern of behaviour, including conduct through which police status or authority is used to gain access, trust or compliance or to reduce scrutiny.....	63
RECOMMENDATION 39	63
Review s 125D of the <i>Criminal Code Act 1924</i> (Tas) to determine whether it adequately captures cumulative and preparatory grooming conduct, including conduct directed towards families, organisations and communities to facilitate access to a child.	63
RECOMMENDATION 40	63
Amend s 124A(1) of the <i>Criminal Code Act 1924</i> (Tas) to expressly include a police officer within the definition of “ <i>person in a position of authority</i> ”.	63
RECOMMENDATION 41	64
Require Tasmania Police to adopt a clear policy that defers promotion, award and other recognition decisions where an officer is subject to an active investigation into misconduct involving sexual violence.....	64
RECOMMENDATION 42	64
Amend section 18(5) of the <i>Police Service Act 2003</i> (Tas) to require the Commissioner, when considering a police officer for promotion, to take into account any current or previous misconduct investigations, their outcomes, and any pattern of complaints or concerning conduct.....	64
RECOMMENDATION 43	65
Tasmania Police establish a policy requiring an immediate risk and conflict-of-interest assessment whenever an officer is alleged to have committed sexual violence or sexual misconduct. Until the allegation is resolved, the officer should not perform duties involving victim-survivors, sexual or family violence, children or other people experiencing vulnerability.	65
RECOMMENDATION 44	66
Require Tasmania Police, in consultation with victim-survivors and specialist sexual violence services, to develop a distinct and comprehensive policy for responding to sexual violence, child sexual abuse and grooming involving police members.	66

RECOMMENDATION 45 68

That, alongside independent monitoring by the Child Safety Reform Implementation Monitor, the Tasmanian Government publicly report on the implementation of all five Weiss Review recommendations, including clear completion timeframes, committed funding and the safeguarding measures applying to community outreach involving children and vulnerable people. 68

RECOMMENDATION 46 69

Require Tasmania Police community outreach initiatives to be governed by clear safeguarding standards and subject to independent evaluation against measurable outcomes, including reporting rates, community trust and satisfaction, and the safety of children and young people. 69



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