

30 September 2025

Mr Robert Benjamin, Implementation Monitor
GPO BOX 1126
Hobart TAS 7001
Email: submissions@oim.tas.gov.au

Dear Mr Benjamin,

Our Watch welcomes the opportunity to provide a response to the Child Safety Reform Implementation Monitor consultation to support the Monitor's work and contribute to a safer, more equitable future for Tasmanian children and families.

Our Watch is a national leader in the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia. We work with governments, practitioners and the community to prevent violence and embed gender equality in all settings where people live, learn, work and socialise. All Australian governments are members of Our Watch, including the Tasmanian Government.

Over the past decade, we have worked with the Tasmanian Government to build capacity across government departments, educational institutions, community organisations, sporting bodies, and the private sector to strengthen prevention practice.

Under our current five-year Partnership Agreement, we are working with the Tasmanian Government to advance Respectful Relationships Education across the state. Together, we aim to create lasting cultural change that promotes safety, respect, and equality for all Tasmanians.

In line with Our Watch's primary prevention expertise and the relationship between gender, sexual abuse perpetration and victimisation,ⁱ this response will primarily focus on gendered violence, in response to:

- Recommendation 6.1 and 9.1 in the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings, (COI) and
- Recommendations 3 and 9 in the 2021 Independent Inquiry into the Tasmanian Department of Education's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Recommendation. (Independent Inquiry)

Our Watch's response will focus on **2 areas of reform for action**:

1. Investing in evidence-based respectful relationships education (RRE) for Tasmanian Government schools.

2. Developing and investing in a primary prevention workforce sector skills and capability strategy for school settings.

Preventing violence against women and their children

Our Watch acknowledges that children of all genders experience violence in all its forms, and that violence is unacceptable regardless of the gender of the victim or perpetrator.

Our Watch's national framework, *Change the story*ⁱⁱ provides a shared, evidence-based approach to stopping violence before it starts. It identifies gender inequality as the primary driver of violence against women and their children and outlines the social norms, structures, and practices that enable it. The framework calls for coordinated action across all settings—where people live, learn, work, and socialise—to challenge harmful stereotypes and promote respectful relationships.

Change the story was endorsed by all Australian governments, including Tasmania, as the national framework for prevention under the current National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032.

Our Watch's approach to primary prevention aligns with the goals of child safety reform by addressing the root causes of violence and creating environments where children can thrive free from harm. We recognise the importance of engaging men and boys, addressing intersecting forms of discrimination, and embedding gender equality across systems and institutions.

By integrating the principles of *Change the story* into the Tasmanian child safety reform agenda, Tasmania has an opportunity to lead the nation in creating safer, more respectful environments for everyone. It provides the Implementation Monitor and Tasmanian Government with actions focused on addressing the drivers of violence, including through systemic and institutional reform. It applies a whole-of-society approach that goes beyond response to embed safety and respect into everyday environments through using policy, legislative and regulatory mechanisms to address the drivers of gendered violence.

1. Recommendation 6.1 of the Commission of Inquiry (COI)

Our Watch reform for action: The Tasmanian Government commit to and invest in evidence-based respectful relationships education (RRE) for Tasmanian Government schools

Our Watch's *Respectful relationships education: A blueprint for preventing gender-based violence through education systems* provides a practical, evidence-based framework for governments on how to successfully implement, coordinate and monitor an evidence-based approach to RRE. This comprehensive policy guide was developed in consultation with government and non-government sectors and other relevant peak bodies across Australia, including the Department of Education Children and Young People (DECYP).

Our Watch recommends that Tasmania:

- Prioritise Respectful Relationships Education as an evidence-based approach to preventing gender-based violence in schools, including through ongoing and long-term investment.
- Embed intersectionality as a core principle in additional education prevention initiatives to ensure approaches are inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability, children from refugee and migrant backgrounds, and those who identify as gender diverse.

2. Relevant to recommendation 9.1 of COI and recommendation 3 and 9 of Independent Inquiry into Tasmanian Department of Education's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Independent Inquiry)

Our Watch reform for action: Develop and invest in a primary prevention workforce sector skills and capability strategy for school settings

Recommendation 9.10 in the COI report calls for the DECYP to develop a workforce strategy for the child and family welfare sector, equipped with the knowledge and skills to respond effectively to the needs of children and families. Our Watch recommends that as part of this, there should be a workforce strategy focused on preventing violence before it starts.

As highlighted in the 2021 Independent Inquiry recommendations on embedding prevention, existing DECYP safeguarding policies and procedures are almost always focused on responding to known concerns or allegations. Prevention should be firmly embedded in DECYP's safeguarding systems - expressed clearly in its safeguarding policies.

Our Watch supports the following recommendations from the Independent Inquiry:

- **Recommendation 3:** DECYP's student safeguarding systems are designed to prevent student sexual abuse from first occurring, as well as to respond promptly, sensitively, and effectively to known concerns or allegations.
- **Recommendation 9:** Information about understanding, preventing, identifying, and responding to sexual abuse be included in inductions, and in annual training, for all principals, teachers and teacher aides.ⁱⁱⁱ

In summary, the Tasmanian Government and Implementation Monitor are uniquely placed to transform the norms, structures and practices for a gender equal Tasmania, through its policy, legislative and regulatory levers. By directly addressing the drivers of gendered violence, Tasmania can stop violence before it starts and shift harmful gender norms.

Our Watch welcomes the opportunity to provide further advice or assistance.

Please contact Director of Government Relations, Policy and Evidence, Amanda Alford at amanda.alford@ourwatch.org.au or Senior Advisor, Tasmania, Government Relations, Kristen Carroll at kristen.carroll@ourwatch.org.au.

Yours sincerely,



Louise Falconer

Acting Director, Government Relations Policy and Evidence

- i Haslam, D., et al. (2023). *The prevalence and impact of child maltreatment in Australia: Findings from the Australian Child Maltreatment Study: Brief report* (Report). Australian Child Maltreatment Study, Queensland University of Technology. As cited in *Commission of Inquiry into Tasmanian Government Responses to Institutional Child Sexual Abuse*, Volume 2: Chapter 3 — Child sexual abuse in institutions (p. 107).
- ii Our Watch. (2021). Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women in Australia (2nd ed.). Melbourne, Australia: Our Watch.
- iii The 2021 Independent Inquiry into the Tasmanian Department of Education's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Recommendations accesses at the 2021 Independent Inquiry into the Tasmanian Department of Education's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Recommendations