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Executive Summary

No to Violence welcomes the opportunity to provide input into the Tasmanian Community Consultation process for the 2024-25 budget process. As the national peak body for organisations and individuals working with men to end their use of family violence, we are pleased to see an increased focus on perpetrator accountability under the Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan 2022-2027.

Implementing this plan will require increased investment in perpetrator interventions that meet the needs of diverse Tasmanians. Increasing the availability and accessibility of evidence-based, tailored programs is an important part of addressing the needs of men to change their behaviour. However, our Tasmanian members continue to struggle to meet demand for services, with very few programs available in regional and rural areas, and waitlists in urban areas that are often several months-long.

This year, we are calling on the Tasmanian Government to invest in critical men's behaviour change programs that are an essential part of ending men's family violence. We are calling for investment in innovative programs that provide men with accommodation and counselling services to interrupt their use of violence, while simultaneously enabling victim-survivors to remain safe at home and connected to their communities. Finally, we are calling on the Tasmanian Government to establish a state-wide sector coordination role to support the development of sector frameworks, to assist with implementation of legislative reforms, and to develop the service infrastructure that is required to interrupt and ultimately end men's family violence.

To truly put survivors at the centre, we need to shift the burden of responsibility away from victim-survivors and place it firmly on men who choose to use violence. To achieve this, there must be a suite of perpetrator interventions available to ensure men are given the opportunity to take responsibility for their abusive behaviour and end their use of violence.

No to Violence is calling on the Tasmanian Government to support three key initiatives which will keep victim-survivors safe and realise our vision of a world free from male violence:

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| 1. | Support the safety of victim-survivors in regional Tasmania by investing in six new Men's Behaviour Change Programs |
| 2. | Keep victim-survivors safe in their homes by removing people who choose to use violence and abuse |
| 3. | Strengthen the Tasmanian perpetrator response by funding a state-wide sector coordination role for men's family violence services |

Initiative 1: Support the safety of victim-survivors in regional Tasmania by investing in six new Men's Behaviour Change Programs

Men's Behaviour Change Programs (MBCPs) constitute a crucial aspect of the primary response to individuals engaged in family violence. Allocating resources to a well-funded, innovative, and evidence-based MBCP sector translates to extending services to a larger number of men in a timely manner aligned with their help-seeking or referral process. The ultimate goal is to enhance the safety of more victim-survivors. Without secure, long-term funding, our sector faces challenges in supporting the community seeking assistance, incorporating and sustaining proven programs, fostering innovation, piloting new initiatives, implementing best practices in risk response, recruiting and retaining skilled personnel, and evaluating existing programs to continually build our evidence base. We urge the Tasmanian Government to augment funding for our sector by allocating new and additional resources.

NTV's members highlight the concentration of MBCP providers in urban areas in Tasmania. Men in rural or remote areas encounter limited program availability, while urban programs often entail extensive waitlists. Moreover, tailored programs for Aboriginal people and communities are notably scarce. As a vital service, MBCPs should be readily accessible to those in need within an appropriate timeframe and in geographic locations that facilitate help-seeking, including accessible programming for residents in rural and regional areas.

There is an urgent need for funding to establish additional MBCPs in the North, Northwest, and South of Tasmania, as well as in urban centres like Hobart and Launceston. No to Violence recommends that these programs cater to both mandated and self-referred men to provide early entry points for those using violence. Establishing new programs in priority areas will empower individuals who previously lacked access to interventions to take responsibility for their actions and embark on their paths to change.

For MBCPs to effectively address risk and support behaviour change in perpetrators of violence, they must encompass various ancillary service components:

- Pre-group work, including motivational interviewing to ensure MBC group readiness.
- MBC group work spanning 20 weeks.
- 1-on-1 case management for men engaged in group work with complex needs.
- Family safety/partner contact work.
- Comprehensive risk assessment and response.

Additional resources are necessary to support family safety contact work as part of existing and any new MBCPs. Funding is crucial for the training and practice development of family safety contact workers, operational expenses, and ensuring that family safety contact begins while men are on waitlists and continues throughout the program's duration.

No to Violence is asking for \$7.54 million over five years to:

- Support the development and implementation of six new MBCPs complete with case management and family safety contact work.

Initiative 2: Keep victim-survivors safe in their homes by removing people who choose to use violence and abuse

No to Violence operates the Men's Accommodation and Counselling Service (MACS) in Victoria, providing stable accommodation and counselling support for men who have been legally excluded from their homes due to court orders. An evaluation of MACS reveals its vital role in addressing service delivery gaps, offering these men a safe alternative to breaching court orders, and allowing victim-survivors to safely remain at home while perpetrators are kept in view and receive support to address their violent behaviours.¹

Conversations with our Tasmanian sector partners highlight the limited options available for victim-survivors or perpetrators facing homelessness or housing insecurity due to domestic and family violence. Hundreds of women and children are turned away from women's shelters every month, and nearly three-quarters of people turned away from specialist homelessness services are women.² Pressures from rising rents and consistently low rental availability in Tasmania compound these housing challenges.³ In the context of domestic and family violence, the absence of safe, accessible, and affordable housing support intensifies the risk and safety concerns for victim-survivors. Introducing a purpose-driven program, akin to MACS, would empower the Tasmanian family violence sector to keep men using violence in view while providing secure accommodation and counselling support to interrupt their violent behaviour and reduce the risk of ongoing perpetration. All the while, it ensures the safety of victim-survivors in their homes.

No to Violence advocates for funding the development and design of a Tasmania-specific accommodation and counselling response for perpetrators of family violence, particularly in regional areas.

Introducing a successful program model like MACS in Tasmania would enable men statewide, who are legally excluded from their homes, to access safe accommodation and counselling support.

No to Violence is asking for \$4.5 million over five years to:

- Develop a Tasmania-centric accommodation and counselling service model
- Establish a Tasmanian based team to implement the program
- Fund an ongoing monitoring and evaluation program to assess the efficacy of the program

¹ No to Violence, 'Evaluation of the Perpetrator Accommodation and Support Service' (No to Violence, 2021), https://ntv.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/PASS-evaluation-report_FINAL_26-May-20212.pdf.

² Ellen Coulter, "'It's Getting Cold out There': Housing Crisis Facing Women and Children Fleeing Unsafe Domestic Situations', *ABC News*, 14 May 2022, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-05-15/tasmania-womens-shelter-accommodation-help/101067210>.

³ Jarrad Bevan, 'Tasmania: Low Vacancy Rates and Declining Investor Activity - Realestate.Com.Au', 12 May 2021, <https://www.realestate.com.au/news/tasmania-low-vacancy-rates-and-declining-investor-activity/>.

Initiative 3: Strengthen the Tasmanian perpetrator response by funding a state-wide sector coordination role for men's family violence services

No to Violence is calling on the Tasmanian Government to establish a state-wide sector coordination role to support the development of sector frameworks, assist with implementation of legislative reforms, and to develop the service infrastructure necessary to interrupt and ultimately end men's use of family violence.

No to Violence strongly supports the initiatives outlined in the *Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan 2022-27: Survivors at the Centre*. In particular, we note commitments to:

- implementing legislative reform to strengthen legal responses to family and sexual violence;
- developing standardised risk assessment process across government and non-government family and sexual violence services;
- strengthening perpetrator programs that support men to change their behaviour and prevent re-offending; and
- delivering mandated behaviour change programs as part of family violence orders.

We believe that successful implementation of these initiatives will require a coordinated, jurisdiction wide, non-government specialist sector voice. No to Violence is well-placed to support the perpetrator response in Tasmania, given our 30 years' experience working with men using violence, and our track record of developing essential frameworks and resources across other jurisdictions.

Funding this crucial sector coordination role would help to streamline engagement between Government and the Tasmanian family violence sector. This role could sit alongside the existing Family and Sexual Violence Alliance, with a specific focus on strengthening perpetrator interventions in Tasmania, in the context of broader family violence sector reform. This role would enable meaningful consultation with services regarding proposed legislative reforms and assist in identifying key issues and priorities for the men's family violence sector.

No to Violence is asking for \$500,000 in ongoing annual funding to:

- Establish a state-wide sector coordination role for the men's family violence sector
- Support the development and implementation of legislative reforms
- Develop frameworks and resources to support perpetrator accountability, including:
 - Perpetrator risk assessment tool
 - Minimum standards and a compliance framework for all perpetrator intervention service providers
 - Workforce development strategy

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to end male family
violence in Australia**

Men's Referral Service
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