

Tasmania Government Community Consultation Submission Cover Page

Organisation or Individual

No to Violence

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**Relevant agencies (delete any agencies
that are not applicable)**

Department of Education

Department of Health

Department of Justice

Department of Premier and Cabinet

Department of State Growth

Department of Treasury and Finance

Acknowledgment of Country

No to Violence acknowledges First Nations Peoples across these lands; the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters. We pay respect to all Elders, past, present, and emerging. We acknowledge a deep connection with country which has existed over 60,000 years. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded, and this was and always will be First Nation's land.



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Executive summary

No to Violence welcomes the opportunity to provide input into the Tasmanian Community Consultation process for the 2023-24 budget process.

As demonstrated by the recent launch of the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children, family violence is a priority of the Australian Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments. The Tasmanian 2023-24 Budget is an opportunity to improve services for marginalised people, including supporting victim-survivors to stay in their own homes and ensure that people who choose to use violence and abuse are held accountable and receive appropriate support in their efforts to change their behaviour.

Our members continue to struggle to meet demand. Men's Behaviour Change Programs (MBCPs) are extremely limited in regional and rural areas, and waitlists in urban areas can be months-long. Investing to increase the number of MBCPs is an important step in stopping men's use of family violence. Innovative perpetrator interventions like No to Violence's Men's Accommodation and Counselling Service (MACS) would support men who have been excluded from the home (due for example, to apprehended violence orders) to access safe and dignified housing while getting the counselling support they need to change their behaviour. MACS plays an important role and can help keep women safe and stable in their homes while holding perpetrators accountable.

Supporting vulnerable Tasmanians means providing the services they need most. Victim-survivors often just want the violence to stop. The budget provides an opportunity to invest in programs to centre on the needs of victim-survivors by investing in perpetrator interventions. People who choose to use family violence are often themselves survivors of family violence. Investing in evidence-based programs like MACS and MBCPs as a part of other systems reforms can help break patterns of abuse.

The sector seeks to strengthen its voice and representation by collaborating through a formal Family and Sexual Violence Alliance for Policy Development and Sector Coordination. Establishing this Alliance would encourage improved coordination across all services that provide a response to victim-survivors and perpetrators of family and sexual violence. It will also build a unified, cross-sector voice with the ability to provide strong and informed input into Government strategies, legislative reforms, and policies and coordinated service delivery in the area of family and sexual violence. We recommend the Government support this Alliance as part of its commitment to ending family violence.

No to Violence looks forward to working with the Tasmanian Government in supporting vulnerable Tasmanians. We look forward to providing you with additional information on our proposals.

Summary of recommendations

No to Violence recommends the Tasmanian Government fund the following to support victim-survivor safety:

1. Extend the availability and accessibility of Men's Behaviour Change Programs. Support the safety of women and children and help men break their use of violence by investing in six new Men's Behaviour Change Programs across regional Tasmania
2. Establish the Men's Accommodation and Counselling Service (MACS). Keep victim-survivors safe in their homes by removing men who use violence and abuse
3. Strengthen the Tasmanian Family and Domestic Sector. Support a cohesive family violence sector through the establishment of a Family and Sexual Violence Alliance for Policy Development and Sector Coordination

Initiative 1: Support the safety of women and children in regional Tasmania by investing in six new Men's Behaviour Change Programs

Ask: \$7.54 million over five years

Men's Behaviour Change Programs (MBCPs) are part of the primary response to perpetrators of family violence. Investing in a well-funded, innovative, and evidence-based MBCP sector means getting more services to more men who need them and within a timeframe that is appropriately proximate to their help seeking or referral, to ultimately, keep more women and children safe. Without long-term, secure funding, our sector struggles to support the community seeking help, embed and continue proven programs, innovate, and pilot new programs, implement best practice risk responses, recruit and retain skilled staff, and evaluate existing programs to continue to build our evidence based. We are asking the Tasmanian Government to increase funding for our sector through an allocation of new and additional funding.

NTV's members report that Tasmania's MBCP providers are concentrated in urban areas. There are few programs available for men in rural or remote areas, programs in urban areas often have long waitlists, and the availability of tailored programs for Aboriginal people are extremely limited. As a key service provision, MBCPs must be available and accessible to people who need them, including within an appropriate time frame and in a geographic location that supports their help seeking. This includes accessible programming for people living in rural and regional areas.

Our members urgently need funding to establish additional and much-needed MBCPs in the North, Northwest, and South of Tasmania as well as in urban centres including Hobart and Launceston. No to Violence recommends that these programs be open to both mandated and self-referred men to offer early entry points to behaviour change for men who use violence. Establishing new programs in priority areas will enable people who have previously been unable to access interventions to take accountability for their violence and begin their change journeys.

For MBCPs to appropriately respond to risk and support behaviour change for perpetrators of violence, they must include the following ancillary service components:

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

Additional resources to support family safety contact work as part of existing and any new MBCPs is required and should be appropriately resourced. Funding is required to support the training and practice development of family safety contact workers, resource the day-to-day operations of family safety contact, and ensure that family safety contact commences while men are on waitlists and can continue throughout the duration of the program.

Establishing six new programs with case management and family safety contact would enable significantly more men to participate in important behaviour change programs over five years.

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

Ask: \$4.5 million over five years

No to Violence operates the Men's Accommodation and Counselling Service (MACS) in Victoria. MACS enables men who have been legally excluded from the home to find stable accommodation and counselling support after being served and exclusion order and breaches of legal orders. An evaluation of MACS found that it fills an important gap in the service delivery system.¹ MACS keeps these men in view while offering them a safe alternative to breaching their court orders; this, in turn, allows victim-survivors to safely remain in the home while perpetrators access the support they need to stop their violent and abusive behaviours.

Through discussions with our Tasmanian sector partners, No to Violence understands that there are limited options available for victim-survivors or perpetrators experiencing 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 There is additional pressure as a result of rising rents, and Tasmania has consistently had low rental availability with limited opportunity for locals to enter the property market.³ In the context of domestic and family violence, the lack of safe, accessible, and affordable housing support for both women and children, and men who use violence, significantly exacerbates victim-survivor risk and safety. Implementing a for-purpose program like MACS will enable the Tasmanian family violence sector to keep men who choose to use violence in view while providing them with the secure accommodation and counselling support they need to interrupt their use of violence and reduce their risk of ongoing perpetration—all while enabling women and children to remain safe in their homes.

No to Violence recommends funding the development and design of a Tasmania specific accommodation and counselling response for perpetrators of family violence—including those in regional areas.

Bringing the successful MACS program to Tasmania will enable men state-wide who are legally excluded from the home to access safe accommodation and counselling support.

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

- Develop a Tasmania-centric model
- Establish a Tasmanian based team to implement the program
- Fund an on-going 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: Support a cohesive family violence sector through the Family and Sexual Violence Alliance for Policy Development and Sector Coordination

Ask: \$834,000 over 5 years

TasCOSS has submitted a proposal to the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC) recommending the establishment of a funded family and sexual violence coordination mechanism, the Tasmanian Family and Sexual Violence Alliance for Policy Development and Sector Coordination (the Alliance). We are part of a core group of service providers and policy experts working to support the family and domestic violence sector in Tasmania and fully support the TasCOSS proposal.

No to Violence has agreed to auspice the Alliance. No to Violence is committed to supporting a cohesive and evidence-based sector that can consistently engage in policy and advocacy opportunities to ensure the best possible outcomes for our clients.

The Alliance will enable our sector to provide coordinated input into government strategies, legislative reforms and policies, and facilitate sector training and development as well as being a single point-of-contact for the Tasmanian Government with our sector. Tasmania is the only jurisdiction without a coordinated, jurisdiction-wide, non-government specialist sector voice to engage in the development of local and national policy responses relating to family and sexual violence.

With more than 30 years of experience, No to Violence knows the importance of a coordinated voice for the family and domestic violence sector. **No to Violence supports the Sector's submission for \$834,000 be allocated to the Family and Sexual Violence Alliance for Policy Development and Sector Coordination over five years.**