

15 February 2023

Safe Homes, Families, Communities Team  
Department of Communities Tasmania  
Children, Youth and Families

By email: [fsvap@communities.tas.gov.au](mailto:fsvap@communities.tas.gov.au)

Dear Safe Homes, Families, Communities Team

**Tasmania's Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan 2022-2027: *Survivors at the Centre***

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a feedback submission on Tasmania's Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan 2022-2027: *Survivors at the Centre*. This submission has been prepared by the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) on behalf of our members; all 29 councils.

LGAT is incorporated under the *Local Government Act 1993* and is the representative body and advocate for local government in Tasmania.

Premier Gutwein succinctly described the importance of local government's contribution to primary prevention of family and sexual violence in his 2022 letter to every Tasmanian Mayor.

*Local governments are uniquely placed to lead community approaches to primary prevention of violence against women and their children. Especially, as they are in touch with people across their life span, from early years to senior years and interact with a diverse range of community groups including, aboriginal, multicultural and LGBTIQ+.*

That unique potential is not acknowledged in Tasmania's Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan 2022-2027. Local government, the third tier of formal government, is not recognised at all.

Councils across Tasmania remain interested in contributing as the local, place-based level of formal government that is present in every community in Tasmania. This interest was first demonstrated when most councils responded positively to the Premier's letter and discussed ways of acting on the Local Government Toolkit with the Our Watch Officer,

Tricia Males. LGAT submitted a 2021 –2022 budget proposal to the government offering to work collaboratively on a program to build on that interest and develop council capability. We proposed “ongoing collaboration between State and local government to improve important health and wellbeing outcomes and funding for a two year project”. That proposal was not successful.

The March 2022 LGAT General Meeting made the following resolution:

*That LGAT lobby the State Government to initiate and fund the development and implementation of a family and sexual violence prevention framework for local government across the state.*

LGAT then wrote to Minister Petrusma on 3 May 2022 requesting support for the framework's development. The Minister replied on 1 June 2022 and her response is summarised below:

- The Minister acknowledged “the important step that LGAT and its members have taken to address the impacts of family and sexual violence in our communities.”
- The Minister agreed that local governments are uniquely placed to engage in primary prevention of family and sexual violence, connecting with many different people within their communities.
- The work achieved over recent years through the Tasmanian Government’s funding of the Our Watch Senior Advisor Tasmania role was described and it demonstrated the interest and practical engagement of 13 councils.
- The Minister also said that she shared LGAT’s letter to her with the Department of Communities Tasmania, “which is overseeing the development of the Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan, and I have asked that the Department make contact with Lynden Lepperd (sic) to discuss our ongoing partnership with Our Watch, and LGAT’s work to develop the family and sexual violence prevention framework for local government.”

The Minister’s supportive reply outlined the government’s support to councils through the work of the Our Watch Adviser. That role previously did facilitate council engagement. However, the specific support for councils available in 2021 and early 2022 decreased as the Our Watch focus moved to include sporting and community organisations. The role was not filled for much of 2022 and support to councils was not available through that period.

The discussion with the Department on progressing the family and sexual violence prevention framework for local government has not occurred.

Following the General Meeting resolution, the then Senior Our Watch Officer committed time and expertise to work with council officers and elected representatives to develop a broad framework that could guide action plans developed by councils. This draft framework provides guidance for council to take actions to improve the liveability of communities, including health and wellbeing outcomes for men, women, and children. Local government is well placed to support effective local implementation of the State and Federal Government policies, plans and desired outcomes. However, LGAT and most councils do not have the financial or human resources to undertake this work, so direct support is required from other spheres of government.

The framework's inclusive and interconnected approach is particularly relevant and important to local government now. Councils will be required to implement the Child Safe Organisations Framework, and the next steps to improve Closing the Gap outcomes currently in development. Effective practical action by councils in local communities in each of these three interconnected areas will require coherent collaboration with government agencies.

LGAT requests the following opportunities to contribute to the "*Survivors at the Centre.*"

1. Discussions on ways councils can make unique contributions to the outcomes in *Survivors at the Centre* as described in Premier Gutwein's letter.
2. Discussions on ways councils can help facilitate the work of the initiatives identified in *Survivors at the Centre* at a local level across Tasmania through their unique position as the local level of government and the infrastructure, local knowledge, and sustained presence that the role provides.
3. Support to implement the draft *local government framework for preventing family and sexual violence 2022* by developing council action plans that also take account of Closing the Gap actions and implementing the Child Safe Organisations Framework.

We look forward to the opportunity to discuss these matters in detail. Please contact Lynden Leppard, Senior Policy Officer at [lynden.leppard@lgat.tas.gov.au](mailto:lynden.leppard@lgat.tas.gov.au) or telephone 6146 3744.

Yours sincerely



Dion Lester  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**