

MEDIA RELEASE



Ashley

19 November 2020

The Commissioner for Children and Young People Leanne McLean said today she was aware of serious and concerning historical allegations made about the safety of children and young people who have been detained at Ashley Youth Detention Centre.

Ms McLean said public discussion and debate about Ashley was important.

“There is a real risk, however, that this may be done in a way which causes harm to children and young people,” Ms McLean said.

“It is incumbent on us to ensure that when an issue is raised publicly, it is done so responsibly and in a way that does no harm to those children and young people.”

Noting that the wellbeing of the children and young people is paramount, Ms McLean said she took action as soon as she became aware of the allegations.

“Due to the nature of these allegations, I referred them to the agencies and authorities best placed to investigate them and, where appropriate, enforce the law, including Tasmania Police and the Department of Communities Tasmania.

“This course of action is consistent with my statutory functions as Commissioner. I am also monitoring the situation closely including receiving regular updates from senior officers of the Department.

“This situation, brought about by the airing of historical allegations, highlights the importance of ensuring that all Tasmanian government departments and organisations providing services to children have child safety and wellbeing principles embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture at every level.

“To achieve this, Tasmania must prioritise the development of a comprehensive child-safe legislative framework, including standards that all organisations must meet, and must fund its implementation.”

Ms McLean said anyone who is aware of allegations of child abuse has a duty to report this abuse to the appropriate authorities, including the Strong Families Safe Kids Advice and Referral Line on 1800 000 123 and to Tasmania Police.

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