

MEDIA RELEASE

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Safeguarding Children

The Commissioner for Children and Young People Leanne McLean today welcomed the Tasmanian Government's commitment to introduce new safeguarding and independent oversight measures to keep children safe in organisations, including government institutions. Across the State.

"Victim survivors are courageously sharing their experiences through the Commission of Inquiry process and it is abundantly clear that we must now redesign our systems in response," Ms McLean said.

"The Commission of Inquiry also has heard evidence regarding the complexity of the current system of oversight and integrity bodies, and this is something that must also be addressed."

The Commissioner said Premier Jeremy Rockliff has today addressed several key concerns previously highlighted in her child safe advocacy work, also included in her submission to the Commission of Inquiry.

"These concerns included the lack of legislated standards to ensure organisations are child safe, a reportable conduct scheme, standards for the provision of out of home care, and a carers register.

"The lack of these mechanisms in Tasmania have, for far too long, created obvious and unacceptable gaps in our system with the potential to negatively impact on the wellbeing and safety of children.

"I welcome all of these commitments and strongly encourage the Government to expedite their development and implementation.

"In particular, I welcome the Premier's commitment to expedite the development of legislated mandatory child safe standards and to regulate organisations that deliver services to children against those standards."

Ms McLean said it was encouraging to hear a commitment that this system will be overseen by a dedicated independent oversight body.

"This approach, including dedicated child-centred oversight, is necessary to proactively drive systemic and cultural change within organisations, to put the interests of children first and prevent child abuse occurring.

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“I also welcome the announcement to expedite the introduction of a reportable conduct scheme to respond appropriately if allegations relating to child abuse are made within an organisational setting.

“Again, this scheme should be overseen by the same child-centred, independent oversight body regulating the Child Safe Standards.”

Ms McLean said the Victorian Commission for Children and Young People operates child safe organisations regulation and a reportable conduct scheme in Victoria.

“I have made it clear to the Tasmanian Government, and in my contributions to the Commission of Inquiry that I would be supportive of the adoption of this model in Tasmania and welcome further discussions on the matter.”