

## WITNESS STATEMENT – ELIZABETH JACK

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**Name:** Elizabeth (Liz) Jack, GAICD

**Address:** Level 8 Parliament Square, 4 Salamanca Place, Hobart Tasmania

**Occupation:** Executive Director, Safeguarding Children and Young People  
Department of Education

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### I. Describe:

- (a) your relevant educational qualifications**
- (b) your relevant professional history**
- (c) your current role and responsibilities, including relevant reporting lines, and**
- (d) any training you have received that is relevant to your current role**

1. This statement is made by me as a witness identified by the President of the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings (Commission of Inquiry), Hon Marcia Neave AO.
2. My full name is Elizabeth Hamilton Jack, and I am the Executive Director, Safeguarding Children and Young People in the Department of Education (Department).
3. I was born in Launceston (Tasmania) but moved to Montreal, Canada in 1975 to pursue my chosen sport of diving, representing Australia at the 1976 Olympic Games.
4. I graduated from McGill University (Montreal) in 1980, with a Bachelor of Arts (Modern Languages) with First Class Honours in German.
5. From 1978 to 1990, I was employed as a professional diving coach with oversight of a large diving club in Pointe Claire, Quebec, including ten years as National Coach of the Canadian Diving Team. During this time, I had personal responsibility for the technical, psychological and physical development of approximately 20 athletes each year, ranging in age from six years through to young adults.
6. As well as working with individual athletes to develop their diving-specific skills, I regularly travelled with groups of young athletes to competitive events within Quebec, across Canada and internationally to a range of countries including Mexico, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, New Zealand and China. On these occasions, I was generally appointed Head Coach and Team Manager by the Canadian Amateur Diving Association (now known as Diving Plongeon Canada), with responsibility not just for each athlete's technical preparation but also, importantly, for their safety, wellbeing and general care. In this capacity, I was trusted by parents to safeguard their children on weekend and week-long trips away from home, often as the sole supervising adult, having responsibility for groups of under-age athletes who were frequently exposed to unfamiliar people, languages and environments.

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7. Throughout this period, I always ensured that I kept the needs, views and concerns of each of these young people at the forefront of my considerations and actions. In the twelve years of holding this responsibility, no parent or child in my care ever raised a concern or complaint about the way in which they were treated or supported, nor have they done so at any time since. Conversely, parents regularly thanked me for the support I provided, and requested that their child be placed directly under my care when we travelled outside the province. To this day, many of my former athletes and some of their parents maintain regular contact with me.
8. As an accredited Level III National Coach, I was appropriately qualified to take on this responsibility, with my training and education covering athlete wellbeing and safety, as well as elite performance, physiology, psychology, dryland training, administration, and finance. My personal qualifications, professional coaching achievements and attention to the athletes' personal needs led to me being appointed as Head Coach and Manager of the Canadian Olympic Diving Team at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games and the 1990 Auckland Commonwealth Games.
9. I returned to Tasmania in 1990 and began my career with the Tasmanian State Service, taking up the position of Director, Tasmanian Institute of Sport. In this role, I was responsible for leading and overseeing the provision of holistic services and support to Tasmania's high-performance athletes. As with previous coaching roles, my responsibilities included ensuring that each athlete was not only given support for their physical training and on-field performance, but that their health, wellbeing and safety considerations were at the forefront of all strategies and decisions.
10. I have since held a number of Senior Executive positions across the Tasmanian State Service, in portfolio areas as diverse as community development, hospitality, property development, regional economic development and the arts. This included roles as Deputy Secretary, Culture Recreation and Sport, and Deputy Secretary, Business and Community Development within the (former) Department of Economic Development between 2008 and 2012. While the positions I held were not directly related to education or safeguarding children, I developed significant experience and expertise in corporate leadership and cultural change management. The knowledge and skills I developed are essential to my role in supporting the Secretary of the Department of Education's (Department) commitment and endeavours to successfully lead and transform our organisational culture to one in which every employee and volunteer understands and delivers on their responsibilities to safeguard all children and young people in our care.
11. In 2019, I joined the Department as Executive Director, Libraries Tasmania, providing strategic leadership and oversight of Tasmania's statewide network of library services, community learning, adult literacy and the state's archives and heritage services, in accordance with the provisions of the *Libraries Act 1984* and the *Archives Act 1983*. I also led work to build a stronger, more accountable culture in Libraries Tasmania, in which staff are prepared to take responsibility for their actions and respectfully hold each other to account.
12. I am a current director on the boards of Relationships Australia Tasmania and Diving Australia, and previously chaired and was a member of the Fahan School Board for seven

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years. The work of these three governance bodies involves critical aspects of safeguarding children and young people, whether in a community, sporting or educational context.

13. In August 2021, I was appointed to the position of Executive Director, Safeguarding Children and Young People (my current role), reporting directly to the Secretary, Tim Bullard. In this role, I am responsible for promoting and protecting the wellbeing of children and young people in all departmental settings. I am also responsible for leading and providing strategic advice and direction in relation to our culture, systems, practices, processes, procedures and professional learning as they relate to safeguarding children and young people. My term of appointment extends through until 13 November 2023.
14. As well as reporting to the Secretary, I provide weekly, in-person updates to the Department's Executive team on emerging issues and challenges, as well as reporting on the progress of key initiatives and programs of work as they relate to the Office of Safeguarding Children and Young People (Office). All members of the Executive have made it clear that the work of the Office is a priority for the entire Department, which is why they have requested regular weekly updates on the Office's work.
15. The core function and work of the Office complements and supports all divisions of the Department (particularly the business units responsible for aspects of child wellbeing and safety) and supports operational responses relevant to safeguarding children and young people. Staff in the Office, therefore, routinely work closely and collaboratively with staff in other business units and divisions to ensure our approach and deliverables are both well-informed and holistic.
16. I am well aware of the importance of keeping all children and young people safe from the harm of all forms of abuse. I am committed to working with all departmental staff to embed, maintain and enhance an organisational culture of which we can be proud—one in which every child and young person in our care is kept safe from abuse and their voices are heard and respected.
17. I am not, nor do I profess to be, an expert in child sexual abuse and its consequential impact on victims/survivors. For that reason, I actively seek out opportunities to undertake specialist training to build our team's skills, knowledge and understanding of the complexities and challenges it presents. Since taking up my current position in August 2021, the training I have attended or booked for future sessions includes the following:
  - (a) I have attended two webinars offered by the Daniel Morcombe Foundation: one on Harmful Sexual Behaviours; and the other on Recordkeeping that considers and supports children and young people. Office staff are encouraged to attend any relevant webinars on offer as and when they become available.
  - (b) Along with all staff in the Office, in March 2022, I attended Vicarious Trauma training delivered by Frontline Mind in Hobart.
  - (c) On 13 April 2022, our entire team participated in Sexual Trauma First Aid training provided by the Sexual Assault Support Service (SASS).

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- (d) I have arranged for a cross-section of departmental staff, including the Secretary and representatives from business units such as Legal Services, Workplace Relations, Student Support, and Strategic Marketing, Communications and Media, to join me and the Safeguarding Children and Young People team at a one-day Foundations for Building Trauma Awareness training session with well-known provider, Blue Knot, to be held in late June 2022. This training will introduce the principles of trauma-informed practice, which will be followed up with more specific, practical training to support the future implementation of these principles across our policies, procedures and practices.
- (e) Through SASS, I attended the first of three in-class consent education sessions (titled Primary Prevention of Sexual Assault and Family Violence) for primary school students in April 2022. I am scheduled to attend the next two sessions, as well as parent and teacher sessions, in May and June of this year.
- (f) My team and I regularly share research findings and other relevant reference materials, which we use to inform our work, and I intend to continue to identify relevant training and information sources, including those recommended by victims/survivors with whom I engage, or individuals and organisations already working in this area.

18. My current CV and position description are provided at Annexures 1 and 2.

### **2. Identify how many full-time equivalent officials work in the Unit**

19. Six (6) staff (5.4 FTE) currently work directly within the Unit (Office). These are:

- (a) Executive Director (SES 3, 1.0 FTE)
- (b) Senior Project Manager (Band 8, 1.0 FTE)
- (c) Principal Policy Analyst (Band 7, 1.0 FTE)
- (d) Senior Communications and Engagement Consultant (Band 7, 1.0 FTE)
- (e) Executive Officer (Band 4, 1.0 FTE)
- (f) Senior Project Officer (Band 6, 0.4 FTE).

20. Five (5) additional staff (2.5 FTE) from two other business units of the Department (Strategic Policy and Projects; Strategic Systems Development) directly support the work of the Office. These are:

- (g) Senior Policy and Project Officer (Band 6, 0.6 FTE – Strategic Policy and Projects)
- (h) Policy and Project Officer (Band 5, 0.9 FTE – Strategic Policy and Projects)
- (i) Project and Policy Officer (Band 5, 0.5 FTE – Strategic System Development)
- (j) Project and Policy Coordinator (Band 7, 0.3 FTE – Strategic System Development)
- (k) Program Manager, Systems and Data (Band 8, 0.2 FTE – Strategic System Development).

21. The Department has committed to three (3) additional (3.0 FTE) positions, which are yet to be recruited. These are:

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- (l) Director, Safeguarding (SES 1, 1.0 FTE)
  - (m) Senior Project Officer (Band 6, 1.0 FTE)
  - (n) Senior Policy and Project Officer (Band 6, 1.0 FTE).
22. When all positions are filled, the Office will be directly and indirectly supported by 14 staff (10.9 FTE).
23. The proposed organisational chart and corresponding roles and responsibilities are included at Annexures 3 and 4.
- 3. Outline the annual budget of the Unit, including any general purpose and targeted funding**
24. The Department has budgeted funds of \$3.4 million (\$823 000 in 2021-22, \$1.4 million in 2022-23, \$1.1 million in 2023-24 and \$493 000 in 2024-25) over the current and next three financial years, to fund up to 9.0 FTE positions to directly resource the Office. This amount does not include funding for the staff retained by other areas of the Department who provide direct support to the Office, such as the current 1.5 FTE provided by the Strategic Policy and Projects business unit, or the 1.0 FTE provided by Strategic Systems Development.
25. The 2020-21 State Budget allocated \$3.15 million over four years for Student Systems Renewal, involving development of a new Case Management Platform (CMP), which is a technology platform that will enable and support effective recording, management and sharing of information about students, staff and other personnel. The CMP will be used to capture information on current and historical child sexual abuse allegations and harmful sexual behaviours. The 2021-22 allocation for this work was \$900 000.
26. Proposals and decisions will also be made through the 2022-23 State Budget process to resource and fund the following activities:
- (a) appointing a Student Safeguarding Officer in every Tasmanian Government school, with appropriate induction and training to be overseen by the Office
  - (b) working with each Student Safeguarding Officer to help them establish an individual and specific risk management plan and safeguarding risk assessment for their school
  - (c) developing and rolling out targeted information on understanding, preventing, identifying and responding to child sexual abuse, for use in inductions and annual training for all school principals, teachers and teacher assistants.

**4. Describe the role of the Unit**

27. My role, and that of the Office, is to lead the provision of strategic advice and direction on the Department's culture, systems, policies, practices and professional learning as they relate to safeguarding children and young people from abuse in all departmental settings. The work of the Office complements and supports the work of other business units that play an important role in child wellbeing and safety, as well as supporting operational responses to

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safeguarding children and young people led by the Workplace Relations, Legal Services, Learning Services and Student Support business units.

**In addition to the general explanation, address the role of the Unit in:**

**(a) implementing the recommendations of the:**

**(i) Independent Review carried out by Professor Smallbone and Professor McCormack**

**(ii) Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse**

28. The Office is responsible for overseeing the implementation of recommendations from the *Independent Inquiry into the Tasmanian Department of Education's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* (DoE Inquiry) and the remaining recommendations from the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse* (Royal Commission), for which the Department has lead responsibility. The Office is also likely to have responsibility for coordinating and delivering any recommendations that may arise from the Commission of Inquiry.
29. work includes the development of policies, guidelines and procedures, the provision of strategic policy advice, project management activities, and planning to support the implementation of measures to address the recommendations. This planning involves budget considerations, planning and submissions, and collaboration with and coordination across other business units of the Department and with other Tasmanian Government agencies.

**In addition to the general explanation, address the role of the Unit in:**

**(b) effecting or encouraging change to the Institutional or organisational culture of the Department in relation to child safety issues**

30. Driving cultural and organisational change is a key purpose of the Office and me personally. Progress towards achieving this goal to date includes championing child safeguarding issues with the Department's Executive Group, other senior staff, school principals and departmental staff more broadly. Changing the organisational culture of the Department in relation to child safety is a critical factor for successful implementation of recommendations from the DoE Inquiry, the Royal Commission and the Commission of Inquiry. As such, the Office will play a lead role in effecting and encouraging this change.
31. An important part of our work on delivering positive cultural change is strategic engagement and communication with students, staff and internal and external stakeholders through a variety of channels, strategies and materials. To support this work, I recently appointed an experienced Senior Communications and Engagement Consultant, who is employed full-time to, among other things, ensure that:
- (a) our engagement and communication with all departmental staff focuses on the underpinning Rights of the Child
  - (b) staff understand their responsibilities
  - (c) staff are provided with the relevant resources and ongoing training to build their understanding and knowledge in this important area.

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32. Awareness-raising events will also be held regularly. The first of these, a ‘Wear Teal Tuesday’ morning tea event, was celebrated across the Department on 26 April 2022. Wear Teal Tuesday is the main ‘day of action’ for the internationally recognised Sexual Assault Awareness Month. More information on strategies for engagement with key stakeholders, including departmental staff, can be found in response to Question 8 below.

**In addition to the general explanation, address the role of the Unit in:**

**(c) preventing child sexual abuse in Institutional Contexts, including any plans for screening processes for Officials, and prevention curriculum**

33. The role of the Office in preventing the sexual abuse of children and young people in Institutional Contexts is to provide leadership and strategic advice and direction on the Department’s culture, systems, policies, practices and professional learning as they relate to safeguarding children and young people from abuse in all departmental settings. This complements and supports the work of other departmental business units that play an important role in child wellbeing and safety, as well as supporting new and ongoing measures for the prevention of child sexual abuse implemented by the Workplace Relations, Legal Services, Learning Services and Student Support teams.
34. In addition to the Teacher’s Registration Board’s existing processes for teachers, the Department requires all employees, volunteers, contractors and external providers, or persons otherwise engaged in or associated with a child-regulated activity to maintain current Tasmanian Registration to Work with Vulnerable People (RWVP). An individual cannot be employed by the Department without meeting this essential requirement. If an individual’s RWVP is suspended or revoked, that person is suspended from duty and investigated in line with the Employment Directions.
35. It is my understanding that the Department has no current plans to expand its screening process, which currently involves RWVP and the requirement for all applicants for roles within the Department to make a declaration in response to six screening questions, which are provided at Annexure 5.
36. For students in Tasmanian Government schools, the prevention curriculum is primarily addressed through the Health and Physical Education learning area of the Australian Curriculum and within the ‘relationships and sexuality’ and ‘safety’ focus areas. This includes content about consent, managing relationships online and offline, and dealing with relationships in which there is an imbalance of power. Extensive resources to assist teachers and school staff in delivering the curriculum are readily accessible through the Teaching and Learning Centre on the staff intranet.
37. The Department also supports a range of evidence-based and age-appropriate programs addressing areas including respectful relationships, consent, sexuality, body ownership and protective behaviours, which align with and complement content covered through the Australian Curriculum. The Department does not mandate delivery of any of these programs within schools, but allows schools to make decisions as to which programs are best suited to their context, in consultation with Student Support staff. The Department promotes availability of these programs to schools through a range of communication channels,

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including Principal Matters (a weekly email to all principals), the staff intranet, and Infostream (a weekly email to all staff that provides external organisations with the opportunity to promote their educational products, services, professional learning and events to Tasmanian schools).

38. Many schools already offer consent and other similar training for students from Kindergarten to Year 10, coupled with separate parent/carer and staff sessions to ensure those adults with responsibility for the protection and support of children and young people in their care are aware of the behaviours and situations that might be of concern to young people and/or the specific responsibility that staff, parents and carers hold.
39. The Office will be working with other business units across the Department to ensure all Tasmanian Government schools consistently offer relevant, contextual, and effective support and education to students, staff and parents/carers to build their collective awareness of, and ability to effectively prevent and deal with, instances of child sexual abuse. This will include a review of available programs to ensure that the programs being offered by schools are appropriate at a whole-of-system level, while still suiting the context for each individual school.
40. Information about prevention programs run in Tasmanian Government schools is provided at Annexure 6.

**In addition to the general explanation, address the role of the Unit in:**

**(d) developing clear protocols and guidelines for Department Officials on how to respond to allegations, incidents, disclosures or suspicions of child sexual abuse**

41. The Office has developed updated advice for all departmental staff on responding to incidents, disclosures, and suspicions of child sexual abuse. This was shared with school principals at the end of Term 1, 2022 and made available to all staff from the beginning of Term 2, 2022.
42. The updated advice was developed in response to, and consistent with, the DoE Inquiry recommendation that the Department update its advice to all staff to support a timely and effective response to incidents, disclosures and suspicions of child sexual abuse. While there were already processes in place to support staff responses to child sexual abuse, the Department lacked a comprehensive, 'one-stop-shop' form of advice on responding effectively and in a child-centred way, irrespective of whether the origin of abuse was at school, home or in any other setting.
43. The advice includes step-by-step information about the appropriate emergency response, staff reporting obligations and protocols, support for the child or young person, contact with parents and carers, and ongoing support, critical reflection and documentation. The information aims to be clear, succinct, easy to interpret, and able to be implemented quickly by all staff in a range of settings. The advice has been adapted into three action-based flowcharts for use by school principals, site leaders and delegates. The flowcharts mirror the format and structure of the Department's existing Critical Incident and Emergency

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Management flowcharts. This approach aims to ensure that the advice is provided in a familiar format that is easy to interpret, absorb and implement in the face of a potentially critical incident. The advice and supportive flowcharts are provided at Annexures 7 and 8.

**In addition to the general explanation, address the role of the Unit in:**

**(e) responding to allegations, incidents, disclosures or suspicions of child sexual abuse.**

44. While the Office does not have a direct operational role in responding to allegations, incidents, disclosures or suspicions of child sexual abuse, work is underway to gain a sound understanding of the way safeguarding-related policies and procedures are put into practice across the Department. The aim of this work is to ensure our responses are consistent and strategically coordinated, and that we continually review the effectiveness and integrity of our processes to ensure we keep the child at the centre of our decisions.
45. An example of the way in which the Office is leading this work is the system review of a recent child sexual abuse matter, which was undertaken in December 2021. The objectives of the review were to build a shared understanding of the way the Department's current safeguarding systems and processes work in practice, and to identify opportunities to improve future system-wide responses to child sexual abuse. A copy of the recommendations from the system review is provided at Annexure 9.
46. The system review recommended several improvements across a range of areas, including ensuring the child is at the centre of all decisions and actions; providing adequate support for action and decision-making of departmental staff; considering the physical environment; recordkeeping and information sharing; improving internal and external communication; considering RWVP processes; and providing adequate professional development.
47. The aim and expectation of the Office is that, across the system, we will operate within a best practice model and will be publicly acknowledged as an exemplary Child Safe Organisation. This will require ongoing monitoring and regular review to ensure that we can identify opportunities for improvement at both the system and individual school level. As such, it is the intention of the Office to embed a process of regular system reviews, as recommended in the DoE Inquiry report.

**In addition to the general explanation, address the role of the Unit in:**

**(f) developing a Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy for the Department**

48. The Office is leading the development of a Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy, in line with the recommendation from the DoE Inquiry that the Department 'develop and implement a comprehensive, integrated Student Safeguarding Policy'.
49. This is a significant component of work that will be informed by a concurrent, holistic review of approximately 70 existing policies and procedures that all contribute in some way to the Department's safeguarding system.

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50. The objective of the review is to ensure that all relevant departmental policies and procedures incorporate safeguarding as a key consideration, and work together as the foundation of a comprehensive, consistent and holistic system of prevention, early intervention and response.
51. Activity on the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy to date has included the commencement of the above policy and procedure review, a review of similar frameworks, policies and procedures in other jurisdictions, and high-level scoping of the required overarching policy framework.
52. Once drafted, the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy will require comprehensive consultation across not only the Department, but also with a range of stakeholders, including other Tasmanian Government agencies, the Commissioner for Children, non-government entities and, importantly, with children, young people and their families.

**In addition to the general explanation, address the role of the Unit in:**

**(g) developing a code of conduct for all Department Officials**

53. In collaboration with other business units of the Department, the Office is leading work on the development of a code of conduct for all departmental staff, as per the DoE Inquiry recommendation that *'a formal Code of Conduct for DoE personnel be introduced to elevate the status of safeguarding obligations for DoE employees and volunteers and so create schools-specific disciplinary measures'*.
54. The first stage of this process is to determine how a code of conduct can be most effectively underpinned by the *State Service Act 2000* and an associated legislative mechanism, such as a Standing Order or Employment Direction. This is to ensure that the Department would be able to undertake disciplinary action for breaches of the code of conduct when necessary. I have recently sought advice from the Office of the Solicitor-General for this purpose.
55. In collaboration with other business units, the Office is also progressing a review of the existing internal documents that guide the conduct and behaviour of staff, to determine how these can be updated and aligned as an overarching code of conduct package. Documents under review include the *Conduct and Behaviour Standards*, *Professional Standards for Staff Policy and Guidelines*; and *Protective Practices for Staff in their Interactions with Students Guidelines*.
56. Further work is required to determine a feasible, detailed timeline for this work. However, the Department has committed to implementing the relevant DoE Inquiry recommendation in 2023.

**In addition to the general explanation, address the role of the Unit in:**

**(h) developing and rolling out new training for all school-based and non-school based Department Officials**

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57. The Department is progressing implementation of the DoE Inquiry recommendation that *‘information about understanding, preventing, identifying and responding to sexual abuse be included in inductions, and in annual training, for all principals, teachers and teacher aides.’*
58. In consideration of the immediate needs of all staff, Mandatory Reporting training is a major focus for the Office. This training is currently being reviewed and updated, with new content expected to be tested with school principals and staff before the end of 2022. The new, compulsory training material will be rolled out annually through the Department’s online training platform, Canvas, commencing no later than the start of Term 1, 2023.
59. The Office is also developing content for professional development modules for existing, new and aspiring school principals, covering topics related to understanding, preventing, identifying and responding to child sexual abuse. This training will then be rolled out to all staff across the Department and will become a compulsory part of annual training.
60. While it would be preferable to immediately cover all staff in the initial roll-out of this training, the size of the Department, the overall number of staff and the small size of the Office makes an approach of this scale extremely difficult. In addition, as leaders in their schools, it is the (approximately) 195 principals who must understand that both the importance of our work to safeguard children and young people in our care and their individual responsibility to help educate and support staff at their site are critical to the successful roll-out of future training for all staff.
61. Proposals and decisions will be made through the 2022-23 State Budget process to fund the development and roll-out of targeted information on understanding, preventing, identifying and responding to child sexual abuse, including through staff inductions and annual training for all teachers and teacher assistants, as well as principals, thereby helping to build a culture of putting the child and their safety at the centre of all decisions that affect them.
62. While training and access to relevant and contemporary policies, procedures and processes are all necessary parts of improving our prevention of, early intervention in, and responses to child sexual abuse, it will take a concerted and consistent effort, combining regular messaging, reminders, training and strong leadership, if we are to be successful. This is something I am determined to maintain a focus on, as a critical component of the Office’s overall approach.

**In addition to the general explanation, address the role of the Unit in:**

- (i) developing and implementing new technology to ensure that all allegations, incidents, disclosures or suspicions of child sexual abuse are recorded and can be followed up in a way that keeps the best interest of the child or young person front and centre.**
63. The Office is not directly responsible for the development or implementation of new technology to support the recording of incidents, allegations, disclosures or suspicions of child sexual abuse. This work is led by the Department’s Strategic Systems Development (SSD) team in collaboration with the business units directly responsible for operational

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procedures and response activities, including Student Support, Legal Services and Workplace Relations.

64. In mid-2020, SSD began working on the development of a new Case Management Platform (CMP), with the aim of creating a centralised technology system to support an efficient process for recording, managing, and sharing information about students, staff and other stakeholders. An initial suite of functionality has been developed to capture historic and current child sexual abuse allegations and harmful sexual behaviour.
65. SSD is currently working with Student Support, Legal Services and Workplace Relations to support them in piloting the minimum viable product that is currently available. This work includes entering cases, reviewing functionality against safeguarding objectives and capturing feedback from users to inform the next steps in the project. This work will continue to the end of 2022, along with further consultation across the Department to ensure all business unit needs are met, safeguarding objectives are considered and best interests of the child/young person remain a priority.
66. The Office's role in this work is to ensure the final product aligns with the Department's overarching safeguarding objectives and addresses, or is consistent with, relevant recommendations of the Royal Commission, DoE Inquiry and Commission of Inquiry.
67. When fully developed, the CMP will be rolled out across the Department, allowing staff in all schools and regions to securely capture, appropriately share, action, monitor and report on cases of child sexual abuse in a way that provides enhanced visibility and accountability.
68. Beyond that, the Office will continue to work with members of the Interagency Data and Systems Working Group to promote the need to more effectively share data and information to protect and safeguard children and young people, as noted in my response to Question 4 (j) regarding the role of the Office in supporting interagency collaboration and coordination.

**In addition to the general explanation, address the role of the Unit in:**

**(j) supporting interagency collaboration and coordination.**

69. The Office actively supports and participates in the Department's work on interagency collaboration and coordination, which to date has included:
  - (a) leading negotiations and finalising a Memorandum of Understanding with Tasmania Police to establish an effective and coordinated approach for preventing and responding to child sexual abuse in government schools (see Annexure 10)
  - (b) commencing negotiations with Communities Tasmania on a Memorandum of Understanding for preventing and responding to child sexual abuse in Tasmanian Government schools<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This was prior to the Tasmanian Government announcement on 24 February 2022 regarding the machinery of government changes affecting the two departments. Work to align approaches and streamline the way information is gathered, exchanged and recorded will be undertaken during and beyond the machinery of government changes.

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- (c) leading the creation of an Interagency Data and Systems Working Group, with representatives from the Department, Tasmania Police, Communities Tasmania and the Department of Justice, to consider opportunities to jointly leverage technology solutions to more effectively share data and information to protect and safeguard children and young people (see Annexure 11)
  - (d) participating in an interagency working group on a Child and Youth Safe Organisations legislative framework, led by the Department of Justice.
- 5. Identify, in relation to each task or project referred to in response to paragraphs 4 (a) to (j):**
- (k) the current status of the task or project**
  - (l) any deadline that has been set for completion of the task or project**
  - (m) the key barriers to the Unit completing the task or project, and**
  - (n) how performance or success will be measured and evaluated.**
70. The status, timeframes, barriers and performance measures of identified and recommended activities, including those referenced in response to paragraph 4 (a) to (j) above, is detailed in Annexures 12 and 13. It should be noted that, given the time the Office has had to consider existing policies and procedures, gaps in current processes, and available resources to support its work, current performance measures are high-level only.
71. To determine success, the Office will use specific measures and data that take into consideration contemporary research within and beyond Australia. This work will also require close collaboration and consultation with the Department's Education Performance and Review team to determine the specific resource implications the work might have.
72. Provided the Office is given the necessary time and resources to address all recommended and identified actions, there are generally no significant barriers to their implementation. It should be noted, however, that, at times, the availability of appropriately skilled staff can be challenging, and unanticipated risks and factors beyond the control of the Office may impact on timelines for the completion of tasks and projects.
73. Some recommendations are dependent on the completion of other work. For example, Royal Commission recommendation 13.1, '*that all schools implement the Child Safe Standards*', may require legislative change and/or the completion of specific policy development work before the Child Safe Standards can be fully implemented. While not a barrier, this interdependency has the potential to impact on the timelines for delivery.
74. Given the size of the Department in comparison with corresponding agencies in other jurisdictions, there may occasionally be a need for the scope of Tasmania's response to some Royal Commission recommendations to be at a different scale from those of the larger states. The Office and the Department will, however, ensure that responses to recommendations are fit-for-purpose and effective, taking into consideration Tasmania's specific needs and context.

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75. Conversely, Tasmania's relatively smaller size gives us the opportunity to easily connect and collaborate with other stakeholders in the implementation of recommendations for which we have a shared responsibility. I personally see this as a significant advantage and will continue to make use of the connections and opportunities for engagement we have across the government, non-government and private sectors to improve our collective response to the many challenges and opportunities before us.
76. It is worth noting that in some instances, the Department is reliant on the efforts of other agencies and/or jurisdictions and does not have overall control. For example, the Australian Education Senior Officials Committee has lead responsibility for Royal Commission recommendations 8.9, 8.10, 8.11, 8.12, 8.16 and 13.8, with success being dependent on the collaboration and commitment of all states and territories.
77. See Annexure 13 for information on the Royal Commission recommendations that are the responsibility of the Department.
78. Overall success will be achieved when every member of staff in the Department understands and believes that safeguarding children and young people in our care is everyone's responsibility, and when each of us can articulate how and why we contribute to that.
- 6. Describe whether and, if so, how the machinery of government changes announced on 24 February 2022 will impact the role of the unit.**
79. As I have not been involved in high-level discussions about the current machinery of government changes, I am unable to comment specifically on how these changes may impact the work of the Office. However, I believe the changes that are likely to ensue present us with an opportunity to continue our collaborative work to build closer links across all areas working to safeguard and protect Tasmania's children and young people. Being part of one agency will, in my view, give us an excellent platform on which we can build a more effective system and processes for sharing information, and foster a more holistic approach to preventing, identifying and responding to child sexual abuse in institutional settings.
- 7. Describe any training that is provided to Community Liaison Managers in each region to assist them in receiving and properly responding to allegations, complaints or concerns raised by parents about a teacher or principal.**
80. Strong relationships between schools, families and the community are essential for a positive educational environment and, ultimately, for each learner's success. The Department established a Community Liaison Manager (CLM) role to support that approach
81. CLMs are not recruited specifically to deal with issues related to child sexual abuse; they provide high-level advice and support across the Learning Services Division to resolve a broad range of community-related issues, enquiries and operational matters as they arise, liaising with senior management as required.
82. Schools and Child and Family Learning Centres receive a wide range of feedback from parents, carers and other community members, including enquiries and complaints that need to be responded to quickly and effectively to provide a suitable response or achieve a

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satisfactory resolution. CLMs manage all complaints and enquiries from parents and carers in accordance with the Department's *Enquiries and Complaints Management Policy* and *Enquiries and Complaints Management Procedure* (see Annexures 14 and 15), keeping the child at the centre and focusing on parent and family engagement as a priority.

83. While it is not a CLM's role to deal directly with complaints made about staff members (see paragraph 87 below), if a CLM was directly contacted in relation to an allegation of child sexual abuse, they would be obliged to follow the mandatory reporting process, as are all departmental staff.
84. If a CLM receives an allegation, complaint or concern about a teacher or principal, they would normally escalate it to the appropriate area of Learning Services immediately, as follows:
- (a) a complaint about a principal's performance would be referred to the Director, Principal Leadership
  - (b) a complaint about a staff member or principal relating to the State Service Code of Conduct would be referred to the Regional Human Resources (HR) Manager
  - (c) a complaint that lacked sufficient evidence to understand to which area it should be referred would be assessed by the CLM, who would obtain further information to determine the most appropriate referral point.
85. The CLM Statement of Duties is attached at Annexure 16.
86. CLMs are recruited on the basis of having background or experience in the management of external stakeholders or complaint handling. Previous/current occupants have varied backgrounds, ranging from managing HR complaints, working at the Office of the Ombudsman, working in a family engagement role, or handling complaints in another organisation.
87. Noting that CLMs do not deal directly with complaints made about staff members, as part of their induction, CLMs receive information from and about a range of business units across the Department relevant to their role. This includes:
- (a) the Department's general induction program available through Canvas, as well as a Work Health and Safety induction
  - (b) a meeting with HR representatives regarding the staff complaints process
  - (c) receiving a copy of the Legal Issues Handbook, including a meeting with Legal Services
  - (d) receiving a copy of the Department's Accountabilities Toolkit
  - (e) being briefed on the Department's Security and Emergency Management Procedures and Critical Incident Response Procedures
  - (f) being provided with information regarding Mandatory Reporting processes, including information provided by Communities Tasmania
  - (g) being given access to information on the Ombudsman Tasmania website.

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88. As part of their own professional development planning, CLMs identify their own training needs, which may include access to relevant training in dispute resolution, internal review and complaints handling processes, managing conflicts of interest and conducting investigations.
89. Proposed future work for CLMs includes developing more in-depth complaint handling training, training on handling difficult conversations or situations, and increasing their knowledge of Mandatory Reporting obligations. This will be done in consultation with the Office.
- 8. Who do you consider to be your internal and external stakeholders in relation to child sexual abuse in Institutional Contexts and how do you engage those stakeholders?**
90. The Office's internal and external stakeholders in relation to child sexual abuse in institutional contexts are many and varied, and the level and method of engagement with these stakeholders reflects this diversity. Our primary external stakeholders are Tasmanian children, young people, their families and carers. We are also aware of our need to sensitively engage with and respond to requests for information from victims/survivors in a trauma-informed way.
91. Our internal stakeholders include all departmental staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff in State Government schools, libraries, Child and Family Learning Centres and corporate areas. It is our strong view that safeguarding children and young people in all our environments is everyone's responsibility, regardless of their role or position.
92. Our secondary stakeholders include staff in non-government schools, community support services, other Government Agencies and members of the Tasmanian community.
93. The Office has been working to engage all stakeholders through a combination of direct engagement, and communication and engagement strategies that will begin to promote the message that we are sorry for our failings of the past, that we are determined to do better, and that we are working to build a culture in which children and young people are at the centre of our decision-making. We will continue to build on this in coming years.
94. I have directly engaged with internal and secondary stakeholders through face-to-face and online meetings to provide advice and information on the role of the Office and our future plans, to seek their views on specific needs, to share information and ideas more generally, and to find opportunities for greater collaboration and engagement to achieve our shared goals. These meetings began soon after the Office was established in August 2021 and are ongoing.
95. Other senior staff in the Office are also involved in meetings with internal and secondary stakeholders, to begin to build a collaborative approach to the creation of effective safeguarding processes, policies and supports that keep the child at the centre, and to provide all departmental staff with clear and useful guidance and advice to help them fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.

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96. Engagement to date has included the Commissioner for Children, the Tasmanian Principals' Association, the Tasmanian Association of State School Organisations, the Tasmanian School Administrators Association, the Australian Education Union, the Department's LGBTIQ+ Working Group, Working it Out (Tasmania's sexuality, gender and intersex status support and education service), the Sexual Assault Support Service in the south, Laurel House in the north/north-west, the University of Tasmania (UTAS), the Teachers' Registration Board, the Office of the Education Registrar, Catholic Education Tasmania, Independent Schools Tasmania and other State Government agencies.
97. In the case of Communities Tasmania and Tasmania Police, senior staff and I have been regularly engaging to develop Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) to align our respective approaches and streamline the way information is gathered, exchanged and recorded. An MoU with Tasmania Police has been finalised; however, work on an MoU with Communities Tasmania has been put on hold. Discussions and agreement on how we align our work will continue as a follow-up to the machinery of government changes set to occur in the second half of 2022.
98. Work with UTAS has included developing an agreement to work together to ensure graduates from relevant UTAS courses are aware of their professional responsibilities in relation to understanding, preventing and responding to child sexual abuse in schools. This includes developing a set of relevant principles, protocols and practices that can be included in UTAS's teacher education courses in relation to child sexual abuse, and creating, piloting and embedding suitable content into future UTAS courses and professional development activities. This work is ongoing. Copies of correspondence between me and Professor Victoria Carrington, Dean and Head of the School of Education at UTAS are provided at Annexures 17 and 18.
99. The Office has recently developed a new visual identity for all Safeguarding materials. The aim of this is to ensure all departmental staff, students, families and members of the public can easily identify any safeguarding-related material produced by the Office for the information of internal and external stakeholders. As new or amended policies and procedures are developed, they will be published using the new identity, helping to raise awareness and a connection with the visual aspect of the material.
100. The visual identity was created with the idea that children and young people need a platform to come forward and be heard with clarity and confidence, using their voice to tell their story or to speak for others. The overlapping speech bubbles in the graphic remind us that we must all speak up, and that child safety is the responsibility of everyone. The three speech bubbles also represent the rights of the child – the right to an education, the right to be kept safe, and the right to be heard. The expressive, hand-written font acts as a prompt to share stories with true feeling and confidence.
101. The visual identity was finalised after direct engagement with children and young people, who unanimously endorsed the design, confirming that it reflected safety and trust and would help encourage them to talk and to speak out for others. A copy of the visual identity can be found at Annexure 19.

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102. A new standalone Safeguarding Children and Young People website is also being developed and will use the new safeguarding visual identity. It will be designed for a target audience of children, young people and their families and carers, providing them with easy-to-understand information on what child sexual abuse is, what to do if they're worried about themselves or someone else, what children's rights are and where they can go for help or other information. It will also provide information for victims/survivors.
103. The website and other safeguarding matters will be promoted through schools, social media campaigns and traditional media to engage children, young people and their families and carers, as well as the broader Tasmanian community.
104. In the interim, we have been working to update our current web presence, including increasing the profile and visibility of the Safeguarding Children and Young People page and ensuring information is relevant and accessible. Content has also been updated to improve accessibility.
105. As the voices of children and young people are critical to and must always inform and underpin our work, the Office is currently developing a plan to engage with this cohort directly, so that they can appropriately influence our work.
106. As we are aware of the many reference groups of young people already in existence in the state, we will first explore opportunities to engage with and gain the support we are seeking through these groups, rather than potentially and unnecessarily establishing yet another reference group of children and young people.

### **REQUEST FOR DOCUMENTS**

- 9 Produce a copy of your most recent resume or CV.**
- 10 Produce a copy of your current position description.**
- 11 Produce a copy of any document relevant to your response to paragraphs 1 to 8.**
107. Refer to Annexures attached.