
2. Report on 2018-19 Key Deliverables



Security upgrades to the Launceston Supreme Court.

The Department received funding in the 2018-19 Tasmanian Budget to deliver a range of specific projects and services to combat crime, protect workplaces and make the community safer. Details of this funding, and the progress to date on implementing these initiatives, is below.

Chatter Matters Pilot Program

Funding of \$150 000 was provided to deliver a pilot Chatter Matters program to prisoners in Tasmania. Chatter Matters Tasmania was developed by Rosalie Martin (2017 Tasmanian Australian of the Year) and uses evidence-based practices to improve literacy, support positive interpersonal interaction and communication skills, and teach participants skills for developing secure attachment with their children. The Chatter Matters program is assisting prisoners to strengthen vital bonds with family and improve their rehabilitation with the aim of reducing their likelihood of re-offending after release. Chatter Matters also provides training to Tasmania Prison Service staff to assist their communication and interaction with prisoners.

Law and Order Legislative Reforms

The Government progressed a number of legislative reforms across Justice Ministerial portfolios, including:

Minister for Building and Construction

- a series of measures to address the issue of shoplifting; and
- work on amendments to the *Workplaces (Protection from Protesters) Act 2014* to support the rights of workers.

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice

- preliminary work on creating new legislation to ensure violent offenders engaging in 'one punch' incidents, that cause the death of another, will always be criminally responsible for the consequences of their actions. This work was undertaken along with a review of existing provisions in the *Sentencing Act 1997* that give courts the power to ban offenders from certain areas;
- creating a new offence of 'persistent family violence';
- preliminary work on amending Tasmania's dangerous criminal declaration legislation to streamline, with appropriate safeguards, the dangerous criminal declaration process and introduce a second tier declaration for dangerous criminals, who will be subject to intensive monitoring post-release;
- re-introducing legislation to require courts to impose mandatory sentences of imprisonment for serious sexual offences against children, and for serious assaults on frontline workers;
- work on reforming bail laws in Tasmania; and
- developing a Bill to amend the *Criminal Code Act 1924* to allow the prosecution of cyberbullies.

Minister for Corrections

- legislating to ensure a member with policing experience is represented on the Parole Board.

New Prison Infrastructure

The Government has committed to funding several significant prison infrastructure projects to increase prison capacity and upgrade existing facilities to meet modern correctional standards.

New Northern Regional Prison

Funding of \$270 million over 10 years has been announced to commence construction of a new Northern Regional Prison. The prison will be built in two stages, with \$150 million allocated for Stage 1 Northern Regional Remand Centre and \$120 million for stage 2 of the prison. An expression of interest process and site selection commenced in 2018-19. Construction of stage 1 is expected to commence in the 2019-20 financial year and will be completed within five years, with Stage 2 works to follow thereafter. The Northern Regional Prison will ultimately provide accommodation for a variety of security classifications, remand facilities, and a women's prison. The Northern Regional Prison will not only relieve pressure on the Risdon facility, but will also be designed to create increased opportunities for prisoners to find meaningful work on release, and importantly provide improved family connections for Northern prisoners.

New Southern Remand Centre

Funding of \$70 million over three years will be provided to build a new remand facility on the Risdon Prison site. \$10 million of that funding was provided in 2018-19. The new remand facility will be incorporated into the existing network of secure walkways within the Risdon Prison Complex, with the main connection located near the existing Visits Building.

Alternative Sentencing Options

Funding of \$4.3 million was provided in 2018-19 as part of the Government's commitment to progressively phase out the use of suspended sentences. This funding has enabled the Department to develop and implement new sentencing options for offenders, including Home Detention with Electronic Monitoring, in addition to new reintegration, education and therapeutic support services to offenders and prisoners to reduce their chances of re-offending in the future.

Court Security and Prisoner Transport

Funding of \$789 000 was provided in 2018-19 as part of the Government's policy to remove police from court duties in Launceston and put them back on the beat. The funding is to meet the cost of additional correctional officers who have assumed responsibility from Tasmania Police for court security and prisoner transport in the Launceston Supreme Court and associated prisoner transport and security costs. Work is ongoing regarding North West courts.

Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse

The Tasmanian Government has agreed to participate in the Australian Government's National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse. The Scheme allows for redress to be provided to individuals who suffered abuse (sexual abuse and related non-sexual abuse) which occurred when the person was a child while in the care of an institution. Survivors can lodge an application with the Scheme, including where they suffered abuse in more than one institution. The Scheme is operated by the Australian Government's Department of Social Services. The Department provides verifying information as required, delivers elements of the redress and contributes costs associated with redress, legal support, counselling and management, and administrative costs associated with the program. The National Scheme will operate for a period of 10 years, from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2028. The Department was provided with funding of \$25 million in 2018-19 for compensation and administration costs, part of a \$70 million commitment over the 10 year life of the Scheme.

Additional Tasmania Prison Service Funding

Additional funding of \$4 million was provided to the Tasmania Prison Service to assist with increasing cost pressures as a result of an increase in prisoner numbers. This funding helped address increased correctional staffing costs relating to additional shifts to maintain the safety and security of the facilities, staff and prisoners, in addition to managing increased prisoner court, hospital and other escorts. Increased demand for prisoner reintegration, activities, education and therapeutic support services was also funded. Furthermore, this funding helps address additional costs such as energy, water, food, clothing, bedding and other prisoner related consumable and non-salary costs affected by the increase in prisoner numbers.



Officer profile: Marica Duvnjak

Years of dedicated hard work, a pursuit of broad legal knowledge and a commitment to access to justice have been the hallmarks of Marica Duvnjak's career, culminating in her appointment as Chairperson of the Resource Management and Planning Appeal Tribunal (RMPAT) in May 2018.

Marica spent nearly 21 years in private practice developing a breadth of experience after graduating from the University of Tasmania with an Arts/Law degree majoring in Psychology.

She was also a member of the Parole Board from 2009, becoming Chairperson in 2012, a position she held for about four years.

She joined the Office of the Solicitor General as Principal Crown Counsel in May 2015.

In November 2017 Marica took on the role of RMPAT Acting Chairperson.

The Tribunal and its Chairperson are significant decision-makers in Tasmania, dealing with appeals and applications with the potential to change the state and the lives of its citizens.

Marica remains grounded in the belief that her role in the provision of access to justice is through accurate interpretation of the relevant legislation that governs these decisions.

"People are very passionate about where they live and they come here needing someone to adjudicate," she said. "They may not always be happy with the decision but the important thing is that the decisions are appropriate and fair."

Marica encourages young lawyers to similarly embrace hard work and a breadth of practice.

"You never know where it might lead you," she said.