

Information Package

Child Advocate

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Purpose of the role

The inaugural role of Child Advocate provides independent advocacy for children and young people, particularly those in out-of-home care and youth justice systems. The role ensures that children's rights, wellbeing, and interests are upheld through individual advocacy, complaint resolution, and systemic influence.

The Child Advocate will be responsible for establishing and administering a statutory independent visitor scheme to ensure that independent persons visit children and young people in detention and out of home care.

The role operates within a statutory framework and exercises independence in advocating for vulnerable children. It involves engagement with government agencies, service providers, families, and children, often in complex and sensitive environments.

The Child Advocate has the legal authority to investigate, intervene and act on behalf of children and young people, ensuring their rights and wellbeing are protected within government systems.

The Child Advocate works in collaboration with the Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young people, the Commissioner for Children and Young People and the Independent Regulator. The three independent commissioners will form the new Commission for Children and Young People. The Commissioner for Children and Young People will eventually hold the position of Independent Regulator and be the Head of Agency for the purposes of the *State Service Act 2000*.

Organisational Environment

The Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings (the Commission of Inquiry) recommended the establishment of a statutory Commission for Children and Young People, with "powers and resourcing to act as a strong and fearless advocate for children's rights and to monitor child safe practices in organisations" (Recommendation 18.6).

Whilst this is the primary recommendation relating to the establishment of the Commission, there are more than 15 other recommendations that relate to the structure, role, functions and powers of the new Commission and its statutory officers.

The Commission for Children and Young People will replace and expand on the functions of the existing **Commission for Children and Young People** and work with the **Independent Regulator** of the Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework to strengthen Tasmania's oversight system and serve as a strong advocate for young people.

The Commission's key roles are set out in the provisions creating its functions and powers. These include:

- recommending system improvements to Government;

- conducting inquiries into systemic issues;
- promoting, monitoring and reviewing the safety and wellbeing of children and young people;
- promoting and upholding their rights;
- promoting and empowering their participation in influencing decisions, and expressing opinions on matters, that affect their lives; and
- monitoring and reviewing data and information that is collected in relation to them.

The Commission for Children and Young People will also have statutory powers including to require information and answers to questions, conduct inspections of detention facilities and publish reports in such manner as it considers appropriate.

The Commission of Inquiry recommended a phased implementation of the new Commission. The key first step was the Tasmanian Parliament passing a Bill to create the new Commission for Children and Young People.

The Tasmanian Parliament passed the Commission for Children and Young People Bill 2025 in December 2025. You can access the Bill and explanatory material [here](#).

The *Commission for Children and Young People Act 2025* will commence once proclaimed. Different parts of the Act can be proclaimed at different times, in a staged approach. The Act as passed is available [here](#).

Central to the development of the Bill was consultation with children and young people, victim-survivors, Tasmanian Aboriginal community-controlled organisations and people, and foster and kinship carers to ensure Commissioner roles align with what is expected and needed by these critical groups.

Important reading for prospective applicants is the following reports resulting from consultation on the Bill:

- the [*‘What We Heard Report’*](#), which summarises the key themes and insights from targeted consultation sessions.
- [*“Letting them have a say”: Children and Young People’s views on the proposed new Commission for Children and Young People*](#) outlines the views and ideas expressed by close to 700 children and young people on the new Commission.

The Government also published submissions received on a consultation Bill, available [here](#) (note that the final Bill which Parliament endorsed was quite different to the consultation version which the submissions commented on).

Current Arrangements

Commissioner for Children and Young People

The current Commissioner for Children and Young People upholds, protects and promotes the rights and wellbeing of children and young people in Tasmania.

This position will cease when the new Commission for Children and Young People commences. The new 2025 Act will repeal the *Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2016* which creates the current commissioner and sets out the current commissioner's functions and powers.

More information about the Office of the Independent Regulator and the current Commissioner for Children and Young People established under the *Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2016* is available at:

Office of the Independent Regulator

The Office of the Independent Regulator (OIR) oversees Tasmanian organisations (including sole traders) required to comply with the Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework.

www.oir.tas.gov.au

childcomm.tas.gov.au

Functions of the Child Advocate in the new Commission

As part of the Commission, the Child Advocate will have the following general functions:

- Individual advocacy for children and young people:
 - Advocate on behalf for individual children and young people, particularly in out-of-home care or youth justice or detention settings.
- Listening to and representing children and young people's views:
- Helping resolve issues and access support, ensuring that children and young people understand their rights and available options to resolve grievances:
- Provide complaints support and representation to children and young people including:
 - assisting children and young people to make complaints, or act on their behalf; and
 - Guide them through the process involving statutory complaint activities.
- Oversight of services and targeted enquiries:
 - Enquire into youth justice and out-of-home care services, and make recommendations.
 - Respond to concerns about how services are being delivered to a child.
- Promoting and upholding the right of children and young people:
 - Ensure that children and young people are treated fairly and safely, particularly in detention and care systems.
- Establishing support structures to help monitor conditions and improve systems:
 - Establishing and managing an independent visitor scheme to ensure that independent persons visit children and young people in a detention facility, out-of-home care and children and young people in other prescribed facilities.
 - Establishing an advisory group for out-of-home care.
- Participate in legal proceedings:
 - Apply to join tribunal proceedings (e.g. TASCAT) where the case involves a child or young person or is relevant to their role.

Other responsibilities under the Act

The Act ensures the new Commission's independence from Government and ensures power equivalence of the three Commissioners.

The Act states:

- The Commission and each Commissioner is not subject to the direction or control of the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, or any other Minister, in respect of the performance of a function, or exercise of a power, under the Act.
- No Commissioner, when performing a function, or exercising a power, as Commissioner, is subject to the direction or control of any other Commissioner or to the [State Service Act 2000](#) in respect of that function or power.

The Commission and each Commissioner must act independently, impartially and in the public interest when performing a function or exercising a power.

Commissioners must avoid duplication of work across the system and must liaise with other relevant statutory authorities, statutory officers and official bodies to facilitate the provision of support and assistance to children and young people.

Subject to any express limitations in the Act (such as that disallowing the Commissioner for Children and Young People from advocating for individuals), each Commissioner may perform the functions, and exercise the powers, of the Commission. Two, or all three, of the Commissioners can perform the same function or exercise the same power.

Key Accountabilities and Responsibilities

Key accountabilities and responsibilities of the role include:

- providing strategic leadership for policy and service delivery;
- developing risk management strategies and resolving complex issues;
- leading change management initiatives within the Commission;
- managing relationships with stakeholders, including Ministers and other government bodies;
- formulating and implementing strategies for organisational sustainability and service effectiveness;
- overseeing continuous improvement in service planning and performance;
- exercising delegations mandated by statutes and regulations;

- ensuring compliance with all policy and protocol requirements, including education and training mandates; and
- Exercising the statutory functions and powers under the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 2025* as part of the statutory Commission for Children and Young People, and other responsibilities under Tasmanian law, including but not limited to the child and youth safe standards in the *Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023*, including meeting the universal principle that the Commission provide an environment that ensures that the right to cultural safety of children who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander is respected.

Key skills and personal attributes

You will be a collaborative, strategic leader, with proven strategic leadership and management skills and relevant policy and advocacy expertise. You will foster creativity and innovation across the Commission, have proven ability to manage critical projects, and meet the highest contemporary work standards.

Above all, you will have a passion for championing the rights and needs of children and young people.

1. Demonstrated Technical Knowledge and Ability

The ability to effectively lead in a service delivery agency involved in the protection and advocacy of children.

Capabilities:

- High level of operational experience in leading in a service delivery and regulatory agency.
- Demonstrated capability in developing and influencing policy within a contemporary child protection and advocacy sector, including an understanding of how systems impact children.
- Excellent understanding of contemporary national and international trends in the child protection and advocacy sector.
- Demonstrated ability leading resilience and recovery in the child protection and advocacy sector.

2. Demonstrated Leadership Ability

The ability to effectively lead significant change and reform in a dynamic and demanding environment.

Capabilities:

- Experience generating and maintaining a shared strategic focus, using judgement, intelligence, and common sense to advocate for child-centred outcomes.
- High level ability to act as a change agent and inspire purpose and direction leading by example.
- Demonstrated organisational leadership to enable innovation in an environment of change.
- Proven ability to manage effective relationships and maintain strong self-discipline.
- The ability to demonstrate self, social and political awareness including through proactive action.

3. Strategic Analytical and Thinking Skills

High level strategic, conceptual, creative and analytical thinking skills.

Capabilities:

- Thinks strategically, conceptually and analytically at the highest level, using evidence and lived experience to inform outcomes.
- Develops innovative solutions within a complex political, social and multi-organisational environment.
- Astute judgement, sensitivity and awareness in identifying, managing and resolving stakeholder issues and concerns.

4. Strong Outcome Orientation

A positive record of and strong focus on achievements.

Capabilities:

- Commits to highly reliable and consistent standards of performance.
- Uses both personal and organisational performance measures.
- Understands the needs and aspirations children and young people and other relevant stakeholders.
- Recognises opportunities and brings them to realisation.
- Manages ambiguity by dealing effectively with uncertain situations and incomplete information.
- Achieves closure and delivery.

5. Influential Communication Skills

Well-developed communication skills.

Capabilities:

- Communicates clearly and can articulate children and young people's needs to decision-makers, using evidence and lived experience.
- Listens, understands and adapts to different audiences, in particular vulnerable children and young people, using trauma-sensitive and culturally safe language.
- Negotiates coherently and persuasively and is able to advocate for the rights of children and young people.

6. Productive Working Relationships

The ability to inspire confidence, engender enthusiasm in others and unify disparate groups to work to a common purpose.

Capabilities:

- Nurtures internal and external relationships and builds networks across government, non-government, communities, families and children.
- Creating safe spaces where children feel heard and respected.
- Facilitates co-operation, teams and high-level autonomy.
- Coaches, mentors and develops people.
- Applies contemporary management practice and principles such as workplace diversity and occupational health and safety.

7. Positive Personal Values

High levels of honesty, integrity and personal accountability.

Capabilities:

- Balances risk-taking, innovation and courage with personal accountability.
- Models professionalism, probity, and integrity.
- Accepts improvement as a key personal and organisational driver.
- Is adaptable, resilient and respectful.

- Demonstrates a commitment to personal learning and development.

Qualification for appointment

A person appointed to the position of Child Advocate should:

- Have relevant experience, knowledge or qualifications, in relation to children or young people, including, but not limited to, vulnerable children and vulnerable young people; and
- Have relevant knowledge of, or experience in, implementing procedures and approaches which have the primary purpose of avoiding, as far as possible, further harm or trauma to individuals; and
- Have relevant experience in advocacy or casework, complaint handling or investigations and policy development or systemic reviews.
- Hold the prescribed registration, and completed satisfactorily the prescribed checks, to ensure that the person is a suitable person to perform the functions and exercise the powers of the specific Commissioner – including a National Police Record Check and Registration to Work with Vulnerable People.

Basis of Appointment and Remuneration

The Child Advocate is appointed by the Governor. The successful applicant will be appointed on a contract for a period up to 5 years and can be reappointed for a further one term.

The salary range for the position is \$266,773 - \$306,623.

Other conditions of employment include:

- Employer superannuation contributions of 12% of salary;
- Ability to salary sacrifice additional superannuation contributions;
- Official and private use of a fully maintained motor vehicle with private number plates;
- Twenty working days annual recreation leave, and 20 working days personal (sick) leave per year of service; and
- Long service leave in accordance with the *Long Service Leave (State Employees) Act 1994*.

For Further Information contact:

Kristy Bourne
Secretary
Department of Justice
Secretary@justice.tas.gov.au
Tel: 03 6165 4943

Responses must contain a *curriculum vitae* and should contain the names of three (3) professional and confidential referees. All applicants must also complete and sign the probity statement provided at Attachment 1.

Responses should be marked “PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL” and sent to:

Kristy Bourne
Secretary
Department of Justice
GPO Box 825
Hobart Tasmania 7001

or via email to secretary@justice.tas.gov.au

Applications must be received by close of business on 23 August 2026

Please note that as part of the selection process there will be direct engagement with a recruitment panel comprising young people. Candidates who are invited to interview will be required to have a current Working With Vulnerable People Check.

Attachment 1 – Probity Statement (to be completed by applicant)

I declare that I have no business or personal interest, real or perceived, which might conflict with the interests of the Child Advocate, other than any required as a prerequisite for the office which might appear to raise a material potential conflict with my public duty as Child Advocate.

Signed _____ Date _____

Name (printed) _____

Address _____
