

Policy Officer
Sexual Assault Support Service (SASS)
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27 January 2015

To whom it may concern,

YNOT agrees that the issue of Children displaying Problem Sexual Behaviour (PSB) and/or Sexually Abusive Behaviour (SAB) is a significant issue in Tasmania and that that this options paper is long overdue, and congratulates the Sexual Assault Support Service (SASS) for developing the paper, and opening it up to review.

YNOT's primary concern associated with the issue of children and young people displaying SAB and PSB is that there is no comprehensive framework which guides, and empowers, the actions of responsive services. YNOT argues that until there is a strong legislative and policy framework, it is not possible for the issue within Tasmania to be addressed. YNOT appreciates and agrees with the concern SASS' displays over the absence of a strong legislative system that would enable and fund, a robust responsive service which can respond to, and preempt, SAB and PSB behaviours. Sections 2.2.6 and 3.1.2 clearly identify the gaps in Tasmania's legislation that limit the government and services ability to directly respond to SAB and PSB behaviour, and identify the need to develop and implement a comprehensive framework. YNOT is a strong supporter of these actions, and in our 2013-2014 Budget Submission to Treasury we made significant recommendations on the issue of problem sexualized behaviours in young people. We advocated for amendments to the *Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997* and the *Youth Justice Act 1997* to allow for the provision of therapeutic intervention and support for young people, the community, their families and other individuals who are, or have been, affected by PSBs, recommendations which align strongly with the interests of the SASS options paper.



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ynot is the peak body representing the voice of Tasmanian youth

Children and Young people who display SAB and PSB behaviours often come from low socio-economic backgrounds, and will often have troubled futures. YNOT believes that it is critical that there are programs and frameworks developed to better respond to SAB and PSB behaviours to limit young people falling through the gaps, being neglected by the system, and displaying problem and sexualized behaviour into adulthood. Section 3.3 of the options paper expresses SASS' concerns with the lack of funding to services and the age limitations places on current service provision. Currently, services are only able to respond to children aged up to 12, leaving a wide cohort of 12-17 year olds displaying PSB or SAB, unable to be treated. YNOT is very concerned that current services cannot offer assistance to young people who are displaying SAB and PSB behaviours and believes that this gap in services will result in young people disconnecting from school and society and becoming heavily involved in crime, criminality and consequently, the youth justice system. As such, YNOT strongly supports the recommendations associated with increased funding and the development of wider programs that SASS has discussed in the options paper.

Currently a large cohort is being neglected, there are no programs, and limited accredited practitioners, in Tasmania adequately responding to sexualized behaviour in young people, YNOT agrees with SASS in that programs need to be developed, or extended, to better cater to their needs and to prevent continued sexualized behaviour.

YNOT argues that any programs designed to target young people who display SAB or PSB need to be both comprehensive and tailored to the needs and wants of young people. Section 3.4 of the options paper details the elements on which Queensland has built their programs; YNOT believes that these would provide a good foundation on which a Tasmanian program could be developed. YNOT supports the assertion that any program developed in not based on a model used by adult sexual offenders and is instead designed specifically around the needs of young people and with an outcomes focus. YNOT supports SASS' argument that any program for Tasmania's young people should draw upon, and be inspired by, programs that have demonstrated results in Australia and overseas.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joanna Siejka". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joanna Siejka
Chief Executive Officer
Youth Network of Tasmania