



Mr B Paterson  
Department of Justice  
Office of the Secretary  
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HOBART TAS 7001  
via email: [haveyoursay@justice.tas.gov.au](mailto:haveyoursay@justice.tas.gov.au)

Dear Mr Paterson

**Re: Commission of Inquiry (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2026**

COTA Tasmania welcomes the opportunity to comment on the consultation draft of the *Commission of Inquiry (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2026*.

COTA Tasmania is the peak body for older Tasmanians. Our interest in the Bill is primarily from the perspective of older people who may be victim-survivors of crime, abuse, family violence, institutional harm or other forms of mistreatment, and who may face additional barriers in accessing justice, review mechanisms and government systems.

COTA Tasmania supports the Bill's broad intent to strengthen safeguarding, accountability, information sharing, and access to review.

We particularly welcome the proposed amendments to the *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 1976* and the *Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2020* to provide a more accessible review pathway for decisions of the Victims of Crime Commissioner.

While the Commission of Inquiry was necessarily focused on child sexual abuse in institutional settings, the Bill's extension of review rights to all victims who make applications for assistance is important and appropriate.

Older Tasmanians may be victims of a wide range of harms, including elder abuse, family violence, sexual abuse, financial abuse, coercive control, neglect and institutional abuse. For many older people, Supreme Court judicial review is not a practical, affordable or accessible remedy. A merits review pathway through TASCAT has the potential to provide a fairer and more usable mechanism.

However, the effectiveness of this reform will depend on practical accessibility, not simply the formal existence of a right of review.

COTA Tasmania recommends that implementation of the new review pathway include:

1. Plain-English public information explaining review rights, timeframes, eligibility, fees, possible outcomes and how to apply.
2. Non-digital access options, including telephone and paper-based pathways, recognising that many older Tasmanians experience digital exclusion or low digital confidence.

3. Support for applicants, particularly people experiencing trauma, disability, cognitive impairment, social isolation, low literacy, limited mobility or limited financial resources.
4. Appropriate fee waiver or fee reduction arrangements, so that cost does not become a barrier to review.
5. Trauma-informed and age-inclusive tribunal processes, including flexibility around hearings, accessibility adjustments and support persons.
6. Clear referral pathways to legal assistance, advocacy, counselling and victim support services.

COTA Tasmania also supports, in principle, the Bill's proposed amendments to improve information sharing where this is necessary to protect children and young people from harm.

However, public confidence in safeguarding systems depends on information being shared appropriately, proportionately, and with clear safeguards. We recommend that implementation be accompanied by guidance that explains thresholds for disclosure, record keeping, privacy protections, procedural fairness and accountability.

More broadly, COTA Tasmania supports the proposed strengthening of State Service conduct and integrity obligations, including the emphasis on an apolitical, efficient, effective, impartial, ethical, and professional State Service.

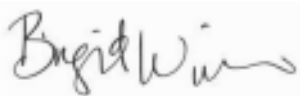
These principles are important not only in child safety contexts, but also in the delivery of services to older Tasmanians and other people who rely on public systems.

COTA Tasmania recommends that the Government monitor and publicly report on implementation of the Victims of Crime Assistance review pathway, including whether older people and other potentially vulnerable applicants are able to understand, access and use the review process effectively.

In summary, COTA Tasmania supports the Bill and particularly welcomes the creation of a more accessible review mechanism for victims of crime.

We encourage the Government to ensure that implementation is practical, trauma-informed, age-inclusive and accessible to people who may otherwise struggle to navigate legal and administrative systems.

Yours sincerely



**Brigid Wilkinson**

Chief Executive Officer

18<sup>th</sup> May 2026