

# 2022-23 ANNUAL REPORT

NORTH AND NORTH WEST TASMANIA  
SEXUAL ASSAULT SUPPORT SERVICES INC



**Laurel House**  
SEXUAL ASSAULT SUPPORT  
COUNSELLING • EDUCATION • ADVOCACY • CHANGE

## Our Vision

Everyone acts to prevent and respond to sexual violence.

## Our Mission

Drive transformational change through counselling, education, and advocacy.

## Our Values



Curious



Courageous



Inclusive



Collaborative



Hopeful

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laurelhouse.org.au

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## Equip communities to act

In the past year, Nita Joy and Elisha Deegan joined, enhancing our community and workforce capacity. Special thanks to Kim and Rebecca for developing educational resources addressing sexual violence in people with disabilities.

Our community education, including collaborations with Women's Legal Service Tasmania, reached organisations and schools across northern Tasmania. Statewide disability training continued, and our increased participation in youth events has empowered young people. Ahead, projects like primary prevention programs in playgroups and Girl Guides are set to materialise.

Additionally, in policy and advocacy, our CEO's involvement in the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse Advisory Committee and the National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence Board significantly advanced our ability to champion the experiences of Tasmanian survivors and influence policy.

## Deliver inclusive and accessible support

Our team remains dedicated to enhancing their knowledge and skills, ensuring a nuanced understanding of intersectionality informs our practices to meet the diverse needs of our communities.

All Laurel House members completed Cultural Competency training with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, and we actively support the Aboriginal Community by working on January 26th. Staff also underwent LGBTQIA+ Inclusion Training with Working It Out, and Tasmanian Government funding will enable further strengthening of our LGBTQIA+ inclusive practices over the next financial year. In commitment to regional outreach, we expanded visits to King Island and the East and West Coasts.

The counselling team received extensive training on therapeutic support for children and young people involved in harmful sexual behavior, launching the PAST program in collaboration with Sexual Assault Support Services (SASS) since January.

# Our Stats



**1031**  
Clients

## Children



**322**



**69**



**8**

## Adults



**549**



**73**



**10**

**3943**

Appointments



**8774**

Direct client hours



**294**

After Hours Calls



**53**

Forensic Exams

## Amplify the diverse voices of victim-survivors

We are dedicated to actively seeking, amplifying, and championing the voices, perspectives, and experiences of victim-survivors. This year, we facilitated meaningful engagements including consultations for media guide development by the University of Canberra and increased involvement of victim-survivors in media opportunities.

Proudly, we inaugurated our Youth Advisory Council, LEAPY, and welcomed Youth Engagement Lead Tess Moodie, a seasoned survivor-advocate, to support its members. Comprising seven remarkable young individuals aged 12 to 17, each with personal experiences of child sexual abuse, LEAPY has convened twice in 2023 and is already attracting interest from external stakeholders, including the Australian Human Rights Commission, eager to leverage their expertise.

## Partner to create impact

This year has seen considerable emphasis on the partnership with Tasmania Police and other stakeholder groups including Child Safety, the Advice and Referral Line and the Family Violence Counselling and Support Services to establish the Arch multidisciplinary centres. Laurel House has brought critical insights from our experience in delivering survivor centred, trauma-specialist support to the design of the physical environment, operational guidelines and monitoring and evaluation framework. The Northern Arch is scheduled to open in August and we are await a commitment from the Government to expand Arch to the North West.

Laurel House continues to be a highly sought after partner and we are thankful to all the organisations and individuals that strengthen our work though mutually beneficial partnerships which see sharing of spaces, information and expertise, and the codevelopment of programs and advocacy activities.

## Build a valued organisation

This year, we've strategically advanced Laurel House's community presence by actively participating in interagency meetings and expos, ensuring broader awareness among organisations and professionals of our contemporary profile and services. We relocated our Launceston office to a signed, prominent CBD location. Concurrently, we are strengthening our social media capabilities, with plans for further development in the upcoming financial year. Engaging proactively with the media, we're amplifying the impactful work of our team.

Our commitment to diversity is reflected in our workforce recruitment efforts, coupled with ongoing investments in training, development, and succession planning for both staff and board members. In dedicated pursuit of operational excellence, we conducted a comprehensive financial function review, implementing a range of enhancements that have significantly bolstered our financial capabilities.

# About Laurel House

The North and North West Tasmanian Sexual Assault Support Service, known as Laurel House, is a not-for-profit, community-based specialist sexual assault support service. We provide sexual assault trauma counselling, support, education and training. We provide an inclusive, holistic service that addresses sexual inequalities and abuses by advocating for individual and community change.

We provide a range of confidential Tasmanian Government funded services that are free to victim-survivors throughout North and North West Tasmania. We offer face-to-face, online and phone counselling to adults, young people and children, and their family and supporters from our offices in Launceston, Burnie and Devonport and through outreach in rural locations.

Laurel House runs a 24-hour support service and offers support through the forensic, medical and legal processes. Laurel House also offers community, workforce and school-based education, professional training and debriefing.

Laurel House is also funded by the Australian Government's Department of Social Services to develop resources and deliver training that improves the capacity of mainstream health providers and disability services to respond to sexual assault in people with disabilities.

## Acknowledgement of Country

Laurel House acknowledges and pays respect to the palawa people, who are the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and waters of lutrawita. We pay respects to Elders past and present. We particularly acknowledge the resistance and resilience of those Aboriginal people who have experienced sexual violence. Your stories and your strength of culture inspires us to fight for equality and a positive future without sexual harm.



## Our Board

Jess Greene, Chair	Andrea Porte, Deputy Chair
Nicole Crook, Treasurer	Victoria Headlam, Secretary
Elise Frost	Charlotte Brown
Jane Fleming	Kelsey Paske (from Nov 22)
Shannon Lovell-Greene	Eliza Jones (until Nov 22)

## Our Leadership Team

Kathryn Fordyce, Chief Executive Officer  
Suzanne Hart, Counselling Lead - North  
Sharon King, Counselling Lead - NW  
Nita Joy, Community Education and Advocacy Manager (from Apr 23)  
Claire Tonks, Operations Manager (from Apr 23)  
Kim Atkins, Education Manager (until Dec 22)

## Our Thanks



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North West: 6431 8711

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Tasmanian  
Government



Australian Government

Our core services are supported by the Crown through the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Our disability project is funded by the Australian Government's Department of Social Services.