

Investing in Child Safety

The Commission of Inquiry found children in state care are at risk of abuse, with child safety services critically understaffed. The Child Safety Service needs urgent investment to keep children safe, and to support staff working in highly stressful conditions.

Investing in Child Safety Officers

Child Safety Services is plagued with staffing shortages.^{1,2} The shortages devastate staff morale,³ and increase the time it takes to begin and finalise child safety investigations.⁴ Under these conditions, notifications of abuse go unaddressed and children’s safety cannot be guaranteed.⁵

The Commission of Inquiry recommended an increase in staffing for the Child Safety Service.⁶ Urgent investment is needed to bring staffing numbers up to safe levels.

We will fight to employ 240 new child safety officers by 2030 – 40 extra each year.

Dedicated Case Workers

Children at risk were managed by a single case worker. This changed in 2022 to being managed by a rotating team - designed to address the fact that many children had no case worker at all.⁷

The change meant children don’t have continuity of care, foster families can’t contact case workers, miscommunications increase risk, and staff turnover increased. It also hasn’t reduced the number of children without a case worker.⁸

We will push to abandon the team model, and return to single dedicated case workers for each child in care.

¹ Sato, K, [Child safety workers strike over ‘desperate’ staff shortages](#), Mercury Tasmania, 2022.
² Abey, D, [HACSU slams Government over Child Safety Officers as staff walk off job in Launceston and Hobart](#), Mercury Tasmania, 2023.
³
⁴ Holmes, A and Beavis, L, [Fears for at-risk kids as Tasmanian child protection investigation times blow out](#), ABC News, 2023.

Recruitment and Retention

We have a plan to improve recruitment and retention across key public service roles, including Child Safety Services.

Our plan includes HECS payments, faster access to long-service leave, cadetships, vicarious trauma leave, and government-funded housing.

[Read our recruitment and retention plan here.](#)

We will also fight to set a maximum case-load for child safety workers, and provide a \$10,000 bonus to workers each year until average caseloads meet safe levels in recognition of the difficult working conditions.

We will also push to bring out of home care policies and guidelines up to date, and make sure they stay current.

Budget (\$m)

(\$m)	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Child Safety officers	4.40	9.06	13.98	19.20	46.64
Policy Updates	0.31	0.32	0.33	0.34	1.30
Gratitude Payments	1.00	-	-	-	1.00
Total	5.71	9.38	14.31	19.54	48.94

FIND ALL OUR POLICIES: tasgreensmps.org/policy/

⁵ Lohberger, L, [Tasmanian child safety head ‘not confident’ children in out-of-home care are safe from abuse](#), ABC, 2022.
⁶ Commission of Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, [Final Report Volume 4: Chapter 9 – The way forward: Children in out of home care](#), 2023.
⁷ Commissioner for Children and Young People, [A Place at the Table](#), Out of Home Care Monitoring Program, 2023.
⁸ Ibid.