



21 August 2014

The Hon Jacqui Petrusma MP
Minister for Human Services, Minister for Women
Level 8, 10 Murray St
HOBART TAS 7000

Tasmanian Branch
Room 15, Level 1, McDougall Building
9 Ellerslie Rd Battery Point TAS 7004
PO Box 20
South Hobart TAS 7004
T 03 6224 5833
F 03 6224 5833
E aaswtas@asw.asn.au
www.aasw.asn.au

Dear Minister

RE: The position of Commissioner for Children in Tasmania

The Tasmanian Branch of the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) is the professional organisation supporting social workers in Tasmania. I write to express concern about the continuing vacancy in the position of Commissioner for Children in Tasmania.

AASW contributed in July 2013 to the consultation process concerning advocacy for children and the role of the Commissioner for Children that was undertaken by Professor Maria Harries.

We believe that it is the role of government to send a very clear message that the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is of the utmost importance. Having a Commissioner for Children is a key part of demonstrating to the Tasmanian community that we care for the wellbeing of our children.

I understand that the Liberal government has committed to supporting the role of the Commissioner for Children and that there is a plan to extend the tenure of the Commissioner for Children from 3 to 5 years. AASW supports this change, however, as the acting Commissioner's term ceased in December 2013, we believe that any further delay means that the needs of children and families in Tasmania are under-served.

We are look forward to your announcements about the status of the position of Commissioner for Children and to be advised as to the changes in the focus of the role.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Allyson Smith'.

Allyson Smith
President
AASW Tasmanian Branch