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23<sup>rd</sup> of March, 2026

To The Public Work Committee,

The newly proposed Tasmanian Youth Justice Facility is the evidence of poor planning, no regard for the surrounding area and its people, as well as an overall lack of care for troubled Tasmanian youths.

Currently, the planned location for the new detention facility borders the Tasmanian Botanic's Australian Medicinal Cannabis Plantation, the LARK Distillery, and three separate gun clubs, which share the same location. Having these buildings surrounding the facility does not provide the youth with an environment fit for rehabilitation.

The marijuana plantation has frequent burn-offs, creating a potent and long-lasting scent of the drug in the air, affecting all surrounding areas. Youths who have a history of substance abuse or have seen others use the drug in a non-medicinal capacity would be severely disadvantaged and put at risk with the odour present. It is my understanding that representatives of the facility have stated their intentions to mitigate the smell. However, this is an unachievable promise, even with the planned alternative disposal techniques. The public has not been informed of said alternative disposal technique, nor when it will be implemented, which leaves reasonable doubt of whether it will even be implemented at all.

The Tasmanian Pistol & Rifle Club runs alongside the Hobart Clay Target Club and the Hobart Gun Club at 48 Shene Road, Mangalore. With the current chosen location for the new Justice Facility being 466 Brighton Road, Pontville, it leaves a very minimal distance between the shooting range and the facility. Troubled youths housed at the facility, alongside staff members, would be subjected to heavy, audible gunshots at a minimum of three days a week, potentially causing distress and hindering rehabilitation along with therapeutic treatment.

Pontville is a small, community-based and heritage-rich town which is not at all fit for the modern and industrial buildings such as the new Justice Facility. The artist's impression showcases a brick building with timber-looking aspects and angled roofs, which does not feel synchronous with the visuals of authentic buildings in the area. Having the facility so close to residential buildings will only succeed in creating an air of anxiety among local residents and deter the public from staying in the area. Brighton Road and Rifle Range Road have not approved the necessary road expansions required to withstand the additional traffic that the Justice Centre will bring into the neighbourhood.

While the new facility strives for reform and therapeutic intervention, the basis of the building is still a detention centre, regardless of detention being a last resort. Community-based rehabilitation has consistently shown better results than any other type of rehabilitation facility.

The proposed facility's predecessor, the Ashley Youth Detention Centre, had an immeasurable number of allegations against it, consisting of historical abuse, child sexual abuse, destruction of evidence and corrupt staff members. In 2022, an inquiry was launched and over two-hundred former detainees came forward with allegations of sexual abuse. Another report showed there were fifty-five sex offenders working at the facility – with one member staff accused of sexually assaulting a minimum of eleven children over the course of three decades. There are also multiple reports of child-on-child sexual assault. The new facility is planned to have individual living areas for each youth, but that will not stop the assault. The public have not been informed of whether staff members from Ashley will carry over to the new facility, re-exposing youth to the heinous acts that the people meant to care for them are committing, with no repercussions. Even if new staff members are employed, there is no guarantee that they will truly care for young people and their role in the rehabilitation efforts.

Security was another prominent issue present at the previous youth centre, and while there are plans to have motion-activated floodlights on perimeter fences and constantly lit entryways, this does not prevent youth from escaping. If youth do manage to leave the new facility, the shooting range and the LARK Distillery are just north of the building site, and private residential buildings are no more than a short run south. The distillery has whiskey and other components of alcohol on site, allowing potential escapees easy access to judgement impairing substances. Some detainees may have experienced troubles surrounding the consumption of alcohol. The residential buildings give youth hiding places, and equipment to make a permeant escape away from the facility.

The new Youth Justice Facility is just an empty promise – a different building, with the same outdated, harmful practices happening behind new walls. This is not rehabilitation.

I sincerely hope you take this letter, alongside all others opposing the facility, into consideration before moving ahead.

Regards,  
Grace Fisher

