From:	Regina Weiss
To:	HA GAB Police inquiry
Subject:	Re: GAB Police Inquiry - Invitation to appear at a public hearing on 1 October 2026 - Regina Weiss
Date:	Thursday, 17 September 2026 3:37:18 PM
Attachments:	image002.png Interim progress report - Independent Review.PDF FINAL_Weiss-Review-Report_June2024.pdf

Dear Ms Haddad,

Dear Committee,

Thank you for the invitation to appear at the public hearing on 1 October 2026, which I must respectfully decline.

As a barrister, I am bound by the *Legal Profession (Barristers) Rule 2016* and the *Legal Profession Uniform Conduct (Barristers) Rules 2015* and it is crucial that I retain my independence as counsel and obligations to my client(s) *vis-a-vis* confidentiality. It would be wholly improper for a barrister to speak openly about any matter they have been briefed in, even if that brief has finished (see Rule 114). These are obligations which attach to all matters I have been briefed in, including the Review into Paul Reynolds.

As a member of the legal profession, it is most important that counsel strictly adhere to their obligations so that confidence in the profession is not lost. Speaking openly about a brief would breach those obligations.

I do **attach** both the Interim and the Final Reports which I authored relating to my brief to Review circumstances surrounding former police officer Paul Reynolds. These were publicly released by my client the Police Commissioner Adams in January 2024 and June 2024 respectively.

The Interim and Final Reports cover my findings based on the extensive evidence collected throughout the Review.

All recommendation were adopted shortly after the Final Report was published, and progress as to their implementation is being monitored by the Implementation Monitor.

Kind regards,

Regina

Regina Weiss

Barrister

[redacted]

https://tasbar.com.au/barrister/regina-weiss/

Svenson Barristers List (Vic)

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Weiss **Independent Review** into Paul Reynolds

Interim report and progress update

January 2024

Where to go if you need support

If anything in this report causes distress or triggers the need for support, the following services are available to you:

- **Lifeline** 13 11 14 or lifelinetasmania.org.au
- **Tasmanian Lifeline** 1800 98 44 34
- **State-wide Sexual Assault Support Line**
  (Sexual Assault Support Service and Laurel House)
  1800 697 877
- **Relationships Australia Tasmania** 1300 364 277
- **Family Violence Response and Referral Line** 24/7 1800 633 937.
- **In an emergency, always call 000.**

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For current serving members of Tasmania Police and their families, Wellbeing Support is available at any time by calling 6173 2873 or email wellbeing@dpfem.tas.gov.au

We respectfully acknowledge the Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the traditional owners of the land upon which we work and pay our respect to Elders past and present. We recognise the Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the continuing custodians of the rich cultural heritage of *lutruwita* / Tasmania.

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Foreword



Regina Weiss

—

Independent Reviewer

On 13 September 2018, former Tasmania Police officer Paul Reynolds died by suicide on Tasmania's north-west coast. On 1 September 2023, a Coroner's report was publicly released, finding that one of the most likely factors contributing to his death were allegations of criminal conduct on the part of Paul Reynolds in relation to children which had emerged and were being investigated.[1]

Subsequent to the Coronial findings and following recommendations made by the *Commission of Inquiry into Tasmanian Government Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings* (COI), I was briefed to conduct an Independent Review into Paul Reynolds (Independent Review).

Although the Terms of Reference do not seek an interim report, I have sought and obtained the agreement of the Tasmania Police Commissioner Donna Adams to provide her with an update on the progress of the Independent Review.

I do not presently see the need to seek any amendment to the Terms of Reference despite the offer to do so by the Commissioner.

In the two months since the Independent Review commenced private listening sessions, the level of uptake by participants who have voluntarily shared experiences and spoken their truth has been considerable. The courage and resilience of those participants, and their trust in the independence of the review process, are key to ensuring that positive change is possible.

To date, victim-survivors of Paul Reynolds and others, their families, observers, bystanders, former and serving police officers have stepped forward and shared their lived experiences – some incredibly painful – openly, candidly and without hesitation. For those forthright contributions I am grateful. I thank the intermediaries who have assisted me in building trust with victim-survivors, and the policing community, who have allowed me to spend time in their world for the purposes of this review.

It was clear from the outset of this Independent Review that Paul Reynolds' position as a police officer coupled with his involvement in sport through coaching and in administrative roles provided him with an ideal platform to groom and sexually abuse young males. This is not a new concept, with grooming and sexual abuse of young persons in sport reported globally and in Australia in recent years. To that end, I acknowledge the support I continue to receive from Basketball Tasmania, the AFL and the CEO of Sport Integrity Australia as the Independent Review progresses.

Finally, I thank Commissioner Adams and her team for the ongoing support she has provided me to date, all the while respecting my independence, and the invaluable assistance of solicitor Ms Demi Peters.

I encourage any person with information about Paul Reynolds to come forward and share their experiences as the review continues by contacting the confidential email address submissions@weissindependentreview.tas.gov.au.

Anyone who wishes to be heard, will be heard.

1 Findings, recommendations and comment of Magistrate Simon Cooper, published 1 September 2023, at [228] available at https://www.magistratescourt.tas.gov.au/about_us/coroners/coronial-findings-2022.

Background

On 6 September 2018, Tasmania Police Professional Standards commenced an investigation into allegations of grooming and sexual abuse of teenage boys by then-Senior Seargent Paul Reynolds. Before the investigation could be completed, Paul Reynolds took his own life, on 13 September 2018.

The findings, recommendations and comment of Magistrate Simon Cooper, published 1 September 2023 (coronial report) confirmed that those allegations of criminal conduct were a likely contributing factor to Paul Reynolds' suicide.

The Professional Standards investigation was closed shortly after Paul Reynolds' death and in 2021, Tasmania Police offered evidence in its possession relating to Paul Reynolds to the COI as a case study. The COI made findings relevant to their review of the material and witness statements provided.

The COI recommended (Recommendation 16.7) that Tasmania Police should:

a. *establish a clear, publicly accessible process for reporting and responding to allegations of child sexual abuse against a member of Tasmania Police, including the ability to report to an entity independent of police such as the Integrity Commission*

b. *expand the domestic violence review panel to cover child sexual abuse and ensure independence in investigations when a member is alleged to have been involved in child sexual abuse*.

On 6 October 2023, the Tasmania Police Commissioner announced that an Independent Review into Paul Reynolds was to be conducted. The objectives of the Independent Review can be found in its Terms of Reference:

- To assess the actions of Paul Reynolds whilst a serving police officer to determine if there has been criminal misconduct in his handling of matters reported to him or investigated by him during the course of his career.
- To enable victim-survivors or members of the community to report concerns regarding the behaviour of Paul Reynolds.
- To identify whether Paul Reynolds used his position as a police officer to groom young people and commit child sexual abuse.
- To provide appropriate support to any victim-survivor that chooses to come forward.
- To identify if there has been any misconduct by police officers involved in the investigation of any allegations against Paul Reynolds.
- To identify organisational learnings.

This interim report outlines the progress of the Independent Review and provides a brief overview of emerging broad themes and commonalities relevant to the scope of the Independent Review. The interim report will not provide intricate detail of the experiences and evidence of participants. These will appear in the final report and will be de-identified.

Methodology

The findings and recommendations for the final report will be based on information and evidence from various and wide-ranging sources. This material is in the process of being gathered, reviewed and analysed.

The Independent Review has received and continues to receive written submissions and engage in private sessions with participants. The review and analysis of phone data, electronic files, Tasmania Police holdings, reports, hard copy files and archived material is ongoing and will continue for some months due to its voluminous nature and the extensive period of time it covers.

The Independent Review is simultaneously undertaking research and conducting comparative analyses to assist in forming the basis for recommendations in the final report. This includes analysis of national and international law enforcement agencies' processes and procedures aimed at preventing, reporting and investigating grooming and sexual abuse with a view to identifying best practice.

All interactions by the Independent Review with participants are approached in a trauma-informed manner, understanding that victim-survivors, observers and by-standers alike continue to be affected by Paul Reynolds' conduct, some many years on.

Scope

Based on evidence gathered to date, the timespan of grooming and/or sexual abuse stems over a 30 year period from 1988 to 2018 and geographically extends from the west through the north-west and north of Tasmania, where Paul Reynolds served the bulk of his postings. As evidence continues to be collected, that timespan and geographical scope may widen.

Confidentiality

As part of the informed consent process, anyone contributing to or participating in the Independent Review is advised that the information they provide will remain confidential, save for circumstances where there is a legal obligation to on-disclose information. For example, where there is a mandatory reporting requirement for suspected child abuse, or a concern about the immediate safety or risk of harm to a person. To date, one relevant disclosure has been made to Tasmania Police.

Participation and engagement

A call for submissions was opened on 12 October 2023, initially until 30 November 2023. The period was then extended at the request of the Independent Reviewer and agreement of the Police Commissioner until 31 December 2023. Written submissions and requests for private sessions came through the submissions@weissindependentreview.tas.gov.au inbox.

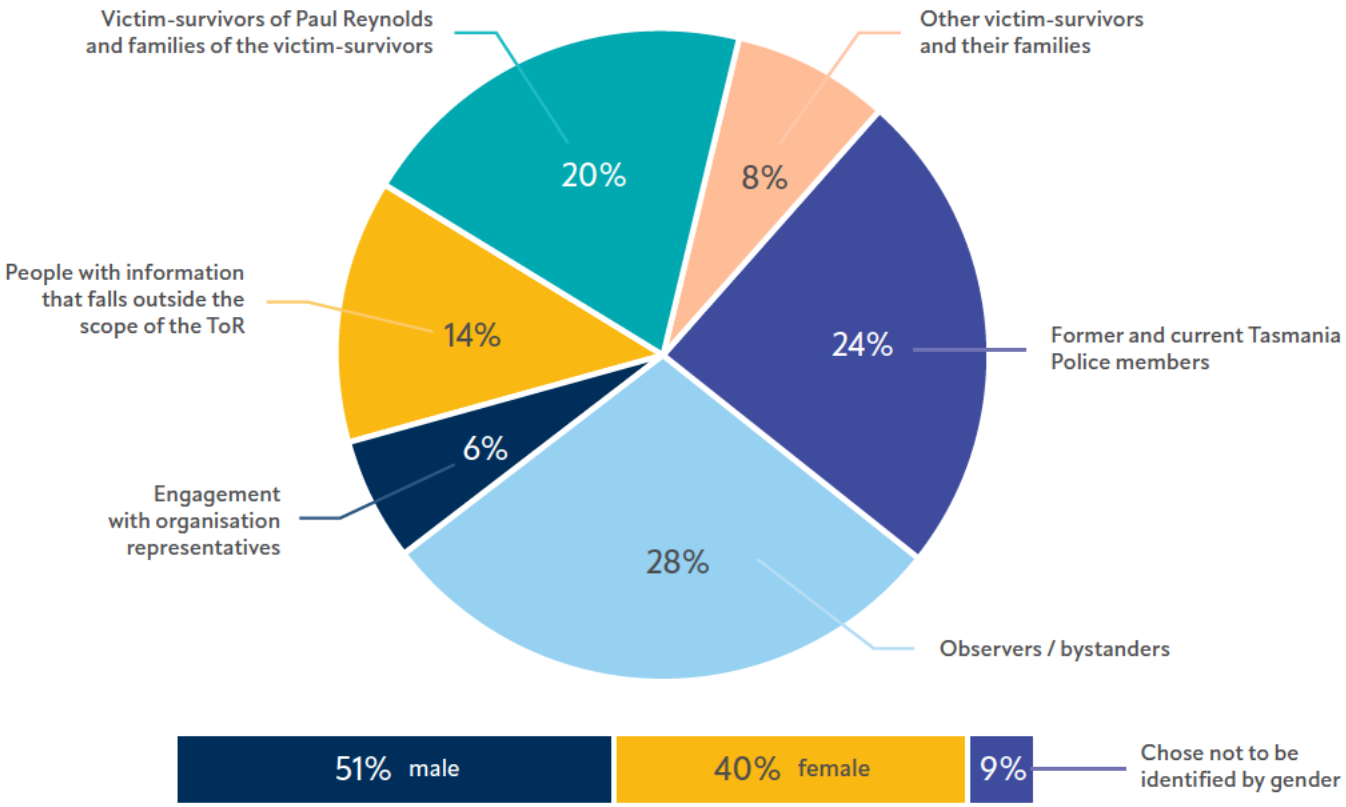
This email address remains active and private sessions can still be facilitated.

Some participants have chosen to participate by providing written submissions only while others have provided written submissions and taken part in follow-up private sessions. Others have preferred to participate in private sessions only.

The Independent Reviewer has also contacted and engaged with sporting and other organisations who supported progress of the review.

The final report will include full demographic data and non-identifying information about participants, noting that private sessions and interactions with participants will continue in the months following this interim report.

FIGURE 1: Participant demographic data (to date)



Private sessions

At the date of this interim report, in-person private sessions have been conducted in Hobart, Launceston, Devonport, Deloraine and Burnie. More in-person private sessions are scheduled in those locations and others in the coming months. Private sessions are conducted in a semi-structured format wherein participants are encouraged to share their lived experiences, observations and insights about learnings, improvements, strengths and failings of systems and processes.

In person face-to-face sessions are the preferred and predominant way participants have chosen to share their lived experiences, observations and insights. They are conducted in a safe, confidential environment and are wholly voluntary. Participants are informed at the commencement of the session they are free to leave at any time and are not compelled to answer questions, noting that a trauma-informed approach is to provide choice and control to a victim-survivor when recounting traumatic events.

Participants are also informed that conversations and any notes relating to them are and will remain confidential unless they provide consent to on-disclose information.

A consent form is signed by participants at the commencement of private sessions, which details the voluntary and confidential nature of their participation.

In a small number of cases, private sessions have been conducted by video-link or telephone due to participant preference or where the participant has been located interstate.

Support

Victim-survivors are offered access to trauma counselling and support services, which are listed on the inside cover of this interim report.

Victim-survivors are at different stages of trauma and many continue to suffer from its effects, as can their families and bystanders. The Independent Review is cognisant that some victim-survivors may choose not to participate directly in the review process but may nevertheless be affected by its publicity.

Anyone who needs support is urged to utilise the free counselling services.

Former and serving police officers are able to access additional free confidential support and counselling services through the Department of Police Fire and Emergency Management Services wellbeing support program – wellbeing@dpfem.tas.gov.au or (03) 6173 2188.

Next steps

Private sessions are scheduled for the end of January with further sessions planned from February to April in the north-west, north and south of Tasmania in addition to videolink sessions with persons located interstate. Participants will be persons who have made contact either independently or through intermediaries and persons approached by the Independent Reviewer.

The future participants will include victim-survivors and observers, former and currently serving police officers, representatives of law enforcement organisations and other relevant organisations.

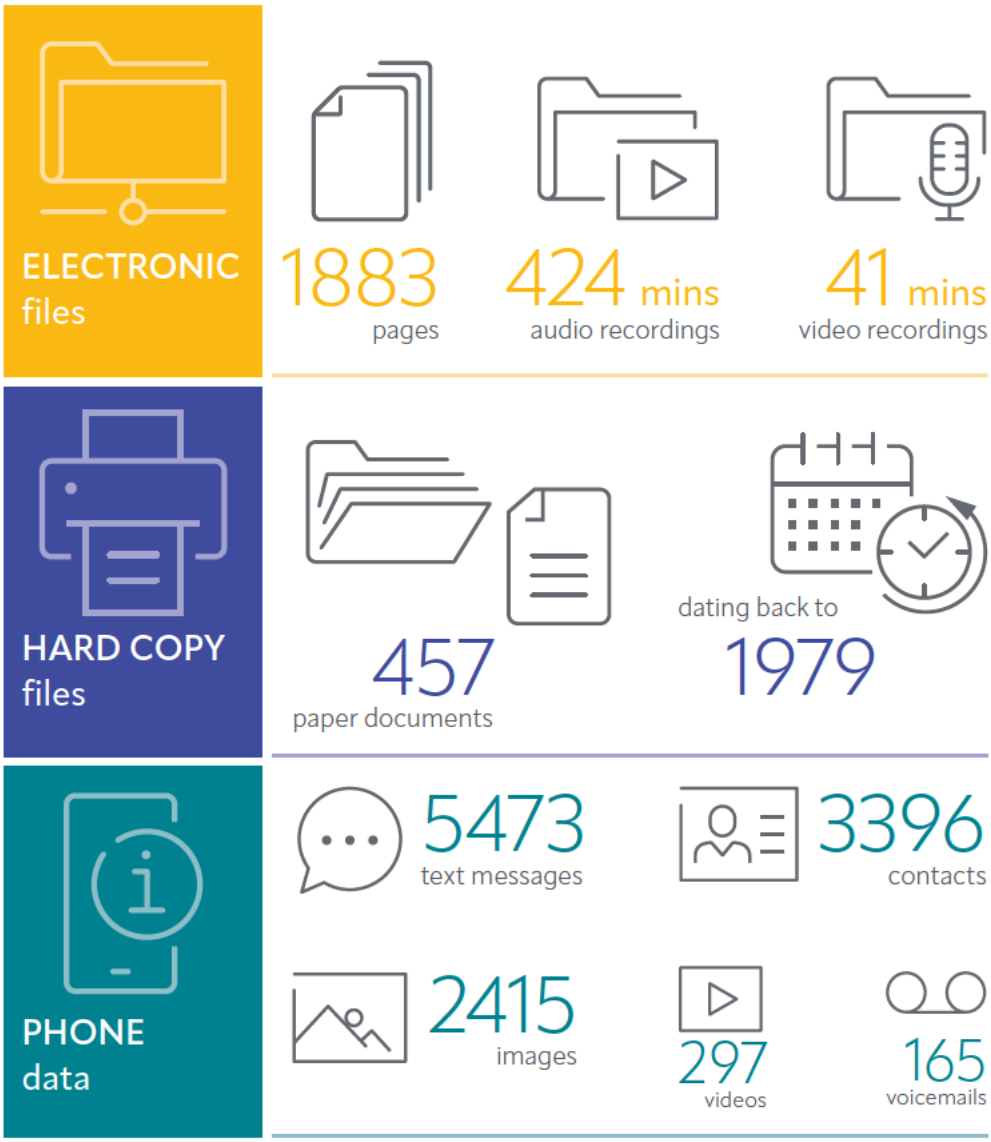
Documentary and other material

Tasmania Police shared relevant material in its possession within the first weeks of the Independent Review commencing which is currently being considered and analysed in the context of the Terms of Reference.

A comprehensive breakdown categorising the types of documentary and data material considered by the Independent Review will be included in the final report.

Information disclosed to date includes the following:

FIGURE 2: Types of documents and data collected for the purpose of this review



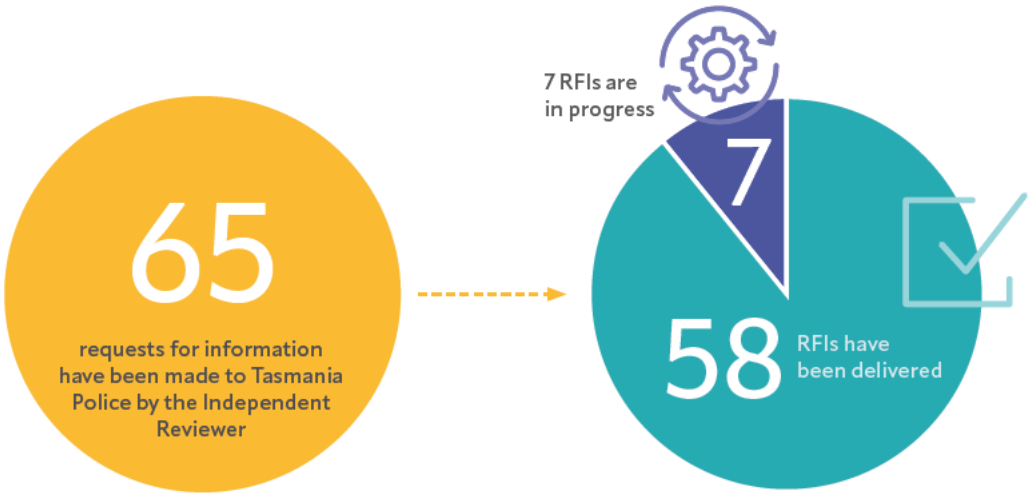
Referrals

Despite the Independent Review centring around Paul Reynolds, people with information about grooming and/or sexual abuse related to other Tasmanian Police officers have also participated in private sessions. In that context, three referrals have been made to Tasmania Police to date (relating to two retired police officers and one deceased officer). Another referral was made in relation to a person who is not a police officer.

Requests for information

As detailed above, a vast amount of material has already been disclosed for consideration of the Independent Review. In addition to that disclosure, further requests for information (RFI) have been made of Tasmania Police in the form of police holdings, files and information. This is not unusual in a review of this kind, because the relevance of certain material only becomes apparent as a review advances. For example, requests for reports, disclosures or communications have been sought based on information provided to the Independent Review by participants in private sessions. Other information has been sought based on leads or 'springboard' evidence.

FIGURE 3: **Reviewer requests to Tasmania Police for information**



Responses to RFIs by Tasmania Police have been immediate, or delivered as soon as is practicable, noting that some information requested stems back over more than three decades. No request for information has been refused or deferred.

Initial observations – emerging themes

The evidence gathering stage of the Independent Review is approximately mid-way, with much work still to be done. Despite this, it has become apparent even at this juncture that Paul Reynolds groomed his victims, their parents and the small communities they lived in.

He was a once-respected police officer within the community, coached football, umpired basketball and at the time of his suicide, was the North Tasmanian Football Association President. He was generally perceived to be a *"larger than life"* personality and well known to many. One victim-survivor described Paul Reynolds as *"just the greatest groomer. He was so charismatic everyone wanted to be around him."*

Independent complaints mechanism

Participants have told the Independent Review that it was this public perception of Paul Reynolds that made it near impossible to speak out about the grooming and sexual abuse they had been subjected to as teenage boys. *"Who would believe me?"* was the view of one victim-survivor from over 30 years ago, whereas another historical victim-survivor said *"I wouldn't even have known who I could report to. Who polices the police?"*

> *" I wouldn't even have known who I could report to. Who polices the police? "*

This contributed significantly to Paul Reynolds' ability to engage in inappropriate and entirely unacceptable conduct towards teenage boys and for it to go largely unreported for many years.

It is important to note that Tasmania Police has taken extensive steps to remedy the reporting gap that existed historically and that the pathways for confidential and safe reporting today are very different to those in 1988. This is evident from the insights of former and serving police officers participants.

Despite the complaints handling processes having evolved significantly in recent years, particularly in light of the COI findings and recommendations, the Independent Review will continue to examine how these systems can be strengthened. Specifically, participants have stressed, in the context of grooming and sexual abuse, the need for the actual and perceived independence of the complaints handling processes and protections for any person who wishes to report including members of the public.

Power imbalance

Participants have spoken of the power imbalance felt because Paul Reynolds was a police officer, but also due to his position in sport. Private sessions have revealed that in the 1980's, Paul Reynolds used his position as a basketball umpire on Tasmania's west coast to groom and sexually abuse his victims and in later years, through rural football clubs in Tasmania's north-west. Evidence considered by the Independent Review shows that Paul Reynolds used football as an initial conversation-starter with teenage boys, progressing to grooming, explicit messaging in the form of text and photos and in some instances, physical sexual abuse.

A pervasive code of silence

Participants have noted that historically, a culture of silence prevailed within the Tasmanian policing community. This is not an unusual nor new phenomenon and has appeared in reviews of law enforcement bodies nationally and internationally, also referred to as a 'blue wall of silence'.[2] Although this attitude is changing through awareness, education, organisational transparency and individual accountability, there is still some way to go. The final report will detail these changes and identify any gaps.

One emerging theme raised by numerous former and current serving police officers was the lack of transparency regarding Paul Reynolds' alleged criminal conduct at the time of his death. Participants expressed disappointment at learning of the reason for his suicide for the first time five years after his death, via the coronial report. Participants voiced their dismay at having attended a full police funeral for Paul Reynolds when it was known that he was under investigation for criminal conduct towards young males.

The apology of Commissioner Adams for holding a police funeral has been reflected on positively by those participants who have spoken about it, however some questioned why it came five years after the funeral and not immediately afterwards, when the Professional Standards investigation was closed.

Next steps

This interim report provides an overview of engagement with the Independent Review, progress to date and some early observations. The information gathering phase will continue until the end of April 2024, with the intention for the final report to be presented to the Police Commissioner at the end of June 2024. It will include detailed findings drawn from the de-identified accounts of people who have contributed to the Independent Review and analysis of all files, data and documents provided to the Independent Review.

2 See for example the Baroness Casey Review (UK, 2023), final report *An independent review into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Metropolitan Police Service* available at https://www.met.police.uk/police-forces/metropolitan-police/areas/about-us/about-the-met/bcr/baroness-casey-review/.

Feedback

Some participants have spontaneously provided feedback about their experience of engaging with the Independent Review. Those who have done so indicated that their experience has been safe and respectful, that they are pleased that the Independent Review is being conducted and have confidence in its independence. Many have also expressed appreciation for the opportunity to share their stories and have encouraged others to take part.

One participant who was a victim of sexual abuse at the hand of a former police officer other than Paul Reynolds told the Independent Review that sharing a lived experience felt like a *"40 year old burden being lifted from my shoulders"* while another victim survivor who shared their experience in relation to Paul Reynolds said that doing so *"has given me a little bit of closure."*

> *" …40 year old burden being lifted from my shoulders…"*

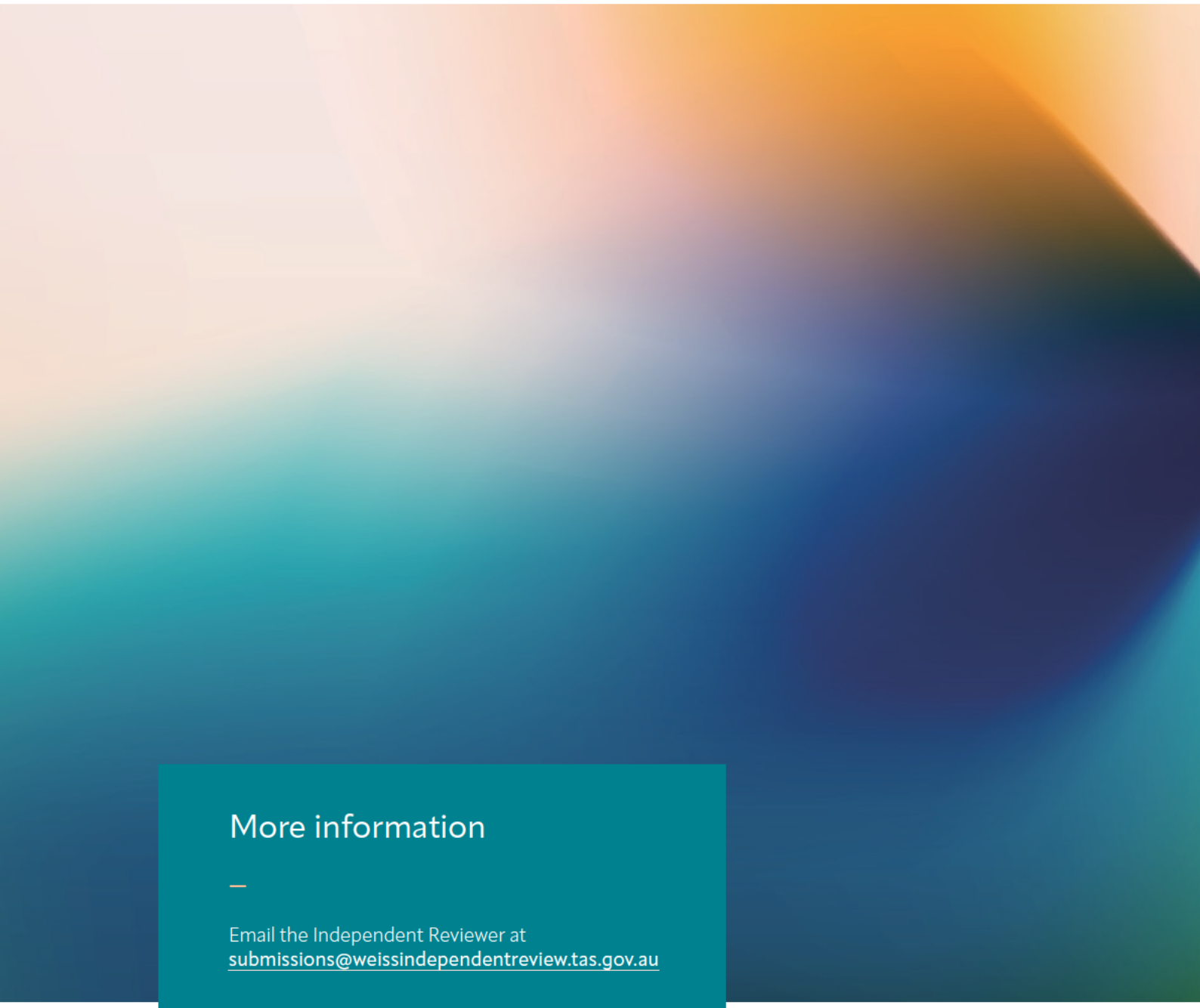
Conclusion

The accounts of grooming and abuse as told by the victim-survivors, their families and observers are harrowing, shocking and devastating. The betrayal of trust felt by so many is evident. What is also shocking is that Paul Reynolds' conduct continued for over three decades despite it being known or suspected that Paul Reynolds was, at the very least, interacting inappropriately with teenage boys.

What is clear from the accounts of former and serving police officers is that the shock reverberates throughout the Tasmania Police community. It shows the dark side of those people in our community who use their position of trust and power to groom and abuse children and young people.

It is important to note and acknowledge the courage and commitment of the many police officers who serve the Tasmanian community, who put their lives at risk to protect others and who take pride in the work they do. The conduct of Paul Reynolds must not overshadow the noble contribution so many Tasmanian police officers have made, and continue to make, to our community.

Finally, the Independent Reviewer encourages victim-survivors, their families, observers, bystanders, former and serving police officers and any other person who wishes to be heard to come forward.



More information

Email the Independent Reviewer at
submissions@weissindependentreview.tas.gov.au

Weiss **Independent Review** into Paul Reynolds

FINAL REPORT

28 June 2024

Where to go if you need support

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  (Sexual Assault Support Service and Laurel House)
  1800 697 877
- **Relationships Australia Tasmania** 1300 364 277
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Foreword

On 13 September 2018, Paul "Beau" Reynolds (**Reynolds**), a then-Senior Sergeant Tasmanian Police Officer died by suicide. What was known to a small number of Tasmania Police, including the highest echelons of policing at the time, was that Reynolds was being investigated for grooming, sharing explicit images with and procuring teenage boys, including coercing them to take photos of themselves naked and of their penises. He was afforded a full police funeral, the investigation into sexual misconduct closed without being finalised, and the file relating to his death placed in a police file room in Launceston. It was not until 2022, when Coroner Simon Cooper (**Coroner Cooper**) conducted an inquest into the death by suicide of four Tasmanian Police Officers including Reynolds, that his file was re-opened. Coroner Cooper's Findings, Recommendations and Comment (**Coroner's findings**) were released to the public on 1 September 2023. The findings regarding Reynolds rocked the general and policing communities. Coroner Cooper found – and for the first time made public – that one of the most likely factors contributing to his death was allegations of criminal conduct on the part of Paul Reynolds in relation to children which had emerged and were being investigated.[1]

In 2021, the then-Tasmania Police Commissioner, provided the Commission of Inquiry into Tasmanian Government Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings (**COI**) information and material relating to Reynolds as a case study for the COI's consideration. Subsequent to the Coroner's findings and following the recommendations made by the COI, I was briefed to conduct an Independent Review into Paul Reynolds (**Review**). What has emerged over the course of the last eight months with respect to the veracity of Reynolds' offending is truly shocking. Also sobering is the reaction of the former and serving members of the policing community who only officially learned the truth behind Reynolds' suicide in the last year, which participants relayed with at times, heartfelt, raw emotion.

In the UK, Baroness Casey conducted an independent review into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Metropolitan Police Service in London between 2021 and 2023. While that independent review was underway, a serving Met officer abducted, raped and murdered a young woman, while another exploited his position to become one of the country's most prolific sexual offenders. "*None of this should have happened. Enough was known about both men to have stopped them so much earlier.*"[2] I borrow from Baroness Casey's words when I say with respect to Reynolds' offending that none of this should have happened. I was told that talk of Reynolds' inappropriate relationships with teenage boys had circulated for years through the small communities he lived and worked in and were once even reported to Tasmania Police in 2008, the investigation of which was ultimately closed with no findings

1 Findings, recommendations and comment of Magistrate Simon Cooper, published 1 September 2023, at [228] available at https://www.magistratescourt.tas.gov.au/about_us/coroners/coronial-findings-2022.

2 *Baroness Casey Review, Final Report, An independent review into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Metropolitan Police Service, March 2023* **(Baroness Casey Review)** at page 6.

of misconduct. That investigation should have exposed his conduct but did not. The system failed Reynolds' victims and the Tasmanian community, including its valued policing community.

Reynolds was a sworn Tasmanian Police Officer who had been promoted at one stage of his career to the rank of Inspector. He was trusted by the Tasmanian community and his colleagues alike. He was revered and respected in local Australian Rules Football (**football**) and basketball communities and abused that trust by grooming and sexually abusing teenage boys he met through sport for over 30 years. He was able to conceal his predatory conduct by leveraging on his status as a senior police officer and suicided when he was exposed. His victims and colleagues were not afforded the closure they deserved. I am hopeful that this Report and the Review process leading to it, will assist somewhat in working towards closure for those who participated in the Review, and also those in the community who did not, but were no less affected by Reynolds' conduct.

I personally thank the courageous and resilient victim-survivors, their families, serving and former police officers, members of the sporting and general communities, who came forward and candidly shared their experiences and stories with me, and the intermediaries who helped along the way. Without them, this Review would not have been possible, and I am grateful for the trust they have placed in it and in me. In addition, I am grateful to those representatives from regulatory and integrity bodies around Australia who gave their time and expertise to assist with this Review.

I thank Tasmania Police Commissioner Donna Adams (**the Commissioner**) for the respect she has shown for the independence of this Review and her instruction to leave no stone unturned. Finally, I thank solicitor Ms Demi Peters for her dedicated support and assistance in conducting the many private sessions with participants and review of vast volumes of material which underpin this Report.



Regina Weiss

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Independent Reviewer

Executive summary

Every day, Tasmania Police officers and members put their own lives at risk to protect the Tasmanian community. Their courage, dedication and pride in the work they do must not be overshadowed by the conduct of Reynolds. The many serving and former police officers and members who voluntarily participated in this Review expressed their shock and anger that someone in their own policing community had groomed and sexually abused teenage boys over three decades and that his offending had gone on without accountability. The Review was told how devastated they felt after finally learning the truth about Reynolds, some only hearing it after years of mourning him as a colleague who had suicided in the line of duty. Serving and former members of Tasmania Police were motivated to speak to the Review because of their firm wish for history not to repeat itself and a desire for positive change. Many spoke of their support of the changes already implemented since 2018, and particularly in the last 18 months or so, as outlined in the body of this Report.

As the lived experiences told in this Report show, Reynolds groomed his victims, their families, the policing, sporting and general communities and he did so with calculated precision.

Although this Report was initiated by the Commissioner and presents learnings for Tasmania Police, it is equally as important for sporting organisations to take notice of the very real risk of grooming and sexual abuse of children in sports, which have long been used as hunting grounds for sexual predators. Unfortunately, this Review is not the first of its kind to uncover horrific and systemic abuse in sport both domestically and internationally.[3] It is also not an isolated case in Tasmania, noting the COI's findings in relation to former nurse James Griffin, who exploited the positions of trust he held in sport and the health care sector to groom and sexually abuse children over decades before suiciding.[4]

Grooming, coercing and sexually abusing children is criminal conduct. Remit for the investigation of these and like crimes sits with police, who have the requisite powers, resources and tools required to properly investigate them. Recently, the Child and Youth Safe Standards (**Standards**) were introduced along with the Office of the Independent Regulator. In line with the new Standards, sporting and recreation organisations are expected to investigate conduct relating to the Standards and report back to the Independent Regulator on those investigations.

3 See for example, the Australian Human Rights Commission *Change the Routine: Report on the Independent Review into Gymnastics in Australia (2021)* available at: https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/sex-discrimination/publications/change-routine-report-independent-review-gymnastics; Sport Integrity Australia Independent Review into the *Western Australian Institute of Sport Women's Artistic Gymnastics Program (April 2022)* available at: https://www.sportintegrity.gov.au/news/media-statements/2022-04/sport-integrity-australia-releases-wais-gymnastics-review-findings; *Independent Review into Victorian Racing Industry Victim Support and Complaint Processes (September 2023)* available at: https://racingintegrity.vic.gov.au/review; and documentary on abuse in Gymnastics USA – Athlete A (2021), available on Netflix.

4 Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Response to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings, October 2023, Chapter 14 – Case Studies: Children in Health Services, available at: https://www.commissionofinquiry.tas.gov.au/report/listing/volume-6/chapter-14/_nocache

What became evident as this Review progressed is that sporting organisations are generally not equipped with the knowledge or resources to conduct investigations relating to grooming, coercing or sexual abuse of children. Criminal conduct should be investigated by police, not sporting organisations. There exists an inherent danger that police investigations could be compromised or jeopardised – even if inadvertently so. For example, a perpetrator of child sexual abuse could destroy evidence such as communications or devices used for grooming or coercion if an 'investigation' is embarked upon by a sporting organisation which may inadvertently 'tip off' the perpetrator. This could cause irreparable damage to a criminal police investigation into that same conduct.

A key message of this Review is that *any* conduct constituting suspected grooming, coercion or sexual abuse of children in sport must be reported to and investigated by police. Community engagement between police and sporting organisations is vital in ensuring that members of the sporting community feel confident and safe when reporting conduct such as that of Reynolds' to police.

Based on the material uncovered by this Review, Reynolds' grooming and sexual abuse of teenage boys stretched over a 30-year period, ceasing only when he suicided in 2018. It is important not to categorise his conduct as 'historical'. Despite awareness and vigilance to grooming and sexual abuse in sport being more prevalent in recent years, Reynolds' offending took place in modern times, utilising modern technology to groom and coerce his victims.

There is certainly a shift in reporting culture and the mechanisms available for doing so have become safer, more accessible and better promoted. The rhetoric when considering reporting "*but what if they didn't do it?*" is slowly being replaced with "*but what if they did?*", although still has some way to go.

There is also a noticeable recent shift in culture within Tasmania Police regarding the understanding of organisational values, which was evidenced by how serving police officers described it to the Review. The Review is cognisant of the recommendations made by the COI and the work that is already underway by Tasmania Police to implement them. The learnings of this Review are intended to compliment and bolster those positive changes.

The following recommendations and considerations are informed by the perspectives, perceptions and lived experiences this Review heard. They are designed to equip Tasmania Police with additional tools to acknowledge and restore past harms, strengthen accountability and responsibility, and provide a safe, independent and robust reporting and investigative mechanism, designed to ensure that history such as that of Reynolds does not repeat. The recommendations have been carefully and deliberately designed to be fit for purpose and to have the greatest amount of impact commensurate to Tasmania's jurisdiction, which by comparison to other states is small in population.

RECOMMENDATION **1**

That Tasmania Police establish a restorative engagement framework and scheme for persons who have experienced grooming and/or sexual abuse by Paul Reynolds who may or may not have participated in the Review, or, if the Commissioner deems appropriate, are victim-survivors of other former or serving Tasmania Police officers who participated in this Review that:

i. reflects best practice for restorative processes and redress schemes;

ii. conveys clear terms of eligibility for participation in an independently funded redress scheme;

iii. is overseen by an independent board;

iv. provides the opportunity for a direct personal response from the Police Commissioner or delegate by agreement, which includes acknowledgment of the impact of the abuse on the victim-survivor;

v. offers access to support services, counselling and psychological care; and

vi. is open for a minimum period of 12 months from the date of its establishment.

RECOMMENDATION **2**

That Tasmania Police establish a permanent restorative engagement framework for persons who have experienced grooming and/or sexual abuse by Tasmania Police officers that:

i. reflects best practice for restorative processes;

ii. is overseen by an independent board;

iii. provides the opportunity for a direct personal response from the Police Commissioner or delegate by agreement, which includes acknowledgment of the impact of the abuse on the victim-survivor;

iv. provides the opportunity to engage in a conciliation process with persons the victim-survivor deems appropriate, with full consent of all parties;

v. offers access to support services, counselling and psychological care.

RECOMMENDATION **3**

That Tasmania Police establish a framework which strengthens community engagement and builds trust between Tasmania Police, vulnerable community groups and Tasmanian sport and recreation organisations for the purpose of preventing, identifying and reporting grooming, sexual abuse and unacceptable sexualised conduct in sport, which includes:

i. Tasmania Police conducting regular forums with representatives from sport and recreation organisations, providing an avenue to share information and raise awareness on preventing, identifying, and reporting grooming, sexual abuse and sexualised conduct in sport.

   a. appointing a dedicated Tasmania Police focal point for sport and recreation;

   b. increasing Tasmania Police presence at junior sporting competitions where practicable;

   c. improving and strengthening the level of statewide engagement and education between the sport and recreation community and Tasmania Police through a dedicated statewide Community Engagement Command. Responsibility for the dedicated statewide Community Engagement Command should be overseen by a Commander of Police and adequately resourced to support the educational, training and safety needs of the Tasmanian community across the state.

RECOMMENDATION **4**

That Tasmania Police establish a dedicated victim management team which is funded and resourced to operate separately of the Professional Standards Command to support victims of reported sexual offending or misconduct where the perpetrator is a current serving or previously serving police officer, and which:

i. is staffed by sworn and unsworn police members with specialised victim-centric trauma-response training specific to dealing with victims of police offending or misconduct;

ii. is housed in a physical location separate from the Professional Standards Command and is accessible to victims statewide; and

iii. provides ongoing support to victims before, throughout and after any Professional Standards investigation.

RECOMMENDATION **5**

i. That consideration be given by Tasmania Police to making a recommendation to the Tasmanian Government for amendments to the *Integrity Commission Act 2009* to ensure that all notifications made to the Integrity Commission in respect of members of Tasmania Police who are alleged to have groomed and/or sexually abused persons [serious misconduct] can be investigated independently by the Integrity Commission through:

   a. authorising access to Tasmania Police investigation databases;

   b. providing coercive examination powers;

   c. recognising the Integrity Commission as a 'law enforcement agency' for the purpose of Tasmanian legislation under which applications for covert powers might be sought;

   d. the ability to conduct (open or closed) hearings in relation to any matter relevant to the performance of its functions with as little formality and technicality as is consistent with a fair and proper consideration of the issues;

   e. the ability to apply to a Magistrate or Justice of the Peace for a warrant for arrest in the first instance;

   f. the ability to conduct wholly independent or joint investigations with Tasmania Police and/or other law enforcement bodies, or monitor and/or oversee investigations conducted by Tasmania Police; and

   g. extend jurisdiction for investigations of former Tasmania Police members provided the conduct being investigated occurred while the person was an officer or employee.

ii. Reiterating Recommendation 35 of the Honourable William Cox AC, RFD, ED, KC in the 2016 'Independent Review of the Integrity Commission Act 2009', that consideration be given to Tasmania Police requesting that the Commonwealth recognise the Tasmanian Integrity Commission under the *Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979* so as to define the Commission as an 'eligible agency' and grant the Commission the status of a criminal law enforcement agency for the purposes of that Act.

Methodology

On 6 October 2023, the Commissioner announced that a Review into Paul Reynolds would be conducted by an independent reviewer, based on six key objectives outlined in the Terms of Reference underpinning the Review [**Annexure A**].

REVIEW OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the actions of Paul Reynolds whilst a serving police officer to determine if there has been criminal misconduct in his handling of matters reported to him or investigated by him during the course of his career.
2. To enable victim-survivors or members of the community to report concerns regarding the behaviour of Paul Reynolds.
3. To identify whether Paul Reynolds used his position as a police officer to groom young people and commit child sexual abuse.
4. To provide appropriate support to any victim-survivor that chooses to come forward.
5. To identify if there has been any misconduct by police officers involved in the investigation of any allegations against Paul Reynolds.
6. To identify organisational learnings.

The Terms of Reference stipulate that at the conclusion of the Review, this Report would be prepared, detailing the outcomes of the Review including any misconduct findings and recommendations regarding policy and practice reform for Tasmania Police.

The Terms of Reference did not include a timeline, which was instead agreed upon between the Commissioner and the Independent Reviewer as the Review progressed. An Interim Report[5] was published by agreement between the

5 Available at https://www.police.tas.gov.au/uploads/Interim-progress-report-Independent-Review.pdf

Commissioner and Independent Reviewer on 23 January 2024 for the purposes of providing an update on the progress of the Review.

The Review received its first written submission on 31 October 2023 and private sessions were held between 31 October 2023 and 20 June 2024 (refer to "Participation and engagement"on pages 11-13 for a detailed breakdown of data). In addition to the lived experiences and information obtained throughout the submission and private session process, the Review has also gathered, reviewed and critically analysed a significant amount of material relevant to the Terms of Reference, including Reynolds' phone and email records, social media and third-party messaging platforms, coronial records, Tasmania Police holdings, reports, hard copy files including Reynolds' prosecution and daily diary notes, archived material, body worn camera footage, prosecution records and physical devices owned by or assigned to Reynolds. The Review also conducted research relevant to preventing, reporting and investigating grooming and sexual abuse with a view to identifying best practice.

This Report is based on, first and foremost, the voices of victim-survivors, their families, former and serving members of Tasmania Police, people who knew Reynolds through sport or community and other bystanders. It is their words that appear in this Report, and which underpin the case for positive change. The Review also spoke with representatives from integrity and regulatory agencies from Tasmania and interstate jurisdictions, and subject-matter experts to inform best practice.

Scope

The scope of the Review was governed by the Terms of Reference set by the Commissioner. As private sessions commenced, it became clear that the scope of the Review would span some 30 years, with the first known victim-survivor's lived experience dating back to 1988 and the last evidence of grooming and coercion occurring in the days before Reynolds' death in September 2018.

Confidentiality

In keeping with an informed consent process, participants involved in the Review were advised that all information provided by anyone contributing to or participating in the Review which could lead to their identification will remain confidential, save for circumstances where there was a legal obligation to on-disclose information. For example, mandatory reporting requirements for suspected child abuse, or a concern about the immediate safety or risk of harm to a person. Any notes taken during private sessions with participants are held solely with the Independent Reviewer and assisting solicitor and will not be shared with Tasmania Police, even after the finalisation of the Review.

Although this Report will refer to the lived experiences of participants and in some cases, quote their words, their identity or information which could lead to their identification, remain confidential. There exists no version of this Report which identifies the persons who contributed to it or which links quotes to a particular participant. That information remains confidential and with the Independent Reviewer and assisting solicitor only.

Participation and engagement

The Commissioner made a call for submissions on 31 October 2023. Initially submissions were open until 30 November 2023, however this period was extended until 31 December 2023 at the request of the Independent Reviewer and with the agreement of the Commissioner. Despite the submission period closing at the end of 2023, the Review continued to receive written submissions and requests for private sessions throughout the beginning of 2024 with the final private session conducted on 20 June 2024. This was to ensure that anyone who wanted to be heard was heard.

The Review has engaged with a total of 87 participants over the 8-month period and were each engaged with by the Independent Reviewer and assisting solicitor only. The Independent Reviewer personally attended each private session. No Tasmania Police or other Tasmanian government employee or representative were present at any of the private sessions and notes of those sessions were not and will not be shared with Tasmania Police unless they were relevant to a referral (discussed below) and with the consent of the participant. Private sessions were conducted wholly independently of Tasmania Police in neutral, private locations.

Some participants chose to engage in the Review by providing written submissions only, while others have provided written submissions and taken part in follow-up private sessions. Overwhelmingly, the majority of participants preferred to participate in private sessions only. The breakdown of the participation methods of engagement can be seen below.

FIGURE 1: How participants chose to engage with the Independent Reviewer

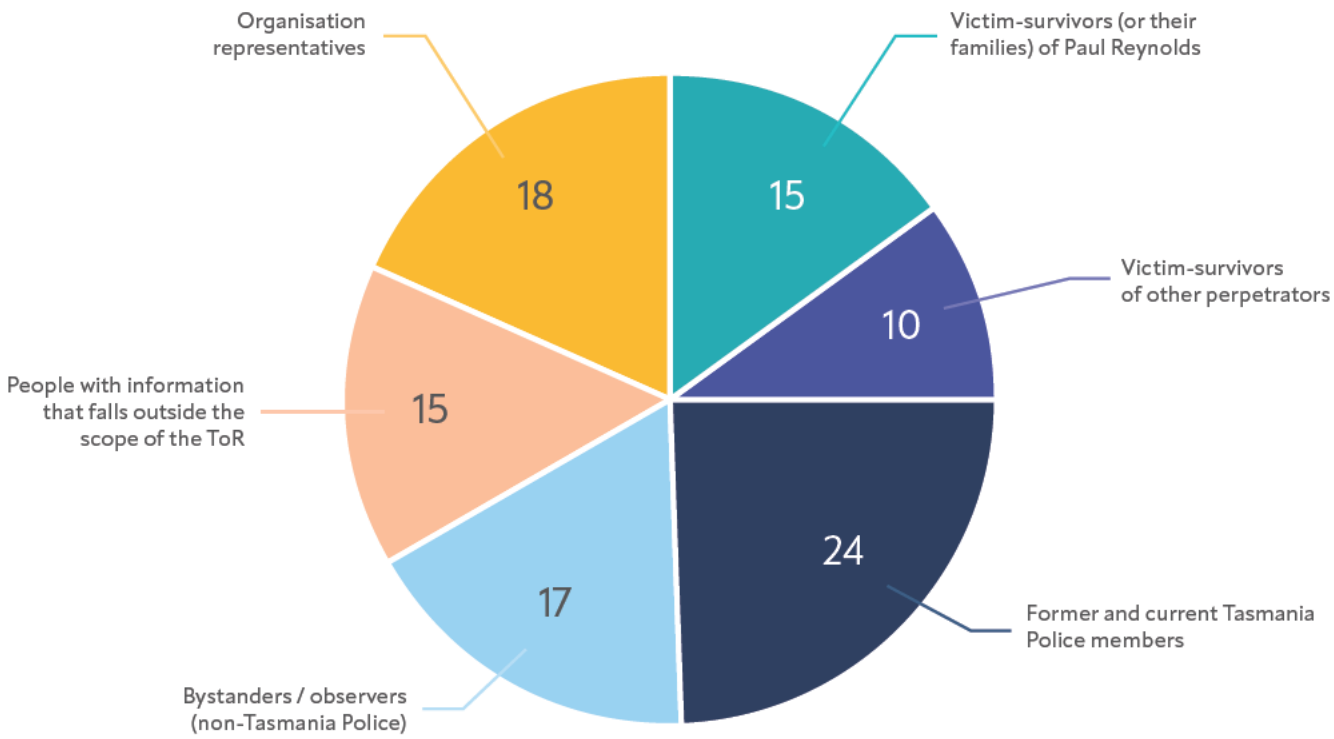


Participants included victim-survivors and their families, current and former serving Tasmania police officers, bystanders, members and representatives of sporting organisations and sports regulators, representatives of interstate police integrity commissions and regulatory bodies, representatives from legal, government and not for profit community services and Tasmanian regulatory bodies.

Of the 87 participants, 15 are victim-survivors or their families, with 100% of victim-survivors being male. These victim-survivors are in addition to four others who took part in police and coronial processes prior to this Review. The Review also considered and relied on their statements and records of interview for the purposes of this Report. Following the analysis of Reynolds' communications, devices and social media platforms including thousands of messages and images from the last seven years of his life, and other material, the Review has identified up to 52 males who were at minimum groomed by Reynolds over the 30-year period, with some resulting in sexual abuse.

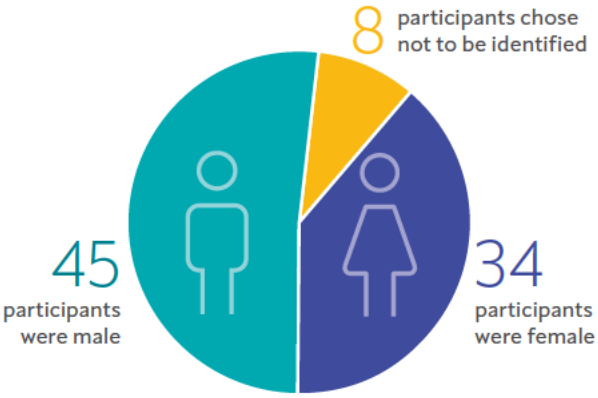
The wide range of people electing to participate in the Review demonstrates the significant impact Reynolds' conduct has had, not only on his victims and their families, but also his colleagues within the police service and the community he was part of.

FIGURE 2: Number of participants by category*



* Some participants fall into more than one category – they have been captured in all relevant categories making the sum of this data more than 87.

FIGURE 3: Participant gender data



All 15 victim-survivors of Paul Reynolds who participated in the Review were male

This is in addition to the two other victims in the initial 2018 investigation.

The Review process, has identified that there may be up to **52 victim-survivors** of Reynolds – all male.

FIGURE 4: Geographical distribution of participants





6 chose not to identify their location

Private sessions

As noted previously, personal face-to-face sessions were the preferred and predominant way participants chose to share their lived experiences, observations and insights, with 89% of participants choosing to participate in the Review this way.

Throughout the Review, in-person private sessions were conducted in Tasmania's South, North, North-West and East. The Review also conducted private sessions remotely with participants based in Victoria, Western Australia, South Australia and New South Wales. Remote private sessions were conducted due to participant preference or where the participant was located interstate.

All private sessions were conducted in a semi-structured format wherein participants were encouraged to share their lived experiences, observations and insights about learnings, improvements, strengths and failings of systems and processes. They were conducted in a safe, neutral, confidential environment and were wholly voluntary.

Participants were informed at the commencement of the session they were free to leave at any time and were not compelled to answer questions, noting that a trauma-informed approach is to provide choice and control to a victim-survivor when recounting traumatic events. Participants were also informed that conversations and any notes relating to them were and will remain confidential unless they provide consent to on-disclose information. A consent form was signed by participants at the commencement of private sessions, which detailed the voluntary and confidential nature of their participation.

Support

Victim-survivors were and continue to be offered access to trauma counselling and support services, details of which are listed on the inside cover of this Report. Some may be at different stages of trauma, and many continue to suffer from its effects, as can their families and bystanders. The Review is cognisant that some victim-survivors may have chosen not to participate directly in the Review process but may nevertheless be affected by its publicity. Anyone who needs support is urged to utilise the free support services.

Former and serving police officers are able to access additional free confidential support and counselling services through the Department of Police Fire and Emergency Management Services Wellbeing Support program by contacting wellbeing@dpfem.tas.gov.au or (03) 6173 2188.

A trauma-informed approach

All interactions with participants were carefully considered and aimed to be trauma-informed, understanding that victim-survivors, former colleagues, observers and bystanders alike continue to be affected by Reynolds' conduct, some many years on.

What does it mean to be trauma-informed?

The phrases 'trauma-informed' and 'victim-centric' are heard far more frequently in recent years than ever before. Despite this, what they mean – and importantly, how we use them in practice – remain for many an unknown. There is a danger in some cases that a 'trauma-informed approach' becomes a tick-box process, leaving victim-survivors susceptible to further harm.

The baseline trauma-informed approach, as it was applied to this Review, is to do no harm. Choice and agency belong to the victim-survivor. Victims of grooming and sexual abuse, when subjected to that conduct by a perpetrator, have choice taken away. That is, the choice not to be groomed, coerced or sexually abused. Reynolds' victims had that choice removed, due to reasons explored later in this Report and which include vulnerability, power imbalance, fear of retaliation or because they were simply too young to understand.

It was an important trauma-informed feature of this Review that all participation was voluntary and the choice to participate in it was given to Reynolds' victims, their families, bystanders, members of sporting organisations Reynolds was associated with, and former and serving members of the Tasmanian policing community. No one was forced or coerced to participate in the Review and all participants came forward either on their own volition or upon invitation of the Independent Reviewer.

Trauma may present at different times and can be triggered in various ways causing re-traumatisation for the victim-survivor. For example, sharing a traumatic experience for the first time, or re-telling a lived experience can trigger re-traumatisation. A trauma-informed approach means ensuring the physical, psychological, cultural and emotional safety of a person, and providing an opportunity for victim-survivors to regain control of their experience.

Other triggers for re-traumatisation can include unexpected publicity relating to a victim-survivor's personal experience, which did occur while the Review was underway. For example, politicising the traumatic experiences of victims without consideration of the impact of doing so on victim-survivors falls short of a trauma-informed approach.

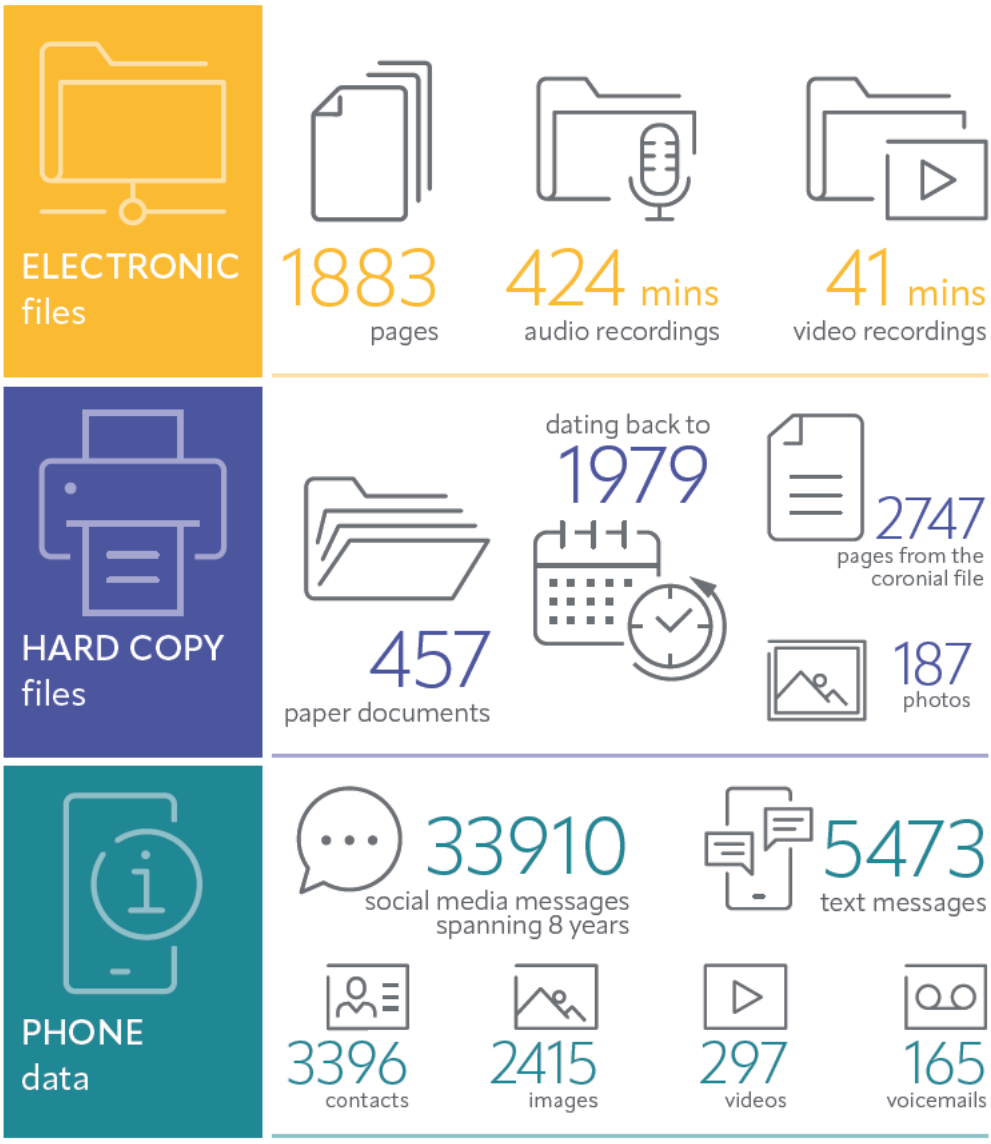
With respect to expected publicity, the Independent Reviewer maintained regular communication with victim-survivors and other Review participants at key junctures such as prior to the release of the Interim Report and prior to the release of this Report, allowing affected persons to manage risk of re-traumatisation. In some cases, this meant ensuring they had adequate support around them and for others it was enough just to not be taken by surprise.

Documentary and other materials

Tasmania Police shared relevant material in its possession within the initial weeks of the Review commencing and as the Review progressed, further information was disclosed as it became relevant. A complete breakdown of the material reviewed is summarised below.

—

FIGURE 5: Types of documents and data collected for the purpose of this Review



Referrals

Although the Terms of Reference were related to Reynolds, people with information about grooming and/or sexual abuse committed by other former or serving Tasmania Police officers have also participated in private sessions. In that context, seven referrals have been made to Tasmania Police. Another referral was made to another organisation in relation to a person who is not a police officer.

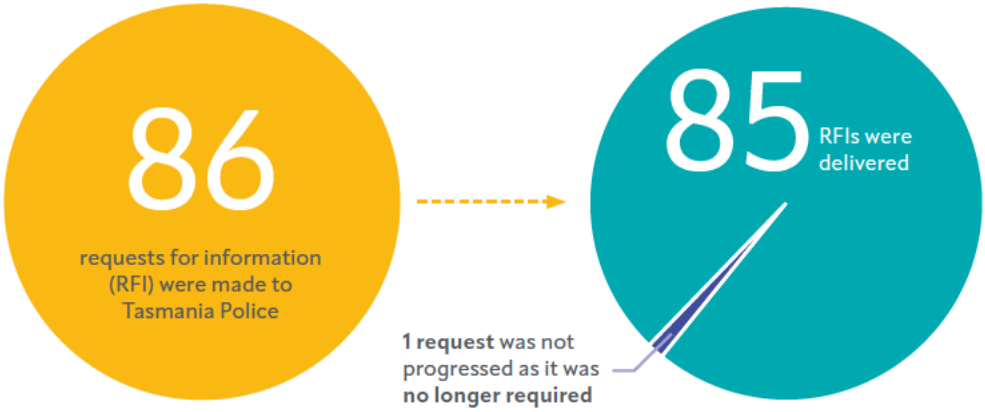
Requests for information

As detailed above, a vast amount of material was disclosed at the outset by Tasmania Police for consideration by the Review. In addition to that disclosure, a total of 86 requests for information (**RFI**) have been made of Tasmania Police by the Reviewer. Out of the 86 RFI, 85 were actioned and one was not progressed as it was no longer required.

It is not unusual in a review of this kind for multiple requests to be made throughout its course because the relevance of certain material only becomes apparent as a review advances. For example, requests for reports, disclosures or communications were sought based on information provided to the Review by participants during private sessions. Other information has been sought based on leads or 'springboard' evidence.

The Review also made an application to Coroner Cooper for access to and copies of the Coronial records in relation to the Coronial investigation into the death of Reynolds. Coroner Cooper approved this request and the file was analysed by the Independent Reviewer and assisting solicitor at the premises of the Coroner's court.

FIGURE 6: Reviewer requests to Tasmania Police for information



Background

Reynolds' career within Tasmania Police spanned over three decades, with all postings being in Tasmania. The following is a timeline of his postings from the commencement of career in 1980 to the date of his death in 2018.

DATE	LOCATION
13/02/1980	Hobart Police Academy, Rokeby
30/11/1981	Burnie
31/05/1983	Queenstown
17/01/1984	Burnie
15/03/1984	Hobart Drug Bureau
13/08/1984	Burnie Drug Bureau
03/06/1985	Burnie
05/05/1987	Waratah
26/02/1988	Savage River
20/02/1989	Tullah
03/07/1990	Hobart Prosecution
13/01/1992	Devonport
08/05/1995	Bellerive
05/12/1996	New Norfolk
03/10/1997	Launceston
06/12/1999	Northern District Administration (Launceston)
22/10/2000	Bellerive Eastern District
11/12/2000	Traffic – Eastern
21/12/2001	Southern Prosecution (Hobart)
30/05/2003	Northern District – George Town
14/01/2008	District Response Administration, Northern District
22/03/2010	Launceston
12/03/2012	Deloraine
01/01/2013	Launceston
13/04/2015	Northern Coroner's Office
27/02/2017	Western Prosecution Services (where he remained until his death)

Complaints and reports

Allegations relating to Reynolds' inappropriate interactions with teenage boys were twice formally reported to Tasmania Police. The first report was in 2008, which resulted in the allegations being unproven, and the second report being in 2018. The conduct and adequacy of both investigations will be discussed later in this Report. The COI outlined the 2008 and 2018 investigations[6] and the Coroner's Findings provided further detail relating to the 2018 investigation.[7] The material and information gathered throughout the course of this Review is entirely consistent with the findings of both the COI and the Coroner's Findings with respect to those investigations.

The 2008 report

In May 2008, at a social gathering at the Tasmania Police Academy bar, visiting police officers from interstate overheard a conversation relating to Reynolds, in which senior members of Tasmania Police had described Reynolds as a 'paedophile'. There were two specific examples of alleged inappropriate conduct discussed amongst the group in the bar. One related to Reynolds having been witnessed giving a teenage boy a massage in his home as the teenage boy sat between Reynolds' legs. The other involved the wife of one of the police officers being asked by concerned members of the community about rumours of Reynolds purportedly consorting with teenage boys.

The interstate police officers were alarmed despite the social nature of the conversation and rightly reported what they had overheard to a Tasmania Police Divisional Inspector, who in adhering to protocol and procedure, formally reported it up the hierarchical line to the Commander of the then-Internal Investigations Unit. The Deputy Commissioner at the time wrote to the senior Tasmania Police officers at the source of the bar conversation seeking clarification around what had been reported. Both indicated there had been a misinterpretation of their conversation and denied saying that Reynolds was a 'paedophile'. An Assistant Commissioner at the time who had also heard the conversation in the Police Academy Bar made a statement to the effect that there was no mention of Reynolds being a 'paedophile' and that the conversation had been misunderstood by the interstate police officers. He further noted in his written statement that the allegations could be "*potentially very damaging consequences for a person wrongfully accused*".

No further investigation was pursued, and the matter was closed.

The recommendation of the Deputy Commissioner at the time was that Reynolds should not be told of the complaint to avoid "*dissension*" between Reynolds and the two senior police officers involved.

In 2012, Reynolds self-demoted from the rank of Inspector to Senior Sergeant. The self-demotion occurred not long after Reynolds had been subjected to an internal formal reprimand relating to his work performance. This is consistent with the view of one participant that Reynolds had been "*over-promoted*". Noting also the level of messaging and physical meetings Reynolds was engaging in with teenage boys during working hours, it is little wonder his work output had diminished.

6 COI Report, Volume 7, Chapter 16, 3.2.6 *Implementing police complaints and oversight mechanisms*, Case Example: Tasmania Police complaints handling—Paul Reynolds.

7 Coroner's Findings, at [190] to [197].

The 2018 report

On 6 September 2018, a Tasmania Police officer lodged a detailed complaint regarding Reynolds in the internal reporting mechanism 'Blue Team' which prompted a Professional Standards investigation shortly thereafter. The following is an extract from the 6 September report:

> *"The information infers the Senior Sergeant is procuring young persons for sexual purposes or grooming young persons, that he is sending photographs of his genitalia to children with the inference he would be receiving child exploitation material in return from them.*
>
> *Senior Sergeant Reynolds is heavily involved and linked in administration of Tasmanian football and is the president of the NTFA. As a result, he has associations with the Deloraine Football Club and has befriended a number of young boys and young men. Senior Sergeant Reynolds is widely reputed in the Deloraine area as being a paedophile and it is known reputedly that 'you do not go to Paul's house alone'. There have been a number of parents who have warned Senior Sergeant Reynolds off having anything to do with their children and sons as a result of his creepy behaviour and if he is at the club, he is watched closely and not welcome, however due to his position as a police officer, there is a reluctance to confront him. He is reputed to groom young boys, presumably for sex and is known to be highly inappropriate around young boys, making inappropriate sexual comments and touching them inappropriately. He is reputed to target young boys who are vulnerable and lack a male figure in their life."*

Within days, interviews were conducted by Professional Standards officers with the teenage boys identified in the 6 September report and others, including a witness who had observed Reynolds massaging a naked boy at the Deloraine football club clubrooms. Those interviews and material found on the teenage boys' phones in various messaging apps including Snapchat and Facebook Messenger, revealed that Reynolds had regularly:

- sent pictures of his penis to several teenage boys;
- coerced teenage boys to send pictures of their penises, or themselves naked, to Reynolds;
- sent pornographic and explicit material to teenage boys;
- given naked rubdowns and ice-baths to teenage boys;
- touched the penises of teenage boys; and
- sent thousands of inappropriate and indecent messages to teenage boys.

The interviews and examination of the teenage boys' telephones provided Tasmania Police with enough evidence to seek and obtain a search warrant on 12 September 2018, based on reasonable grounds to suspect:

- that Reynolds had sent images of his penis from his mobile phone to boys under the age of 17 years;
- that sexual or indecent images had been sent by boys under the age of 17 years to Reynolds; and
- that Reynolds was procuring boys under the age of 17 years to have unlawful sexual intercourse with another person or to engage in an unlawful sexual act.

The search warrant was executed on the evening of 12 September 2018 and several items were seized, including his mobile phone, laptop and other electronic devices. On the afternoon of 13 September 2018, Reynolds died by suicide.

What is grooming?

Grooming is often carried out under the guise of being kind, charming and helpful. The intentions behind the behaviours involve manoeuvring a child into a position that makes them more isolated, dependent, likely to trust, and more vulnerable to abuse. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (**Royal Commission**) provided some useful applicable commentary on grooming behaviours generally:

> *"Grooming is often difficult to identify and define. This is because the behaviours involved are not necessarily explicitly sexual, directly abusive or criminal in themselves. They may only be recognised with hindsight. Indeed, some grooming behaviours are consistent with behaviours or activities in non-abusive relationships and can even include desirable social behaviours, with the only difference being motivation."*[8]
> [footnotes omitted]

The Royal Commission identified stages of grooming which gradually escalate to sexualised conduct or sexual abuse. As the lived experiences shared with the Review and the communications between Reynolds and his victims showed, Reynolds applied similar techniques through his interactions with teenage boys which escalated from subtle contact to, in some cases, sexual abuse.

The stages in the process of grooming a child may include:

- ***befriending a child**, becoming familiar with their interests and being helpful in order to gain their confidence and trust*
- ***creating a special or exclusive relationship** with the child by bestowing gifts, privileges, affection and rewards, and sharing secrets. The exclusivity of the relationship isolates the child from their parents or others who would be a source of safety*
- ***paying increased attention to the child**, including adopting a pseudo-parental role*
- ***giving and withholding gifts** to enable the perpetrator to exert more control over the victim*
- ***gradually increasing intimacy with the child** – for example, through non-sexual touching, including play-acting, tickling and wrestling. Touching may be a very important element of grooming as it tests the child's resistance and desensitises the child*
- ***using sexual conversations** or materials to familiarise the child with sexual behaviours and invoke feelings of shame or guilt in the child*
- ***isolating the child from their family, peers and other support** networks to conceal the abuse and ensure the child's silence to avoid disclosure and detection*
- ***potentially also introducing further victims to the process** of grooming and abuse.*[9]

8 *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Final Report: Volume 2, Nature and cause* at page 40.
9 Ibid. at p.41.

Answering the Review Objectives

Findings of the Independent Reviewer

OBJECTIVE 1:

To assess the actions of Paul Reynolds whilst a serving police officer to determine if there had been criminal misconduct in his handling of matters reported to him or investigated by him during the course of his career.

The Review conducted a comprehensive examination of case files associated with or managed by Reynolds, including paper-based and electronic files, databases accessed by Reynolds, his emails and communications. Despite the in-depth analysis, the Independent Reviewer did not find any evidence of investigation or prosecution manipulation by Reynolds.

Some Review participants were concerned that Reynolds had used his position to deliberately interfere with Tasmania Police investigations, prosecutions or coronial inquiries over the course of his career and particularly when he was posted to Western Prosecution Services and the Coroner's office in Launceston. The Review has extensively examined files Reynolds had been associated with, including specific matters which were raised by Review participants, and was unable to find evidence of any deliberate interference with investigations, prosecutions or coronial inquiries by Reynolds while posted at Western Prosecution Services and the Coroner's office in Launceston.

Exploitation of Reynolds' position as a grooming mechanism

Despite no evidence of actual manipulation of investigations or prosecutions being uncovered, it became clear as the Review progressed that Reynolds had used the *perception* that he had power to influence the outcome of criminal processes as a grooming mechanism. One participant who knew Reynolds through sporting administration told the Review *"he made out he had a lot of influence in the police force."*

Review participants recalled that Reynolds told various persons – and particularly those he was grooming – that he had the power to influence outcomes of prosecutions. One participant told the Review that Reynolds had bragged to him that he was able to assist the father of one teenage boy in his company to *"get out of jail on parole."* There is little doubt that Reynolds utilised his position to give his victims, their families and members of the community the impression that he had the power to manipulate investigations and court outcomes, but this was less reality, more grooming tool. One former police officer participant who worked with Reynolds said:

> *"I know there is speculation that he influenced prosecution cases, I had no idea how he could because he was never at work, he hated work … Sometimes boys would get pulled over drink driving, or there was an assault at the footy club, it was like, go and chat to Paul about it. Of course, he didn't fix it, but he acted like he did. Being so naive, you just believed Paul had an influence, but in reality, he never did."*

Serving and former police officers who had worked with Reynolds spoke of his lax work ethic. One participant who worked with Reynolds was of the view that Reynolds may have been over-promoted and out of his depth with the responsibility assigned to him. This inevitably did lead to Reynolds' self-demotion in 2012.

One participant recalled a specific occasion between 2011-2015 when Reynolds, who at the time the participant considered to be a friend and mentor, visited his house with what looked like a police report or complaint about him. After Reynolds showed the victim-survivor the apparent police report, he said "*if you suck my dick I can make it go away.*" The participant told the Independent Reviewer:

> *"I was shocked and scared. I had never been in trouble with the law, I had kept myself clean and tidy and had always kept my nose clean. I didn't want to be in trouble or on the wrong side of the law … He always used to bring up weird things in the form of banter – he was a banter-type person. But this time I was really shocked because I know I hadn't done it but didn't have money for legal costs – I was young."*

The Independent Reviewer, in the form of an RFI, sought a full search of police holdings relating to the apparent police report referred to by the participant. No such report was located. The Independent Reviewer formed the view that it was likely that the report had been fabricated and presented to the participant in the form of a falsified document by Reynolds. Even if there had been a legitimate police report, and despite this participant being over 18 at the time of the incident, utilising a police report as a mechanism to procure sexual favours was a gross abuse of the authority Reynolds held as a police officer and trust the victim-survivor had in him.

Several participants put forward propositions that Reynolds had used his position as a police officer to conceal or assist suspected paedophiles he may have known or manipulated police investigations relating to or involving suspected sex offenders or others. The Review found no evidence to show that Reynolds was in contact or shared information with suspected or convicted sex offenders, paedophile rings or groups.

"He knew how to make you feel special …"

Despite a thorough examination of Reynolds' communications and various electronic devices, no evidence was uncovered which indicated that Reynolds shared explicit images of boys known to him with other adults. There was, however, evidence of Reynolds sharing images with teenage boys he was communicating with, including explicit images, which will be expanded on later in this Report.

The extent of Reynolds' grooming and sexual abuse of young males over a prolonged period is truly shocking and horrific, however there was nothing uncovered throughout the course of the Review to show or even suggest that he was collaborating with other adults in his conduct.

Reynolds pattern of grooming and sexual abuse was considered and targeted. Analysis of thousands of messages to teenage boys in the years prior to his suicide showed a systematic approach to coaxing boys into what can only be described as a relationship of trust. "*He knew how to make you feel special*" recalled one victim-survivor.

In at least the two years leading up to his suicide he simultaneously messaged numerous boys every morning with "*good morning*" and every night to say "*good night*" often with "*I love you*" or "*you are so special to me*" accompanied by red love heart emojis. One teenage victim he messaged morning and night consecutively for over 35 days in 2018 prior to his suicide. His messaging style with teenage boys was akin to messages one might expect to find between people in a romantic relationship. The difference being, of course, that the author was a 54-year-old man and the recipient being teenage boys.

This pattern of behaviour wherein Reynolds developed trusted and perceived caring relationships with his victims before escalating to sexual abuse or attempting to coerce sexual contact is consistent with someone who worked alone rather than in a collaborative group.

There were concerns received from some participants that Reynolds may have abused detainees within, or on route to and from, the Ashley Youth Detention Centre in Deloraine. The Review found no evidence, including in the review of Reynolds' hard copy files, his daily diaries, phone and other enquiries to support that occurred. The Review found that overwhelmingly, Reynolds' connections to the boys he groomed, coerced and sexually abused were through his close association with, and the positions held, in football and basketball.

OBJECTIVE 2:

To enable victim-survivors or members of the community to report concerns regarding the behaviour of Paul Reynolds.

and

OBJECTIVE 3:

To identify whether Paul Reynolds used his position as a police officer to groom young people and commit child sexual abuse.

Lived experiences

Victim-survivors, their families, current and serving police officers and others came forward to courageously share their experiences of or with Reynolds, some for the first time. Those lived experiences gave the Review insights into Reynolds' conduct, and the slickness with which he had groomed his victims, their families, his colleagues and the wider community.

Sport as a hunting ground

Reynolds' identified and pursued the vast majority of his victims through his affiliation with sport. Throughout his life, Reynolds was heavily involved with football and basketball, in coaching, umpiring and administrative capacities. He was President of the Northern Tasmanian Football Association (**NTFA**) when he suicided. Reynolds was widely reported to have given his time to sport, and the Review was told he was an excellent football coach.

The position of trust he was able to cement in sport from as early as the 1980's until his death in 2018 gave Reynolds the opportunity to befriend, groom and sexually abuse teenage boys. His position in the community as a senior police officer assisted him in establishing trust with members of the sporting community, including parents and guardians, who allowed Reynolds to coach and transport their children to and from training and games, and before and after school. He regularly attended games or training in his police uniform.

The Review heard that Reynolds would offer and perform massages on teenage boys under the guise of therapeutic assistance from as early as the 1980's until the months before his suicide. The teenage boys would generally always be alone with Reynolds when he massaged them in private settings such as football clubrooms for which Reynolds had keys and while the teenage boys were naked or wearing just underpants. In some cases, the massaging led to touching of genitals and other sexualised conduct. The Review found no evidence of Reynolds' holding accreditation in massage or sports therapy and even if he had, the conduct he was engaging in with teenage boys ranged from entirely unacceptable in some cases, to criminal conduct in others.

When Reynolds became NTFA President, there is little doubt his position as a police officer contributed to the perceived credibility that comes with it and assisted in his attaining the President role. He remained in that role until his death. One victim-survivor told the Review:

> *"I genuinely believe that one of the main reasons he wanted to be in the position of NTFA President was so he could have unfiltered access to football change rooms across the north. Open access, which increased his capacity to engage with young men … Paul gave rub downs to so many young players before football games and he had access to every club room across the north west because of the NTFA."*

Reynolds used sport to hide his grooming, coercion and inappropriate relationships with teenage boys in plain sight. His coaching, umpiring and administrative roles facilitated the opportunity for Reynolds to access teenage boys, but also serve as a cover for his conduct. As one participant who was 15 when he met Reynolds recalled:

> *"I met him through footy, he was just always around, always friendly to us young guys. He was also at basketball and that, everyone knew who he was, he was so very funny, the funniest bloke I've ever met. I was drawn to him straight away."*

Another participant who was a teenager when he was groomed by Reynolds remembered "*He did so much good for me. He helped with football. He took me to footy training.*" The same participant received explicit messages, was coerced to send photos of his penis to Reynolds and endured regular 'dick flicks' from Reynolds when he was 15.

Reynolds took a special interest in the Deloraine football club despite not holding any official roles within the Club. One participant told the Independent Reviewer that in the 2016-2018 time period:

> *"He was at all the games. He was even at school football games, which I always thought was strange. There were games where he would park his car and all the boys would go to his car."*

Another victim-survivor spoke of Reynolds' presence at the Deloraine Football Club in an earlier time-period "*He had no connection to the club, but he made his own way in somehow and was always in the changeroom when we were in there. No one questioned it and he was able to come into the change room and engage.*"

From the in-depth analysis of Reynolds' telephone and electronic devices, social media accounts, written and recorded submissions and as told in private sessions by victim-survivors and their families, it is clear that Reynolds' targeting, grooming and sexual abuse of teenage boys followed a consistent pattern.

Sport was always the common hook in establishing and maintaining a connection.

An ineffective reporting mechanism in sport

The Review heard, alarmingly, that a report was made to the highest echelons of the NTFA Board about suspected inappropriate conduct by Reynolds, in particular the witnessing of Reynolds' massaging a teenage boy in the Deloraine Football Club in the months leading up to his death. A search of police holdings show that this was not on-reported to police or any other agency, despite the severity of the allegation. It was clear from those who spoke to the Independent Reviewer that

not all members of the NTFA Board were aware of the allegation, who themselves only became aware of the reasons underpinning Reynolds' suicide from the 2023 Coroner's findings.

Reynolds' presence, without encumbrance or question, in changerooms with teenage boys is also concerning and should have raised alarm bells, particularly given he did not hold a coaching or training role.

Grooming victims

One participant who was groomed and sexually assaulted by Reynolds as a teenager described him as *"just the greatest groomer and ideal human. He was so charismatic everyone wanted to be around him."*

Another victim-survivor who was sexually abused by Reynolds first got to know him through sport as a teenager in the late 1980's, when Reynolds himself was a police officer in his mid-20's. *"Initially, he seemed like a great guy. He would laugh and joke with us and made you feel really comfortable. Just one of the boys."*

Another victim-survivor from that era who was 15 at the time told the Review that *"he was my best friend. He was always crude and sexual in the way he spoke but he was the funniest man I knew. I trusted him – I thought he was the best bloke ever."*

"…just the greatest groomer… He was so charismatic everyone wanted to be around him."

To aid in establishing this level of comfort, trust and rapport with his victims, Reynolds would often engage with his victims using a teenage-like communication style. The word "banter" was used by numerous participants to describe the conversations that Reynolds had with them as teenage boys:

"Almost every interaction I had with Beau, he was asking who I was having sex with, what I thought of this girl, would I do this sexual favour. Then it escalated to him saying "just give me a blow job or suck me off mate". They were just comments at the time that I didn't perceive as strange, just a happy larrikin guy throwing banter around."

Another participant who was a teenage boy when he was groomed by Reynolds from around 2011 told the Review that he saw Reynolds as a friend and mentor at the time, although on reflection as an adult viewed things in stark contrast.

"He was one of those funny old guys, where you think "he is just a funny old guy". You didn't take anything he said seriously. I didn't have any feeling of ill intent but then again looking back, I know that was naivety and he played on it."

That adult reflection and self-questioning was a common theme amongst victim-survivor participants, with another from the 1980's telling the Independent Reviewer *"When I look back now, I think – how did I let that happen? I feel like I was brainwashed."*

A participant who was a teenage boy in the 2007-2009 period attended Reynolds' home under the guise that Reynolds – who was a football coach at his school at the time – would assist him in improving his football game. When he arrived, Reynolds was home alone. He encouraged the boy to allow him to massage him, assuring him that he was qualified in sports massage and that a massage would improve his ability

to play. The participant told the Review that Reynolds began to sexually assault him once he commenced the 'massage'.

> *"When I realised what was happening, I got up, left and never, ever went back to his house. I was smart enough to know what he was doing. As an adult, I think back now about who else it happened to … I didn't report it to anyone, I was just so embarrassed it had happened."*

Reynolds was able to normalise conduct which constituted grooming and sexualised conduct and discourse. The Review heard that Reynolds introduced sexualised conversations and secret-keeping with teenage boys as a grooming tool from as early as the 1980's. He told his victims graphic stories of his own apparent sexual encounters with women to lure the teenage boys into a sense of intimacy and secrecy. The introduction of sexual discourse into conversations escalated, in some cases, to sexual contact with Reynolds under the guise of experimentation which amounted to sexual abuse of teenage boys. One participant to whom Reynolds sent explicit pictures to while he was a teenage boy told the Independent Reviewer:

> *"I didn't really think about it, it was just part of his humour. It's only now that I feel creeped out about it and I think about what his intentions were. That's hard to think about."*

With respect to the 'dick slaps' Reynolds gave him and his friends on a regular basis, the participant told the Independent Reviewer that *"it was a joke, I didn't find it funny but I just let it slide. When he said, "*I want you*" to me, I didn't quite understand what he meant, at that age you don't realise."*

Participants spoke of a commonality around the teenage boys Reynolds targeted, groomed and abused:

> *"Every single one of the guys he connected with that I knew of, none of them had a dad or male role model … Paul would tell you how proud he was of you, and that would have an impact … None of this at the time ever sparked a thought process. We all knew he was a bit weird. But we didn't know any better."*

From the outside, it looked very much like Reynolds was helping and mentoring boys who had a difficult home life or absent parents. But the reality was in stark contrast. A serving police officer who has worked in the child sex-crimes unit during their policing career and knew Reynolds shared their opinion with the Independent Reviewer:

> *"Paedophiles have an innate ability to walk into a room full of children and pick out the child who won't say anything if they are groomed and abused. They are skilled at picking their targets, as Reynolds was."*

As technology advanced, so did Reynolds' use of it as a grooming tool. In the last five years before his death, Reynolds adopted a similar pattern of grooming.

The messages used as examples on the next page were all messages sent by Reynolds to numerous teenage boys in the same timeframe in 2017-2018.

FIGURE 7: Reynolds' grooming pattern

1

FRIEND REQUEST

Reynolds befriends teenage boys he has briefly met in person or been introduced to, always through football, by him sending a 'friend' request on Facebook.



2

INITIATES FRIENDLY CONVERSATION

Once accepted, Reynolds initiates messaging via the Messenger App connected to Facebook and commences seemingly innocent conversations about football. In some cases, boys seemed surprised to receive the initial message from Reynolds, but engage in conversation nevertheless.

You played really well today mate!

That extra training is paying off!

3

MESSAGES BEGIN TO TEST BOUNDARIES

Regular contact is maintained, generally about football or basketball but with the occasional inappropriate message included, testing how far he could go, usually under the guise of 'banter'.

Thought you were hoping to get some hand action!! 😘 I don't care - I love you anyway even if you did it yourself.

Your thingy is big isn't it?

Bet you've got a big slug.

Pulling one off tonight?

Beautiful boy – how are you? Have you been naughty?

4

DECLARATIONS OF LOVE

Grooming escalates through messages with sexual inuendoes becoming more prolific through declarations of feelings and love towards the boy, coupled with immediate apologies.

You are all I could want. Sorry. Don't hate me. I can't help it.

Ohh mate - is there anything you would like me to rub? 😉 [no response] Sorry if I've upset you.

Sorry if I embarrass you - you know how I feel - I'm sorry if that offends you.

I think you are beautiful.

I think I love you.

I love you - and want you a little bit 😘.

I know you think I'm weird but god I love you.

Gee I love you 😔 Sorry if that embarrasses you.

I want you 😘
[no response]
Have I offended you?

5

MOVE TO SNAPCHAT WITH PHOTOS

Reynolds entices the boys to move to the Snapchat App, where messages disappear after a short period and are irretrievable. Explicit pictures are exchanged and in some cases Reynolds coerces boys to take photos of themselves in the shower, of their penis or naked and send to him.



6

MEETING IN PERSON

Meetings are arranged with boys including picking them up in Reynolds' car from school, home, taking them to football training, football on weekends and to give them massages. In some cases, sexual contact is made.

Ok my little lover.

Do you want 🍆😉 or coffee?

😘 want you.

Are you huge?

Toilets? 🍆

There were instances where several teenage victims chastised Reynolds and told him to stop the sexualised messaging. Reynolds often apologised but pressed on with the grooming and coercion nevertheless. In some cases, the grooming led to in-person sexual abuse in the form of genital groping, sexualised massaging and other sexual abuse.

As a matter of course, as boys entered adulthood, Reynolds moved his attention to new victims. One participant who was groomed by Reynolds when he was younger said *"I was in my mid-20's and he just lost interest. He used to pay me so much attention when I was younger but then that just stopped. I wondered what had happened but when I look back with the benefit of hindsight, I realised he was grooming me."*

Sexual abuse

The Independent Reviewer spoke with victim-survivors who recounted their lived experiences of being sexually abused by Reynolds from as early as 1988 until 2018. That is, his offending spanned a period of at least 30 years.

A victim-survivor from the late 1980's told the Independent Reviewer that on numerous occasions, Reynolds masturbated him, performed oral sex on him, and forced him to masturbate and perform oral sex on him. The sexual abuse usually took place in Reynolds' personal car but also Reynolds' police car and at times Reynolds was in his police uniform. His victim was barely 16. He drove his victim to and from sports games which Reynolds umpired and used the opportunity to take his victim to an isolated place in his car and sexually abuse him. The victim-survivor recalled that Reynolds took him back to his residence, which was a police property, and sexually assaulted him there.

Another victim-survivor recalled being sexually assaulted by Reynolds on at least a dozen occasions in the late 1980's. Reynolds would pick him up from his house in the police car and tell his dad that they were going for a kick of the football. Sometimes they would kick the football, and other times they would go for drives. He was first sexually assaulted at the police station, in an office, with numerous instances of oral sex and masturbation following in an isolated location.

A victim-survivor participant told the Independent Reviewer about his lived experience with Reynolds around 2009 – 2011:

> *"The first time he groped me was in [a football club] changeroom. He walked in and grabbed my penis. At least two guys I know, he had walked in grabbed a towel off them, walked over and grabbed their penis. He used to walk into showers (which were open back then) and stand in the change room and in the shower. He was perceived to be a weird old guy, but he was funny and everyone loved him.*
>
> *He used to invite us to his house all the time, pretty regularly, maybe every couple of days. He offered to give us rubdowns after games, come over for dinner, we went to movies with him, he would travel with us with no seatbelts and cram us in the car. I was a kid and it was funny at the time. He was top dog."*

Grooming family

Family members of some teenage boys who had contact with Reynolds were approached by Reynolds offering to massage their children and claiming to have experience in sports massage. Others were offered *"special coaching"* which unsuspecting parents had no reason to question.

"He made out that he was on this big upper level."

Reynolds was viewed by some as *"a father figure and role model"* and laid a foundation of trust with boys and their guardians so that he could spend time with the boys who he eventually groomed and sexually abused. As noted above, often there was only one visible parent and Reynolds was able to access the boys by establishing himself as a father-figure. Parents felt that their children were safe with Reynolds, due to his position in the community as a police officer and in sport, and his ability to be a responsible person looking out for their kids. Review participants spoke of Reynolds picking them up from social events under the guise that they would be safe, and families trusted him. One victim-survivor recalled:

> *"He made out that he was on this big upper level. When he was inspector at Deloraine, would always give lifts at football functions, you could get a free 'taxi' from him after a night out. If you had nowhere to go, sometimes people would go to his house to stay, sleeping on the lounge or floor."*

Analysis of Reynolds' messaging showed that he groomed the parents of his victims by feigning genuine concern over their son(s) and convincing them that he was helping, taking the boys under his wing. Unsuspecting parents of teenage boys expressed gratitude for his assistance, particularly in cases where the parent was having a difficult time with the boy, when in fact Reynolds was creating situations – with the consent of parents – to be alone with boys under the false pretence of being a caring mentor, father-figure, coach, police officer and friend.

When parents found out the truth behind Reynolds' interest in their children, some were shocked whereas others, the Review was told, continue to remain in disbelief or denial.

One parent told the Review *"when I saw the messages and the daily contact - to see the things he was asking for and sending him – it made me feel sick."*

Grooming the general and policing communities

The picture painted of Reynolds as a community member by participants was of a person who was *"larger than life"* and as a police officer who was *"always offering to help." "Everyone knew who he was. He had a huge presence about him."*

One participant who knew Reynolds through football administration recalled watching Reynolds at the football when he was the NTFA President:

> *"He would shake everyone's hand, he would know everyone. People at the football wanted to be around Paul. He was well respected, or at least was perceived to be well respected around all of the football clubs – club presidents would all speak to Paul."*

One serving police officer told the Independent Reviewer of his first meeting with Reynolds:

> *"He made such an overwhelming first impression. He could tell jokes like no other – three-minute monologues followed by a punchline. I thought this guy was incredible, the funniest guy I had ever met. He was the Inspector at Georgetown and I followed his career although didn't really work with him. Everyone knew who Paul Reynolds was … The first I heard about the [sexual abuse] was in the Coroner's report. I had no idea and initially just couldn't believe it to be true."*

Another participant who worked with Reynolds in a sporting organisation capacity recalled that *"he was always making a joke about something, he was so quick-witted. That was just Paul. So many loved him. I couldn't get over how many people were at his funeral."*

It was this public persona which Reynolds presented to the general, sporting and policing communities which assisted Reynolds in continuing his criminal conduct with teenage boys and allowed it to go unreported and undetected for many years. Additionally, with the power imbalance Reynolds held as a high-ranking police officer, Reynolds was able to groom the community. When the Independent Reviewer asked a serving police officer why they thought Reynolds' conduct remained unreported for such a prolonged period of time, they were of the view that:

> *"I think it is because of the way he built relationships. He built trust with people and he could generate it so quickly. He held a reasonably high profile in policing and held positions in football and the NTFA. So if there was a question as to whether he was capable of [grooming or abuse], people would immediately think "no, not Beau"."*

One participant who did not want to attend Reynolds' funeral told the Independent Reviewer that they had fabricated the reason for their non-attendance so they would not be ostracised by community members. This participant had suspected that Reynolds was conducting himself inappropriately with young boys but had not spoken up or reported it for fear of retaliation by community members, many of whom held Reynolds in the highest regard.

It is evident that Reynolds ingratiated himself so convincingly as an upstanding member of the policing and sporting communities that, as the Review was told, some members of the small communities he lived in to this day do not accept or believe that Reynolds had been capable of grooming and sexually abusing children.

"He built trust with people and he could generate it so quickly."

Grooming and sexual abuse in the workplace

Although the vast majority of the victim-survivor participants knew Reynolds through sport, Reynolds did not confine his abuse exclusively to sport-related contexts. One former police officer recalled his interactions with Reynolds when he was a young recruit under his authority:

> *"He sexually assaulted me twice at work. Once was in the office, he came in and groped me. It was a proper grope, not a flick. He would have one hand on my chest and one hand on my private parts and he would hold you there … He would get physical with me all the time."*

Another recalled that in hindsight, he has also been subjected to grooming and inappropriate sexualised contact by Reynolds as a young recruit many years ago without recognising it as such at the time. Despite both participants being over 18 years of age at the time, sexual assault in the workplace is entirely unacceptable conduct. Even worse is that Reynolds behaviour was witnessed by other police officers who did not report it and "*laughed it off*".

Power imbalance and reluctance to report

Although much of Reynolds' grooming and sexual abuse was born out of his connections to victims through sport and the positions he held within sporting organisations, it was his status as a senior police officer which facilitated the power imbalance that allowed Reynolds' conduct to go unreported. One bystander participant witnessed Reynolds groping a teenage boy and then watched as they got up from where they were and walked into a toilet together in a public place. He recalls "*I couldn't believe what I was seeing but there was no question as to what I saw. It was a proper grope and feel.*" He did not confront him "*because he was a copper*" and didn't make a report about what he saw for fear of retribution:

> *"I thought, here is this bloke who is a copper, president of NTFA. Who can I tell? No one. I did end up telling two people, one didn't believe me and one who didn't want to know about it … Everyone liked Paul, he was charismatic. And he was a Police Prosecutor. I knew I couldn't tell anyone else."*

This participant said that he had waited more than five years to tell somebody in authority about the experience, which he did through the Review. He indicated that he did not and would not have reported what he saw to police.

A victim-survivor who was sexually abused by Reynolds in the 1980's told the Review that he would never have reported the abuse to police:

> *"With the sort of guy he was portrayed as, and being a police officer, there is no way I would have felt comfortable reporting what he did to me. Everyone liked him, he was a cop. Who would believe me? I was just a kid."*

Another victim-survivor from the late 1980's expressed regret for not reporting the abuse sooner but explained that he did not say anything to anyone as Reynolds was in a powerful position as a police officer and was respected within the football and basketball communities. He said it was a different generation in the 1980's and it was simply not acceptable to report sexual abuse, particularly if the perpetrator was a police officer.

The power imbalance described above in respect of the general community, also extended to the policing community. Serving and former police officers shared their experiences about being young recruits under Reynolds' authority. One of them told the Independent Reviewer:

> *"He groped my private parts and he was doing it in front of senior officers. It was pretty demoralising but somehow it was accepted by people around him and it was laughed off.*
>
> *As a junior constable he spoke to me at [a Tasmanian police] station, and he came and squeezed my arm hard. He was in your face and had a dominating way of dealing with you.*
>
> *Paul was a senior police officer who was intimidating and influential. I can't believe he had such a hold over me."*

Serving and former police officers expressed that Reynolds made the impression he was connected to the highest echelons of Tasmania Police, which deterred junior police officers from reporting his conduct for fear of impeding their chance of promotion. A serving police officer told the Review that Reynolds *"made sure you knew he was untouchable."*

" Paul was a senior police officer who was intimidating and influential."

One bystander who from a distance saw Reynolds engaging in questionable conduct with a teenage boy said he was reluctant to report it to anyone, let alone police, for fear of reprisal from a community within which Reynolds had achieved popularity and adoration. When asked whether he would have reported the behaviour to an independent body with assured confidentiality, he told the Independent Reviewer:

> *"If I could have reported his behaviour safely and confidentially to someone outside of police, I would have. But he was a senior police officer and I couldn't take the risk of him finding out in this small community so I didn't."*

One retired police officer participant reflected on whether they would have reported Reynolds' conduct if they had been aware of it at the time:

> *"I probably would have but that's easy to say as a [former senior ranking police officer]. But as a junior, it would have been extraordinarily difficult – they would have been so disempowered. When you initially finish training, you go to an environment where you look at people like Reynolds in senior positions as role models. How would they cross that line? I am sure a lot of cops would have said something if they knew but I can understand why junior people wouldn't have. Mind you, I do wonder what happened to those persons who were in positions of authority and influence who must have known about his offending and didn't say anything."*

The extensive phone and messaging communications analysed by the Review show that between 2011 and 2018, Reynolds was sending messages that constitute grooming including the exchanging of explicit photographs. In the months leading up to his death, Reynolds was simultaneously engaging in explicit messaging with no less than 9 teenage boys up to the day of his death. None had reported his conduct before his death save for those approached by Tasmania Police in September 2018.

Similar themes contributing to a reluctance to report were found amongst victim-survivors who participated in the Royal Commission as to those who participated in this Independent Review.

> *"One of the most common barriers to disclosure we heard about in private sessions, which is also supported by research, was shame or embarrassment. These feelings can overwhelm a victim and have a silencing effect that can last for many years or decades … Before disclosing child sexual abuse, victims will often weigh up the potential risks and benefits of telling others about the sexual abuse. Unsurprisingly, victims are less likely to disclose if they feel they won't be believed, expect a negative reaction or response, or believe the disclosure will have negative consequences for them, their families or communities."* [10]

A safe and independent reporting mechanism

The reluctance to report was exacerbated by the inability for victims, their families, bystanders and even police officers to report Reynolds' conduct to a body independent of Tasmania Police. Participants were overwhelmingly supportive of an independent reporting and investigation mechanism which sits outside Tasmania Police for reports of grooming and sexual abuse conduct suspected of Tasmania Police officers and staff. One long-retired police officer told the Independent Reviewer that:

> *"I hope this [Independent Review] will cause those in charge to reflect on what happened with Reynolds. It could be the start of a move towards independent oversight."*

A serving police officer told the Independent Reviewer that he thought there was still some ways to go in ensuring that police officers report conduct of other police officers.

> *"If there was some way to do that anonymously, and with assurances that people you work with wouldn't find out, police would report on each other more. I still think there is some ways to go to break the culture of not wanting to rat on each other. What we need is an independent system that actually works."*

" What we need is an independent system that actually works."

10 *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Final Report: Volume 4, Identifying and disclosing child sexual abuse (2017)*, page 10.

Impacts of an unfinished investigation and lack of support

At the outset of the Review, Tasmania Police provided the Independent Reviewer with the case file relating to the Professional Standards investigation which preceded Reynolds' suicide, and which remained largely unfinished once Reynolds had died. There were some internal investigations completed into whether Reynolds had consorted with, or had inappropriate contacts with criminal entities, and some investigations into financial matters including the unauthorised use of his incapacitated mother's funds, however the investigation into allegations of Reynolds' criminal conduct with teenage boys came to an abrupt halt when Reynolds took his own life. It remained dormant until the Coroner's office decided to conduct an inquest into the suicide deaths of four police officers in 2022.[11] The investigation into Reynolds' alleged inappropriate conduct with teenage boys ought to have been completed in 2018 for a number of important reasons which will be identified below. It was, after all, the basis for the search warrant which was executed on 12 September 2018.

A cursory look at the information on Reynolds' phone and those of his victims, which were in the possession of police at the time of Reynolds' death, would have shown that at a very minimum, he had been grooming and sending explicit photos and pornographic imagery to numerous teenage boys. There were messages which indicated he had been soliciting sexual contact with males. This material was in the possession of Tasmania Police when the highest echelons of the organisation determined that Reynolds was to receive a full police funeral including a guard of honour.

Although the current Police Commissioner has apologised for the police funeral and that apology has generally been received positively by serving and former police officers, some of the police officers who spoke with the Independent Reviewer pondered why it took over five years for that apology to be made when the information relating to Reynolds' conduct had been in the possession of Tasmania Police since 12 September 2018. Police officers the Independent Reviewer spoke to said they felt deceived and misled by messaging around the funeral when it turned out that decision-makers had information in their possession which implicated Reynolds in grooming and sexualised criminal conduct with teenage boys. Some became emotional when articulating the betrayal they felt, followed by anger.

The better course of action may have been to finish the investigation in 2018 and furnish that apology once findings had been made in much closer proximity to his death. This may have assisted with the healing process much sooner for victim-survivors and those members of the policing, sporting and general communities who, as articulated to the Independent Reviewer, continue to feel a sense of betrayal.

In October 2023, the Tasmanian Police Manual was updated to include a section relating to police funerals, which stipulates that in determining whether to approve a police funeral, the Commissioner will consider any current or relevant Professional Standards investigations.

Reynolds' victims, their families and friends, Tasmania Police colleagues, members of the Deloraine and nearby communities, members of sporting organisations

11 Ref inquest

Reynolds was involved with and the wider community, ought to have been informed of the outcome of a finalised investigation. Instead, they were left in the dark until the Coroner published his report on 1 September 2023.

"*Cover-up*" and "*swept under the carpet*" were phrases used by various Review participants to describe their view of the unfinished investigation and noticeable silence of the highest echelons of policing in the months and years following Reynolds' death and funeral. One former police officer said:

> *"What occurred and has become knowledge … has shattered me. To some extent it has only been the Coronial Inquests conducted by Mr Simon Cooper that has exposed a litany of disgraceful failings."*

Many persons directly related to the 2018 unfinished investigation, be it victims who had been interviewed by police in September 2018 or colleagues including first responders, found out from media reports, and not Tasmania Police, that Reynolds had been suspected of misconduct relating to teenage boys and which was the likely cause of his suicide.

> *"After his suicide, there was no follow up, no confirmation that there was evidence to support the claims, no wellbeing support. The investigation just ended."*

> *"Not a message, not a phone call, absolutely nothing."*

Although all but one Review participant was supportive of this Review, many questioned why it was being conducted five years after Reynolds' suicide and not directly after it.

Victims felt guilt, responsibility and blamed themselves for Reynolds' suicide. That guilt was not confined to the teenage boys he groomed at the time of his suicide. It was also felt by bystanders and members of Tasmania Police who blamed themselves for not being there for Reynolds. As one serving officer told the Independent Reviewer:

> *"When I heard that Paul Reynolds had committed suicide, my first thoughts were – why didn't he call me? I could have helped him! That was my initial reaction. I later unofficially heard from contacts why he had killed himself – but that's because I had contacts. Others did not know why and were never told."*

A participant who had known Reynolds through a sporting organisation said:

> *"He was like a father figure to so many. I felt such guilt when he suicided and thought I could have helped him. I went to the funeral and we heard nothing more. For a long time, I lived with that guilt and nothing ever came out – not until the [Coroner's] report. I was in such shock."*

A participant associated with Reynolds through a different sporting organisation told the Review about the betrayal he felt for not being told the truth underpinning Reynolds' suicide until years later when he read the Coroner's findings:

"It was devastating when it happened. It was a week before the Grand Final. The police organised his funeral and the NTFA organised and paid for the wake. We were all broken-hearted. I look back now - to think we had done that – we all trusted someone like that … when I found out the truth, I felt so betrayed. I feel like the police must have known."

A serving police officer who spoke with the Review and went to Reynolds' funeral was of the view that the investigation should have been finalised despite his death:

"I think the common theme was that strong sense of being let down. If I knew the truth I wouldn't have gone to the funeral … The investigation should have been continued because of the potential that other people may have been involved and also for the allegations to be substantiated or not."

I know he is dead, and after the fact there is no criminal responsibility. But for the victims – it would have given them closure and gives them opportunity to speak and have their voice heard.

Another serving police officer told the Independent Reviewer that the Professional Standards investigation into Reynolds should have been completed despite his suicide. He was of the view that the findings should have been shared, at the very least, with Tasmania Police officers.

"They should have been told and if the investigation had been completed, then the outcome should have been shared with the policing community at least. Transparency and closure - that was lacking. If they had completed the investigation, they could have told our people. Learnings could have come out of it too and alleviated the harm."

"… when I found out the truth, I felt so betrayed."

OBJECTIVE 4:

To provide appropriate support to any victim-survivor that chooses to come forward.

When a person is groomed and/or sexually abused, their fundamental ability to choose is taken away by their abuser. Any sense of control is lost to the abuser. The resulting effects on the victim are devastating and, in many cases, life-long.

As the lived experiences demonstrate, Reynolds' victims were young and their choice to not be groomed and/or sexually abused was removed due to a skewed power imbalance which weighed heavily against them through Reynolds' positions in both sport and policing. The power imbalance coupled with the inability to report his misconduct safely provided him with the ideal environment to continue the grooming and abuse in various forms over a 30-year period.

In some cases, Reynolds' victims did not consider anything wrong with his behaviour at the time. His grooming skills were so refined he was able to normalise his behaviour under the guise of "banter" and they were simply too young to understand that conduct which constituted grooming – which in some cases led to sexual abuse – was entirely unacceptable criminal conduct. As is often the case with victims of childhood sexual abuse, the consequences of the abuse may not manifest until victim-survivors have reached adulthood.

This Review process has provided an initial stepping stone in restoring choice and to some extent – control – to victim-survivors. It is also the beginning of a larger process in restoring the ability for victim-survivors to choose and trust.

Two key steps have commenced by way of the Review, the first being to provide a platform to be heard, to be believed. The second is to offer the option of taking part in a restorative process that may assist with healing.

Be heard, be believed

Review participants in some cases were speaking about grooming and/or sexual abuse for the first time when they spoke with the Review. Doing so was a hugely significant step in the lives of those victim-survivors. Some were victims of Reynolds whereas others were victims of sexual abuse at the hands of other police officers. All were offered follow-up support or counselling and some took up that offer. Disclosing child sexual abuse is often an ongoing process and having that first conversation is, in many cases, just the first step, as it was for participants who chose to share their lived experiences with the Review.

An analysis of Reynolds' messaging show that there were a number of victim-survivors who were groomed and/or abused by Reynolds who chose not to speak to the Independent Reviewer and it is important to reiterate that their lived experiences are no less significant than those who chose to come forward and take part in the private sessions. It is not unusual for childhood grooming and abuse to be disclosed many years after the event, when the victim-survivor reaches adulthood. In some cases, victim-survivors choose to never disclose.

Survivors who took part in private sessions with the Royal Commission took an average of 23.9 years to tell someone about the abuse and men often took longer to disclose than women.[12] In the same vein, it may very well be that Reynolds' victim-survivors who have not yet chosen to disclose may choose to do so in the future. Now that the Review has closed, it is imperative that systems are in place for safe reporting going forward should victim-survivors wish to be heard.

One victim-survivor who disclosed his lived experience from over 30 years ago for the first time to the Review said *"I never felt comfortable telling anyone about my experience until now. If I had told you while he was still alive, it would have felt like I was betraying him."*

"If I had told you while he was still alive, it would have felt like I was betraying him."

Restorative justice process

Restorative processes are fast becoming best practice and go some way to providing an option to repair past harms. For example, in 2022, the Australian Sports Commission introduced a restorative program in response to allegations and reviews like this one of historical abuse for Australian Institute for Sport (**AIS**) scholarship athletes from 1981 to 2013 who experienced harm from inappropriate practices or abuse as a result of their time at the AIS. The restorative program provides access to counselling and wellbeing services, participation in a restorative engagement and a one-off financial payment for eligible applicants. The Defence Abuse Response Workforce was established in 2012 for former and serving Australian Defence Force (**ADF**) members who suffered sexual abuse, physical abuse, sexual harassment and workplace harassment, and bullying in the ADF prior to April 2011. Over 1700 former and serving ADF members chose to take part in reparation, counselling, and/or restorative engagement, with referrals made to police or the Chief of Defence Force.

Tasmania Police have already explored and implemented multiple forms of restorative justice processes in the Family Violence space. This has been done through consultation with the Family Violence Review Committee, which is chaired by a representative independent to Tasmania Police. Restorative justice processes provide a victim-survivor with the choice to sit down, in a safe environment, with persons who have harmed them, or persons in positions of authority who did not prevent the harm or who have the power to prevent harm in the future. It provides a platform for victim-survivors to share their lived experiences with persons in authority and responsibility and can assist in recalibrating power imbalances which in many cases – like Reynolds – facilitated grooming and sexual abuse.

Restorative justice processes are not a one-way street, but rather provide those in positions of leadership the opportunity to understand the harm suffered by victim-survivors and educate themselves on how to respond in a trauma-informed and victim-centred manner. Listening to the lived experiences of victim-survivors through restorative justice processes is powerful, confronting and necessary. Most importantly, understanding how past harms provide those in positions of

12 *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Final Report: Volume 4, Identifying and disclosing child sexual abuse (2017)*, page 9.

authority and leadership with the insight to assist in establishing systems which may prevent future harms.

As part of the Review, the Commissioner took part in a restorative justice meeting with a victim-survivor of historical grooming and sexual abuse. The victim-survivor was not a victim of Reynolds but rather a victim of another police officer who groomed and sexually abused her from the ages of 8 to 15 in the late 1970's and early 1980's. A search conducted by Tasmania Police in response to an RFI showed the perpetrator died over 30 years ago.

The first time that this victim-survivor fully shared her lived experience of grooming and sexual abuse was with the Independent Reviewer. She spoke of the betrayal of trust by a police officer in a position of authority known and admired by her family, who groomed and sexually abused her over a seven-year period:

> *"I had no one to tell. I was too scared to speak up and tell anyone because in those days, people didn't believe this sort of thing could happen to children, especially not by a police officer. My [family] considered him a good friend and member of the community."*

This victim-survivor carried the burden of her abuse for over 40 years before speaking up. She told the Independent Reviewer and the Commissioner that she took part in the restorative justice process with the Commissioner because she wanted to share with her what she went through. She also said:

> *"I'm really hoping that my story also encourages others to come forward that have also been impacted like me, no matter how long ago it was. I'm just grateful that I now feel like I have a voice."*

When the Independent Reviewer asked the Commissioner about her reflections after the restorative meeting with this victim-survivor, she said:

> *"I got the opportunity to see firsthand the courage and bravery it takes for a victim-survivor to come forward, and to better understand the long-term effects of their trauma."*

"I was too scared to speak up … people didn't believe this sort of thing could happen to children, especially not by a police officer."

Wellbeing support for Tasmania Police

Wellbeing support is offered to all members of Tasmania Police, and is managed through the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management (**DPFEM**) Wellbeing Support Directorate (**the Directorate**). The Directorate was established in 2019, and offers confidential, proactive, and preventative mental health and wellbeing services to DPFEM staff including: accident, illness, hospitalisation assistance; counselling (including relationship, grief, alcohol and drug, psychological); health coaching; injury management; peer support programs; transition pathways (e.g. to retirement or alternate employment); trauma (critical incident) support; victim/witness support; wellbeing housing (e.g. in urgent situations); wellbeing support officers (allocated for individual clients) and support for work-related difficulties. Within the Directorate exists the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Program which aims to provide support to staff following exposure to a critical incident.

The Directorate has three offices across the state (in the Southern, Northern and North Western Districts) and importantly their services are available 24/7 via contacting 03) 6173 2873.

Prior to the establishment of the Directorate (and at the time of Reynolds' death) the support services provided to Tasmania Police members existed within the People and Culture team of DPFEM. Between 1996 and 2015, only one full time welfare officer was employed to provide support to Tasmania Police and in 2016 there were two. At the time of Reynolds' suicide, there were only four people delivering wellbeing support services to all DPFEM staff across the state. With the introduction of the Directorate there has been an increase in Wellbeing Support Officers, and the Independent Reviewer understands there are now eight permanent Wellbeing Support Officers and thirty Wellbeing Support Peers, situated in the Southern, Northern and North Western Districts, who are a combination of sworn and unsworn members of DPFEM. The Directorate are also supported by a number of psychologists, client managers and support staff.

It is evident to the Independent Reviewer that wellbeing support is taken most seriously by DPFEM and that the provision of those services has improved and evolved over time.

Since the announcement of this Review, the Directorate has provided and will continue to provide support to current and former serving members of Tasmania Police who have been affected by the nature of Reynolds' offending and the reason for his suicide, as well as the Review and the outcomes of it. The Independent Reviewer encourages any current and former serving members of Tasmania Police to reach out to the Directorate for support if needed.

OBJECTIVE 5:

To identify if there has been any misconduct by police officers involved in the investigation of any allegations against Paul Reynolds.

The 2008 investigation referred to earlier in this Report (page 19), should have uncovered Reynolds' conduct towards teenage boys – which based on the lived experiences heard through this Review had been occurring since at least 1988 – but did not. Analysis of the 2008 file relating to the investigation, and private sessions with persons involved in it, does not show evidence of misconduct by police officers, insofar that it would constitute a breach of the Code of Conduct specified in section 42 of the *Police Service Act 2003*.

It did however expose that there was far too much focus on the risk of reputational damage to Reynolds, which was prioritised over risk to the safety of young people and was demonstrative of the *"what if he didn't do it?"* rhetoric taking precedent over the question – as it should be posed – *"but what if he did?"*. This may have been due to Reynold's innate ability to groom the general and policing community into believing that he was simply not capable of sexually abusing teenage boys, as is typical grooming behaviour. Still, the investigating officers in 2008 ought to have been 'alive' to this issue, which was raised in the context of policing a decade earlier in the Wood *Royal Commission into the NSW Police Force (Volume IV: The Paedophile Inquiry)*:

> *"It is a mistake to assume, in any investigation, that the holding of a particular position of responsibility or eminence automatically disqualifies a person from being a suspect. Sad to say, it can be a trait of a paedophile that he seeks and attains positions where he can be in contact with, or have influence over, children. Also sad but true is the fact that the paedophile may well be extremely plausible, devious in the exploitation of children, and capable of gulling those caring for them and of covering up his activities."*[13]

The 2008 investigation is also demonstrative of the inadequate investigative capabilities that were available in 2008 for independently investigating allegations of serious police misconduct and the need to strengthen those powers even today. The allegations against Reynolds ought to have been investigated by an independent body with independent reporting and investigative capabilities with a full suite of coercive powers in 2008, but no such body existed.

In the present day, all allegations of sexual abuse involving a police officer as a perpetrator are overseen by a Review Committee, chaired by a person independent of police.

In 2008, the Tasmanian Integrity Commission had not yet been established. However, even if it had existed in the form that it does today, it may not have uncovered the extent of Reynolds' grooming and abuse. As this Report will show in "Integrity Commissions – a comparative analysis of Australian jurisdictions" on

13 *Royal Commission into the NSW Police Service, Final Report, Volume IV: The Paedophile Inquiry (August 1997)* at page 15.

page 51, the legislative investigative powers of the Tasmanian Integrity Commission applicable to serious misconduct of police officers falls short in comparison to other Australian agency jurisdictions and are not fit for purpose.

If an independent integrity had existed with powers akin to, for example, the NSW Law Enforcement Corruption Commission (**LECC**) or the West Australian Corruption and Crime Commission (**WACCC**), which have available a suite of powers such as intercept and surveillance capabilities and coercive hearings, the outcome may have been different. Considering Reynolds extensively utilised messaging and his phone to groom victims, telephone and message interception would have been a useful tool to uncover the extent of Reynolds' contact with teenage boys. Coercive hearings – with strict non-disclosure directions to protect the testimony of compelled witnesses – could have also exposed information which may not have otherwise been attainable in a small community.

"… it can be a trait of a paedophile that he seeks and attains positions where he can be in contact with, or have influence over, children."

OBJECTIVE 6:

To identify organisational learnings.

Breaking down a pervasive code of silence

From the outset, it is important to note that police culture has changed significantly since the 1980's, when the first accounts of grooming and sexual abuse by Reynolds as told by Review participants stem. In particular, the 'Blue Code of Silence', as it has been referred to by participants, has diminished, in part due to the evolution of the Professional Standards Command but also due to awareness and accountability within Tasmania Police ranks regarding the absolute unacceptability of criminal conduct such as that of Reynolds.

As noted above, the Review found no intentional 'cover ups' of Reynolds' sexual abuse of teenage boys while he was a serving police officer. Still, the propensity to be more concerned about Reynolds' reputational damage over the risk to teenage boys in the community is indicative that in 2008 at least, remnants of the 'blue code of silence' still existed. The full and frank report submitted on 6 September 2018 by exemplary police officers in Reynolds' small community demonstrates that the code of silence had disintegrated further and was being replaced by a culture which calls out unacceptable conduct from within policing itself.

Serving and former Tasmania Police officers expressed their disgust, dismay, betrayal and bitter disappointment to the Independent Reviewer that Reynolds had, as a serving police officer, groomed and sexually abused teenage boys over such a prolonged period. One serving police officer said *"knowing that there was a paedophile in our ranks makes me sick to the stomach."*

Another said *"I have an anger in me and a sense of failure because I didn't see it. Paul Reynolds has destroyed for me so much of what I loved about policing. What he did was unforgivable."*

" I have an anger in me and a sense of failure because I didn't see it ..."

There is little doubt that Reynolds was adept at concealing or at least masking his predatory behaviour towards teenage boys from those close to him in the policing community. Reynolds relied on the traditions of 'old school' policing which were born out of the same 'us and them' mentality referred to in the Wood Royal Commission in 1997.[14] He told police officers who executed the search warrant at his house on 12 September 2018 that *"this is career destroying"* and *"what a way to end a 40 year career"*.

Reynolds graduated from the Police Academy in 1980 where loyalty to one's policing colleagues usurped all. One former police officer who had known Reynolds throughout the entirety of his career told the Review that *"20 years ago there was a camaraderie."* Although that participant saw that camaraderie as a positive, it is clear that this impenetrable camaraderie assisted in concealing Reynolds' conduct, even if not intentionally. As previously

14 *Wood Royal Commission into the NSW Police Force, Final Report (May 1997), Volume 1* at 6.12 - 6.17.

noted, lived experiences show that groping and sexual assault in the workplace was laughed off or ignored by those who observed it and Reynolds simply got away with it. Another retired police officer told the Review that *"the culture around the time that Reynolds was a junior police officer was that you will support your colleagues no matter what, or you will be a pariah."*

A serving police officer told the Review that despite improvements over time, it was their observation that *"what stops police officers reporting on each other is the culture. There is no anonymity when you report other police officers."*

> *"… what stops police officers reporting on each other is the culture."*

What has become apparent to the Independent Reviewer throughout the course of the Review is that the culture within Tasmania Police has evolved for the better. The Independent Reviewer is confident that the serving police officers she spoke with, if faced with a situation whereby they were aware of or had suspicions concerning the conduct of a police officer akin to that of Reynolds, they would report it.

The evolution of complaint investigation and management - Tasmania Police

Who polices the police?

The earliest instances of grooming and abuse by Reynolds were reported as taking place from around 1988. There may have been earlier incidents. They were reported to have taken place in isolated, small communities on Tasmania's west coast, when safe reporting mechanisms simply did not exist. To be clear, despite the lack of safe reporting mechanisms and the fact these incidents took place over 35 years ago does not in any way diminish their severity nor the betrayal of trust at the hands of a police officer. Indeed, that betrayal of trust was exacerbated by the victim-survivors' fear of retaliation by Reynolds as an officer of the law and the authority and power he was bestowed with if they did attempt to expose his criminal conduct.

Since 1988, reporting mechanisms have evolved. In 2018, it was the filing of an internal complaint to the Tasmania Police Professional Standards Command that Reynolds' conduct was finally exposed. Since 2018, Tasmanian Police complaints management processes with respect to police misconduct have continued to advance.

Background

The following is a timeline of the complaints mechanisms and management processes that have existed within Tasmania Police from 1898 to date.

Between 1898 and 2003, police misconduct was managed through the *Police Regulation Act 1898* and associated Regulations. This legislation had no specific complaints reporting mechanism for concerns (either by police officers, victims or members of the public) to be raised against police officers. Instead, the only requirement within the legislation was that all reports were to be directed to the Commissioner of Police. The Commissioner of Police then reviewed those reports and made a determination. The Review was told that the practical effect of this meant reports by police officers concerning potential corruption or misconduct were directed to the Police Commissioner either in writing or in person.

The fact the Commissioner of Police was in charge of reviewing the reports and making any applicable determination would have undoubtedly impacted and contributed to reluctancy in reporting, particularly within the police service itself. During this period, victims and members of the public had no clear reporting mechanism. What is important to note is that even if a reporting mechanism existed for the public during this period, the lived experience of participants show it is unlikely they would have reported in any event, given the fears of not being believed and inability to report anonymously. 2004 saw the introduction of the *Police Service Act 2003* which replaced the previous legislation. The Act introduced a Code of Conduct for police officers and importantly outlined legislative requirements for complaint management, registration, investigation, and determination. The most important legislative change was that the complaint did not need to identify the complainant, which allows civilian and police officer complainants to remain anonymous. Despite the legislative anonymity for complainants, participants still indicated to the Review that police officers, victims and members of the public are still reluctant to report about police, to police.

In 2010 DPFEM undertook a review of the existing process for complaint investigation and management which resulted in the introduction of a Graduated Management Model (**GMM**). In line with the introduction of the GMM, the Professional Standards Command was created. The responsibilities of the Professional Standards Command included:

- Promotion and oversight of professional and ethical behaviour within the Department;
- Conducting investigations into serious misconduct;
- Providing advice and recommendation on training and policy as a result of investigations conducted, as well as taking action to address emerging issues that may affect professionalism and ethical standards;
- Recording and managing internal complaints or misconduct allegations, supporting other districts to manage and resolve investigations in to misconduct;
- Reviewing operation procedure and compliance with policy, and
- Being the operational point of contact between Tasmania Police and the Integrity Commission and Ombudsman.

In the same year the GMM was implemented (2010), the Tasmanian Integrity Commission became operational which saw Tasmania Police subjected to independent oversight for the first time. The Tasmanian Integrity Commission is not a law enforcement agency but rather operates as an oversight mechanism. Whilst the introduction of the Tasmanian Integrity Commission was an important development in the accountability and management of complaints against members of Tasmania Police, its investigative powers are lacking and by comparison to like agencies across Australia, are not fit for purpose. This will be discussed further below.

In mid-2013, a joint review of the GMM was commenced by Tasmania Police and the Integrity Commission affording the opportunity to assess and review how the complaints management system was working and how it could be improved. As a result of the review, in 2018, all conduct and complaint matters were managed in accordance with the Commissioner's Directions for Conduct and Complaint Management, and Compliance Review (known as **Abacus**). Abacus prescribes how Tasmania Police respond to all conduct, complaint and compliance matters, including internally raised matters. The Deputy Commissioner of Police has overall

responsibility for ensuring discipline is maintained with Tasmania Police and has assigned day-to-day responsibility for conduct and complaint management, and compliance review to the Commander, Professional Standards. All complaints made by members of the public and raised internally by officers are recorded, managed, and stored in an IT system designed for complaint management, with the ability for matters to be raised anonymously. The review also saw Professional Standards having statewide responsibility for two divisions comprising Internal Investigations and Management Review.

The introduction of Professional Standards and Abacus has seen a significant improvement in the management of conduct and complaint matters. The Integrity Commission conducted a detailed review in November 2021, titled **A Review of Tasmania Police's New Conduct and Complaint Management Policy, Abacus**. That review noted that overall Abacus was working as intended and had resulted in improvements in the management of complaints within Tasmania Police, particularly with respect to timeliness of complaints management, contact between police officers and complainants, and the investigation of the matter themselves.

Abacus has been subject to continuous review and amendment and is due to be further reviewed in the near future. At the Commissioner's direction, a public portal with the option for anonymity for members of the public to report complaints and feedback directly to the complaint management system is in the process of implementation. The Review welcomes this implementation, particularly given the propensity – as this Review has shown – for victims, police officers and members of the community alike to still fear retribution, even if the risk of it occurring is low. Lack of anonymity contributes to that reluctancy to report, which was particularly relevant in relation to the conduct of Reynolds.

Obstacles to reporting

"…I thought [his behaviour] was odd, but didn't think to say anything."

Despite significant changes in the internal reporting and complaints mechanisms about police through Professional Standards, there is still room for further change within the current model.

Police reporting other police as perpetrators is still a difficult area and is perhaps an after-effect of the pervasive code of silence which sat over policing historically. In effect, police are being asked to report suspected misconduct without any particular minimum threshold which may be applicable to 'regular' police work, concepts like 'reasonable suspicion', 'reasonable belief' or 'probable cause' are not relevant. This is now reflected in Abacus, which stipulates that a member who becomes aware of another member committing a serious offence or crime or a breach of the Code of Conduct must report the matter immediately to a senior officer.

Seemingly innocent behaviours in Reynolds' case were not reported because, when viewed in isolation, may not have seemed like viable observations to make a complaint about. For example, Review participants spoke of having heard that Reynolds was giving massages to boys at the football club which was described as *"strange, because I don't think he had any training in massage or physio, but I didn't really think anything of it"* whereas another said *"I always saw him with teenage boys and know he bought them new shoes and clothes, which I thought was odd, but didn't think to say anything."* Another said *"he always had teenage boys in the*

car with him. It didn't seem right somehow, but I didn't have any reason to think something was wrong."

Under the system in place today, police officers – and members of the general public – would be encouraged to report this conduct to Professional Standards or Crime Stoppers. What has become evident as this Review progressed is that behaviours that seem innocent – if not a little out of place – actually formed part of the grooming and abuse process which Reynolds had applied for years. This is consistent with the findings of the Royal Commission with respect to grooming, which were quoted earlier in this Report.

Despite the inroads that have been made, police officers who are expected to report suspected misconduct need to feel the ability to trust that their reporting is safe and feel supported in doing so. What remains a live issue for some serving police officers the Independent Reviewer spoke to is that the mechanisms for internal reporting is, to them, not a place where they feel they could safely report without fear of repercussions. This may be a subjective mistrust for some, although it is likely that it still exists more broadly throughout policing. The fact that Tasmania is a small jurisdiction also brings with it complexities and impediments including that police do not feel confident that they can safely report about suspected misconduct of other police officers without being singled out or identified.

The *perception* that reporting isn't safe, wholly confidential or without risk of retaliation may never be overcome and for this reason, the reality is that some people will never utilise a complaints mechanism that sits within Tasmania Police when it comes to reporting police officers – and that applies to both the general public and members of the policing community. This is certainly not unique to Tasmania Police and was highlighted in the Baroness Casey Report. Review participants from interstate integrity and regulatory agencies reiterated to the Independent Reviewer the importance of complaints mechanisms which operate independently of police, to provide a catch-all for those persons (including members of the policing community) who want to report police misconduct safely and securely, independently of police. It also provides victim-survivors with the choice they are entitled to, being in control over when and how they report.

In Reynolds' case, it is understandable that his victims would not consider reporting the grooming and sexual abuse to police, because Reynolds was a high-ranking police officer. Trust in police was diminished and the fear of being found out – and the repercussions that could come from peers or Reynolds himself – was too great a risk to take. As victim-survivors saw it, there was no safe independent complaints mechanism, and as a result, victims remained silent for 30 years.

Victim support and management is a crucial tool in encouraging and promoting an environment in which members of the general and policing communities feel safe and secure to report. Victim support within Tasmania Police presently sits within the Professional Standards Command, which is managed by one sworn police officer, supported by the Wellbeing Support Directorate. This one sworn police officer is tasked with the role of not only managing and supporting the victim, but also in conducting the investigation. This is not a trauma-informed approach to victim management, and would no doubt be acting as a barrier for victim reporting. This is particularly so in circumstances where victims often do not want to pursue criminal charges, however, do wish to make a complaint or share their story. Conversely, there are circumstances in which a complaint is unable to be pursued by the Director

of Public Prosecutions or Tasmania Police, for either legal or evidentiary reasons, and this decision can often be a difficult one to convey to the victim. Due to the complexities between the investigation process and the specialised skills required to ensure adequate and appropriate support is provided to victims, it is clear to the Independent Reviewer, that the role of victim support/management should be separate to that of the role of an investigator.

Integrity Commissions – a comparative analysis of Australian jurisdictions

Victim-survivors, their families, bystanders, and serving or former Tasmania Police officers who participated in the Independent Review showed overwhelming support for an independent complaints-handling mechanism and investigative body with sufficient powers over law enforcement officers.

Tasmania's Integrity Commission was established by the *Integrity Commission Act 2009* (**Integrity Commission Act**) and as noted above, commenced operating in 2010. As the following comparative analysis will show, the Tasmanian Integrity Commission's powers *vis-à-vis* police are significantly lesser to analogous integrity commissions and bodies with jurisdiction over law enforcement in other Australian States and Territories.

"Who polices the police?"

Strengthening investigative powers to assist in the detection of police misconduct such as that perpetuated by Reynolds for over 30 years would be a step in the right direction to answering the question raised by several Review participants: "*Who polices the police?*"

The Independent Reviewer spoke with CEOs and Commissioners from integrity bodies and agencies in other Australian jurisdictions about best practice, valuable statutory powers and effective processes to assist in making recommendations on how to strengthen the powers needed in Tasmania.

Coercive powers including intercept and surveillance capability, coercive hearings with adequate protections and unfettered access to police holdings were identified as key tools in detecting and investigating law enforcement misconduct. A collaborative, joint approach between integrity agencies and police was identified as a significant operational benefit and one which has the most impact institutionally.

> *"Police need to own the problem. If they don't own the problem, they just pass it to someone else."*

In its current state, the Tasmanian Integrity Commission does not measure up to its interstate counterparts with respect to investigative powers over law enforcement officers for serious misconduct such as that perpetuated by Reynolds.

The LECC is a stand-alone agency with exclusive jurisdiction over law enforcement officers (NSW Police, administrative staff and NSW Crime Commission staff). The LECC also has jurisdiction over former police officers and staff, provided the conduct being investigated occurred while the person was an officer or employee. LECC is a separate agency to the NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption and is led by a Chief Commissioner, and Commissioner, who are appointed by the Governor, and the Chief Executive Officer and Executive

Director Operations. The LECC is entirely independent of NSW Police and the Crime Commission.

One of the key objectives of the LECC, as found in section 3(b) of the *Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016* is to *"provide for the independent detection, investigation and exposure of serious misconduct and serious maladministration within the NSW Police Force and the Crime Commission that may have occurred, be occurring, be about to occur or that is likely to occur."* Importantly, this aim is coupled with the proposition that NSW Police and the Crime Commission still retains responsibility when it comes to investigating and preventing misconduct within those agencies (at section 3(f)). Despite the LECC's independent status and powers including oversight, responsibility to investigate and prevent misconduct still rests with the NSW Police and the Crime Commission. That is, police still "own" the investigation, with oversight by the LECC. As elaborated below, this is a key takeaway which should be considered in order to strengthen Tasmania's serious police misconduct investigation and detection ability.

The LECC has available to it a suite of coercive powers applicable to serious misconduct or serious maladministration matters including the conduct of public or private coercive examinations and summoning witnesses with powers of arrest if a summons is not complied with. A person summoned as a witness before the Commissioner for examination must answer questions and there is no presumption of the right to silence. Non-compliance with a summons or refusal to answer questions at an examination can result in contempt proceedings before the Supreme Court and is punishable by up to two years' imprisonment.

There are stringent non-disclosure protections to ensure confidentiality and secrecy and breach of non-disclosure orders can result in up to 12 months' imprisonment.

The LECC Commissioner has the power to issue search warrants with obstruction to their execution punishable by imprisonment. Additionally, the LECC Commissioner or delegate can apply for surveillance and intercept warrants.

NSW police officers and former police officers cannot be appointed to, employed in or engaged by, or seconded to the service of, the Commission for the purpose of exercising or assisting with investigations of serious misconduct or serious maladministration.

The Victorian Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission (**IBAC**), the Queensland Crime and Corruption Commission (**CCC**), the WACCC and the South Australian Independent Commission Against Corruption (**ICAC**) are bodies independent of police charged with jurisdiction over state law enforcement officers with designated statutory powers. Coercive powers include public or private examinations or hearings, which are regularly utilised and with powers of arrest for failure to appear available. There are strict non-disclosure directives available to protect the integrity of private hearings with criminal consequences if breached.

IBAC, ICAC, the CCC and WACCC Commissioners have the ability to seek telecommunications and surveillance warrants independently of police, powers to order the production of documents and issue or seek search warrants, with criminal penalties for obstruction. ICAC, IBAC, the CCC and WACCC must be given access to the databases and confidential holdings of the police services they oversee, with undetectable access, as one integrity agency representative who spoke with this Review noted, as being an important tool for accountability and detection of serious

misconduct or corruption. IBAC, ICAC, the CCC and WACC are able to conduct independent or joint investigations with law enforcement bodies or can monitor or oversee investigations relating to police misconduct being conducted by police.

The Tasmanian Integrity Commission does have an oversight function over Tasmania Police officers but with fewer powers than like agencies in other jurisdictions. The Tasmanian Integrity Commission is not a law enforcement agency, unlike ICAC, CCC, LECC and WACCC and does not mirror their investigative functions, capabilities or capacity. Although the Tasmanian Integrity Commission has powers to hold private or public inquiries, they are not utilised, with one private inquiry held since its inception and none relating to Tasmania Police matters.

The Tasmanian Integrity Commission is not listed as an 'eligible authority' or a 'criminal law enforcement agency' under the *Telecommunications (Intercept and Access) Act 1979 (Cth)* (**TIA Act**) unlike its state or territory integrity agency counterparts in NSW, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia, noting that recommendations have recently been made for the ACT Integrity Commission to also join that list.[15] Consequently, the Tasmanian Integrity Commission – unlike Tasmania Police, which *is* listed as an 'eligible authority' and 'criminal law enforcement agency' in the TIA Act – is barred from seeking intercept capability in the form of interception warrants, stored communication warrants and telecommunication data requests. That means to this day, the Tasmanian Integrity Commission could not independently covertly intercept live telecommunications including calls, text messages or third-party messaging platforms such as Messenger or WhatsApp, even if faced with another Reynolds-like scenario. It cannot, under the TIA Act, obtain stored communications such as email, SMS or voice messages stored on a carrier's server.

Particularly given that the grooming perpetuated by Reynolds was predominantly by way of thousands of messages on his telephone via various messaging platforms, SMS and phone calls – which could have legally been intercepted under a TIA Act warrant – the importance of independent, properly regulated intercept powers is paramount.

Powers relating to interception of personal communications are a direct invasion of a person's privacy and must be used carefully and with stringent safeguards, oversight and accountability. The TIA Act only allows intercepts for strictly permitted purposes which relate, among other things, to the investigation by an eligible authority of a 'prescribed offence' which is generally a serious offence or one punishable by imprisonment for at least three years. Reasonably suspected sexual abuse of a teenage boy would, of course, fall into that category.

No intercept warrants were sought by Tasmania Police in relation to either the 2008 or 2018 investigations into allegations against Reynolds which with the benefit of hindsight, could have been an alternative course of action to seizing his phone.

15 See *Report of the Independent Statutory Review of the ACT's Integrity Commission Act 2018, (November 2023)* Recommendations 15, 16 and 17 at p age 98.

Review of the Integrity Commission Act

The Hon William Cox AC, RFD, ED, QC and former Chief Justice of Tasmania was appointed to conduct an independent review of the *Integrity Commission Act* in November 2015 (**the Cox Review**), with the Report tabled in Parliament on 24 August 2016, making 55 Recommendations to improve it. The Tasmanian Government supported 47 of the recommendations made, 18 with further comment, and rejected eight of them, including Recommendation 35:

> *"That the Commonwealth be asked to amend the Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979 (Cth) so as to grant the Commission the status of a criminal law enforcement agency for the purposes of that Act."*[16]

In November 2016, the Government Response to Recommendation 35 was as follows:

> *"It is not considered appropriate that the Commission have access to intercepted materials and data. Access to such data is currently strictly limited to national security and the investigation of serious criminal matters and the Government does not favour supporting access outside of these reasons."*[17]

Recommendation 15, which related to the Integrity Commission retaining jurisdiction over complaints referred to an agency or public authority for action, was also rejected, in part because the Government of the day was of the view that it:

> *"… tends to blur lines of accountability and create tension and possibly inconsistency around the exercise of powers and performance of functions. In some cases, it may also create a conflict with the legal duties of that entity, e.g. the office of constable which is independent in relation to the investigation of alleged crime – even from certain directions from police command."*

In July 2022, a Discussion Paper was released by the Tasmanian Attorney General seeking submissions on reforms of the Integrity Commission Act relating to those Cox Review recommendations not yet adopted or implemented. The outcome of that process is still pending.

16 *Independent Review of the Integrity Commission Act 2009, Report of the Independent Reviewer (May 2016)* at page 94.
17 *Tasmanian Government Response Independent Review of the Integrity Commission Act 2009* (November 2016) at page 10.

Other safeguarding and reporting mechanisms

Office of the Independent Regulator

The Tasmanian Government enacted the *Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023* (**CYSO Act**), which commenced on 1 July 2023 and established the Office of the Independent Regulator (**OIR**). The CYSO Act also established Tasmania's Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework (**the Framework**) which all Government Agencies who engage with children and young people (including those that provide facilities specifically for use by children who are supervised by a relevant organisation) are required to follow. As of 1 July 2024, Sporting and Community Organisations have been included within the CYSO Act and are now subject to the Framework. There are various reporting requirements on heads of organisations within the CYSO Act. The OIR can conduct own-motion investigations based on reports. Under the CYSO Act, the OIR has right of entry powers, powers to require the production of documents and information, and powers to request any person to attend interviews. Broad powers also exist in the CYSO Act, for the OIR and relevant entities to share information provided the disclosure of the information is necessary to either meet the purposes of the Act, the promotion of the safety and wellbeing of children, or for a prescribed purpose.[18]

Under the Regulator's Reportable Conduct Scheme, organisations (which now includes sporting and community organisations as noted above) are required to report concerns of conduct related to child abuse involving adult workers in their organisation to the OIR and investigate these concerns within a specific and limited time period. The Independent Reviewer notes the inherent dangers associated with sporting organisations investigating suspected grooming and abuse of children themselves at the same time or instead of police, as is elaborated on further below.

Although specifically targeted towards organisations including sporting organisations, members of the community are able to report conduct or concerns to the OIR directly and can do so anonymously.

The OIR have and are continuing to conduct community capability and awareness training for organisations across the state. The OIR is actively encouraging organisations to reach out to the OIR and seek assistance regarding their obligations under the CYSO Act and how to go about making a report and conducting an investigation.

Crime Stoppers

Crime Stoppers was introduced to Tasmania in 1994. It is an organisation aimed at providing the community with an avenue for anonymous reporting of crimes and suspicious activity. Crime Stoppers is not part of Tasmania Police but rather acts as an intermediary by filtering information from the hotline to Tasmania Police directly. Although it is not targeted or advertised as a mechanism whereby complaints against police officers can be made, it is another reporting avenue available.

18 Section 40, *Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023.*

Reporting and investigating suspected abuse in sport

Sport has long provided predators with a platform to identify, groom and abuse young people. One need look no further than the 2021 Australian Human Rights Commission's *Change the Routine: Report on the Independent Review into Gymnastics in Australia*,[19] the 2022 Sport Integrity Australia's *Independent Review into the Western Australian Institute of Sport Women's Artistic Gymnastics Program*,[20] the 2023 Victorian Racing Integrity Commissioner's *Independent Review into Victorian Racing Industry Victim Support and Complaint Processes,*[21] the 2020 documentary on Gymnastics USA – *Athlete A*[22] and *The Whyte Review June 2022* – an independent investigation commissioned by Sport England and UK Sport following allegations of mistreatment within the sport of gymnastics.[23] History shows that turning a blind eye to misconduct in the sporting context has been common, for reasons including brand protection. Shining the spotlight on misconduct in one's own sport may result, for example, in the loss of sponsorship, membership or cause reputational damage.

Despite the existence of agencies such as Sport Integrity Australia and locally, the OIR, which has Tasmanian sporting organisations within its purview, sports are still required to investigate themselves, which historically has been ineffective. Small sporting organisations are often staffed and/or managed by volunteers who may understand the rules of the game or sporting strategy but simply do not possess the skills – or resources – to undertake investigations. The danger is that people who work or volunteer in sporting organisations may simply not recognise and report conduct which constitutes grooming or harmful behaviours because they do not have the expertise, knowledge, time or resources. In Reynolds' case, it was not evident to those who knew or worked with him in football or basketball that he was subtly grooming the boys he was coaching or associating with in changerooms, which culminated into sexual coercion or sexual abuse. Sending inappropriate messages – or even mildly explicit images – may to some simply not register as being all that harmful when in fact it may – as it was in Reynolds' case – be part of a systematic pattern of grooming which led to coercion and sexual abuse.

Conversely, as noted above, in cases where sporting organisations embark on investigations into suspected grooming or sexual abuse behaviours independently of police, there exists an inherent risk that the perpetrator could destroy important evidence of criminal conduct once alerted to it.

Even with guidance from the OIR, most sporting organisations are still not equipped – or staffed – to investigate misconduct, which in turn still leaves reporting gaps.

A key learning from this Review is that police hold a crucial role when it comes to the reporting and investigation of grooming and sexual abuse in sport. Grooming which leads to, or is intended to lead to, sexual abuse of children is a serious crime and falls under the jurisdiction of law enforcement for investigation. If a child is in immediate danger or at risk of being sexually assaulted, it is imperative that it is reported to police – particularly if the need for urgent response is required. As such, community

19 https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/sex-discrimination/publications/change-routine-report-independent-review-gymnastics

20 https://www.sportintegrity.gov.au/news/media-statements/2022-04/sport-integrity-australia-releases-wais-gymnastics-review-findings

21 https://racingintegrity.vic.gov.au/review

22 Produced by Actual Films, USA, available on Netflix.

23 https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/safeguarding/whyte-review

engagement between police and sporting organisations remains extremely important in protecting young people from sexual abuse in sport.

The Community Engagement Division of Tasmania Police recently commenced in June 2024 and is responsible for the management and support of community-based programs and provides a statewide liaison and coordination service for community groups and district-based Community Engagement officers. There is a specific focus placed on programs that build relationships, reduce crime and assist those members of the community at a higher risk of becoming a victim. The sport and recreation community fall with the remit of that Division.

Recommendations and considerations for policy and practice reform for Tasmania Police

The extent of grooming and sexual abuse over a 30+ year period uncovered and publicly shared by the Coroner in 2023, and now through this Review, will invariably shock members of the general and policing community. Victim-survivors told the Review the aftermath of the abuse they suffered left them "*broken*" and "*destroyed*". "*Shattered*", "*devastated*", "*horrified*" and "*angry*" were words used by serving and former Tasmania Police members who took part in this Review to describe how they were feeling once they learned the truth about the extent of Reynolds' offending. The lived experiences shared with the Review demonstrate how important it is that the voices of those affected are heard, listened to and learned from. They cannot be buried in the past.

Ultimately, those who were groomed and, in some cases, sexually abused by Reynolds were let down by ineffective systems in policing and sport which were supposed to protect them from grooming and sexual abuse and detect grooming and sexual abuse, where safeguards were either simply not in place or were not adhered to. Safeguarding children is a shared responsibility – police, sporting organisations, bystanders, families and general members of the community all play a role. No one is exempt from that collective responsibility.

As this Report shows, inroads have been made to bridge reporting gaps, with the Professional Standards Command strengthening its reporting and investigative frameworks and the establishment of the OIR at the beginning of 2024. There is, however, still some way to go.

Review participants provided valuable insights and made many useful recommendations on how systems and frameworks could be strengthened even more, and it is their voices which underpin the recommendations found in this Report. Based on information heard in private sessions and submissions, guidance from integrity and regulatory bodies across various jurisdictions, research and subject matter experts, the following recommendations are proposed for consideration by the Commissioner.

Recommendations

for policy and practice reform

Restorative justice

Restorative justice processes are being widely implemented where organisational harm has been recognised and addressed. This Review is a first step in hearing and acknowledging the experience of the victim-survivors groomed and/or sexually abused by Reynolds. A restorative justice process provides a safe platform for victim-survivors to relay the impact of harm they have suffered to persons in leadership roles. As was experienced in the context of this Review, restorative processes can be powerful and assist somewhat with healing and empowerment. They provide choice to a victim-survivor to take part in a process where they are heard, believed and recognised. Additionally, they give persons in leadership roles the opportunity to listen, understand and learn from the experiences of victim-survivors and gain valuable insights which assist with cementing positive change for the organisation.

RECOMMENDATION **1**

That Tasmania Police establish a restorative engagement framework and scheme for persons who have experienced grooming and/or sexual abuse by Paul Reynolds who may or may not have participated in the Review, or, if the Commissioner deems appropriate, are victim-survivors of other former or serving Tasmania Police officers who participated in this Review that:

i. reflects best practice for restorative processes and redress schemes;

ii. conveys clear terms of eligibility for participation in an independently funded redress scheme;

iii. is overseen by an independent board;

iv. provides the opportunity for a direct personal response from the Police Commissioner or delegate by agreement, which includes acknowledgment of the impact of the abuse on the victim-survivor;

v. offers access to support services, counselling and psychological care; and

vi. is open for a minimum period of 12 months from the date of its establishment.

RECOMMENDATION **2**

That Tasmania Police establish a permanent restorative engagement framework for persons who have experienced grooming and/or sexual abuse by Tasmania Police officers that:

i. reflects best practice for restorative processes;

ii. is overseen by an independent board;

iii. provides the opportunity for a direct personal response from the Police Commissioner or delegate by agreement, which includes acknowledgment of the impact of the abuse on the victim-survivor;

iv. provides the opportunity to engage in conciliation process with persons the victim-survivor deems appropriate, with full consent of all parties;

v. offers access to support services, counselling and psychological care.

Community engagement with sports

The lived experiences and other evidence before this Review show that Reynolds utilised his affiliation with sports and sporting organisations to identify, approach, groom and sexually abuse teenage boys. The earliest known victim-survivor knew Reynolds through basketball umpiring and football in the late 1980's. The teenage boys groomed and sexually abused by Reynolds up to his death in 2018 knew him through football. Those in between knew him through his various roles in football and basketball. His approach was often subtle, under the guise of helping, coaching, volunteering, driving, and providing support. As the overwhelming material analysed and heard by the Review shows, it was sport that facilitated the introduction to the teenage boys he would eventually groom and sexually abuse.

Sport has historically been used as a hunting ground for sexual predators, and Reynolds' conduct is not unique, despite how shocking it may seem. It was exacerbated by his elevated position as a senior police officer, which assisted with his behaviour going undetected and unreported for such a prolonged period of time. Despite the advancements in safeguarding and reporting mechanisms in sport, Tasmania Police play a lead role in the shared responsibility to protect young people who participate in sport from grooming and sexual abuse.

The Tasmania Police Community Engagement Division is overseen by an Inspector and forms part of the Statewide Services Command. Given the crucial role Tasmania Police holds in the prevention and investigation of grooming and sexual abuse in the sport and recreation communities, the Independent Reviewer recommends that Community Engagement Services should become a standalone Command, overseen by a Tasmania Police Commander. This will ensure that dedicated Tasmania Police funding and resources are focused on strengthening that shared responsibility between community and police to keep children and young people in sport and recreation safe.

RECOMMENDATION 3

That Tasmania Police establish a framework which strengthens community engagement and builds trust between Tasmania Police, vulnerable community groups and Tasmanian sport and recreation organisations for the purpose of preventing, identifying and reporting grooming, sexual abuse and unacceptable sexualised conduct in sport, which includes:

i. Tasmania Police conducting regular forums with representatives from sport and recreation organisations, providing an avenue to share information and raise awareness on preventing, identifying, and reporting grooming, sexual abuse and sexualised conduct in sport.

   a. appointing a dedicated Tasmania Police focal point for sport and recreation;

   b. increasing Tasmania Police presence at junior sporting competitions where practicable;

   c. improving and strengthening the level of statewide engagement and education between the sport and recreation community and Tasmania Police through a dedicated statewide Community Engagement Command. Responsibility for the dedicated statewide Community Engagement Command should be overseen by a Commander of Police and adequately resourced to support the educational, training and safety needs of the Tasmanian community across the state.

Victim management

Although members of the general and policing communities are able to report suspected police misconduct to the Professional Standards Command, not all complainants will feel comfortable doing so, even with assurances of confidentiality. This is particularly so when police members report suspected misconduct of other police. The Review was told that there can be physical and psychological impediments to making such a report, particularly in the small policing jurisdiction in Tasmania. Presently, when the perpetrator is identified as a current serving or previously serving police officer, victim support sits within the Professional Standards Command and is managed by one fulltime police position, who also holds the role of investigator. To ensure a trauma-informed approach to victim-survivors, the roles need to be separate, so that dedicated and specialised support can be given to the victim and they receive continuity of assistance and support. Not all victims who make contact are ready to report immediately – this may take time, not least because trust and rapport must be established. The Review has demonstrated the need to establish a safe, separate victim support unit for victims of police perpetrators, staffed with sworn and unsworn Tasmanian Police members with specialised training in victim-centred support and trauma-informed complaint management. Importantly, a separate victim support unit will provide choice to victims.

RECOMMENDATION **4**

That Tasmania Police establish a dedicated victim management team which is funded and resourced to operate separately of the Professional Standards Command to support victims of reported sexual offending or misconduct where the perpetrator is a current serving or previously serving police officer, and which:

i. is staffed by sworn and unsworn police members with specialised victim-centric trauma-response training specific to dealing with victims of police offending or misconduct;

ii. is housed in a physical location separate from the Professional Standards Command and is accessible to victims statewide; and

iii. provides ongoing support to victims before, throughout and after any Professional Standards investigation.

Strengthening investigative capabilities

of the Tasmanian Integrity Commission with respect to investigations involving serious misconduct including sexual abuse by police officers

The Tasmanian Integrity Commission's investigative powers fall short of its interstate counterparts with respect to matters of serious police misconduct. With the benefit of hindsight, if an integrity commission with investigative powers independent of police and akin to those available to the LECC, ICAC, WACCC, IBAC or the CCC had investigated allegations of Reynolds' grooming or criminal conduct with teenage boys, perhaps his actions would have been detected sooner. For example, the use of coercive powers including telephone intercepts and/or coercive hearings may have revealed the thousands of grooming and explicit messages Reynolds sent to teenage boys. As noted, Recommendation 35 of the Cox Report related to amendment of the *Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979* (Cth). This recommendation was rejected by the Tasmanian Government because it did not consider it appropriate that the Commission have access to intercepted materials and data because it is *"strictly limited to national security and the investigation of serious criminal matters and the Government does not favour supporting access outside of these reason."* The Review has shown that in relation to matters relating to allegations of child sexual abuse such as those perpetrated by Reynolds, intercept capabilities would have been invaluable in detecting his conduct, which undoubtedly falls into the 'serious criminal matters' category.

The Review is cognisant of the second limb of the COI's Recommendation 16.7(a), which stipulates that Tasmania Police establish a clear, publicly accessible process for reporting and responding to allegations of child sexual abuse against a member of Tasmania Police, including the ability to report to an entity independent of police such as the Tasmanian Integrity Commission. This Review demonstrates that the Tasmanian Integrity Commission should not only be an entity which has the important function of being an independent complaints mechanism – as reiterated by COI Recommendation 16.7(a) – but to also be vested with statutorily prescribed powers which allow it to properly and independently investigate allegations of child sexual abuse against a member of Tasmania Police.

RECOMMENDATION **5**

i. That consideration be given by Tasmania Police to making a recommendation to the Tasmanian Government for amendments to the *Integrity Commission Act 2009* to ensure that all notifications made to the Integrity Commission in respect of members of Tasmania

   Police who are alleged to have groomed and/or sexually abused persons [serious misconduct] can be investigated independently by the Integrity Commission through:

   a. authorising access to Tasmania Police investigation databases;

   b. providing coercive examination powers;

   c. recognising the Integrity Commission as a 'law enforcement agency' for the purpose of Tasmanian legislation under which applications for covert powers might be sought;

   d. the ability to conduct (open or closed) hearings in relation to any matter relevant to the performance of its functions with as little formality and technicality as is consistent with a fair and proper consideration of the issues;

   e. the ability to apply to a Magistrate or Justice of the Peace for a warrant for arrest in the first instance;

   f. the ability to conduct wholly independent or joint investigations with Tasmania Police and/or other law enforcement bodies, or monitor and/or oversee investigations conducted by Tasmania Police; and

   g. extend jurisdiction for investigations of former Tasmania Police members provided that the conduct being investigated occurred while the person was an officer or employee.

ii. Reiterating Recommendation 35 of the Honourable William Cox AC, RFD, ED, KC in the 2016 *Independent Review of the Integrity Commission Act 2009*, that consideration be given to Tasmania Police requesting that the Commonwealth recognise the Tasmanian Integrity Commission under the *Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Act 1979* so as to define the Commission as an 'eligible agency' and grant the Commission the status of a criminal law enforcement agency for the purposes of that Act.

Who to contact to report abuse

To report sexual abuse involving a current or previously serving Tasmania Police officer (including any matters relating to Paul Reynolds), please contact:

- Tasmania Police Professional Standards Command – email professional.standards@police.tas.gov.au
- Crimestoppers – visit crimestopperstas.com.au or call 1800 333 000
- Tasmanian Integrity Commission – visit integrity.tas.gov.au/reporting/making-a-complaint
- Sexual harm coordinated support at Arch – visit arch.tas.gov.au or call 1800 697 877 for crisis counselling and support.

To report information relating to child sexual abuse or to report that a child is at risk, please contact:

- Strong Families Safe Kids – call 1800 000 123 or visit strongfamiliessafekids.tas.gov.au
- Crimestoppers – visit crimestopperstas.com.au or call 1800 333 000
- Office of the Independent Regulator – visit oir.tas.gov.au
- Call Tasmania Police on 131 444 for non-urgent matters or 000 (Triple Zero) in an emergency where there is an immediate risk of harm.