



Audit  
**Tasmania**

*Follow up of Report of the Auditor-General  
No.6 of 2021-22 Accessing services for the  
safety and wellbeing of children and young  
people – the Strong Families, Safe Kids  
**Advice and Referral Line***

**Report of the Auditor-General No. 12 of 2025-26**

# Audit objective

This audit assessed the degree to which the Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP) has implemented the 7 recommendations made in *Report of the Auditor-General No.6 of 2021-22: **Accessing services for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people – the Strong Families, Safe Kids Advice and Referral Line*** (the 2022 audit).

# Our conclusions

DECYP has:

- implemented recommendations 1 and 5
- progressed recommendations 3, 4 and 7
- not implemented recommendation 2, but is working to mitigate the service risks this presents
- assessed recommendation 6 as no longer applicable due to the planned restructuring of the Advice and Referral Line (ARL).

# Context: child safety area has been subject to significant change in the last 10 years, especially since the audit

When assessing if DECYP implemented the recommendations from the 2022 audit, we considered:

- the change in responsibility for the ARL from Communities Tasmania, when it was abolished in September 2022, to DECYP
- subsequent reforms to the ARL since the 2022 audit, including the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings
- the impact of the ARL Review Project in 2023 which recommended changes to the ARL's operating model.

**March 2016**

Strong Families Safe Kids  
Action Plan released

2016

2018

**July 2018**

Child Safety becomes part of  
newly-created Communities  
Tasmania

**Dec 2018**

ARL commences operation

2020

**May 2020**

SFSK Evaluation report

**Nov 2020**

Commission of Inquiry  
announced

2022

**June 2022**

Auditor General's audit of  
the ARL tabled

**Sep 2023**

Commission of Inquiry  
findings tabled

2024

SFSK Final Progress report

**Oct 2024**

Internally led review of  
ARL completed

**Dec 2022**

ARL becomes part of newly-  
created DECYP

2026

**May-Sep 2025**

Child Safety Youth Justice  
Operations Portfolio  
restructured

**July 2026**

Planned implementation of new  
ARL service structure

# Recommendation 1

Ensure sufficient and appropriate project resources and effective project management methodology are deployed in future significant sub-projects of major reforms.

- DECYP has **implemented** this recommendation.
- DECYP allocated more resources and used an improved project management approach for the ARL Review Project. It:
  - allocated project funding of \$300,000
  - had governance and project roles
  - ensured steering committee oversight
  - defined project objectives, scope, outcomes and outputs.

## Recommendation 2

Work with DPFEM to improve the manual or electronic interchange of information relevant to child safety, and specifically information flowing between the existing CARDI\* and Atlas systems, in order to reduce reworking of data leading to inefficient practices within both agencies.

- DECYP has **not implemented** this recommendation.
- There is still no integration between Atlas and CARDI, which means ARL staff continue to manually convert Tasmania Police referrals on child safety matters.
- The ARL has improved its collaboration with Tasmania Police to mitigate the service risks this presents.

## Recommendation 3

Review its processes regarding the delivery of feedback of next steps and outcomes to persons contacting the ARL to ensure consistency of approach.

- DECYP is **progressing** this recommendation.
- DECYP advised that work to implement consistent caller feedback processes was still ongoing.
- DECYP advised that it will review caller feedback processes as part of the ARL Renewal Project, noting there are confidentiality and legal constraints.

## Recommendation 4

Work with stakeholder agencies to raise both awareness of the ARL and its role and encourage those agencies to promote their own responsibilities in child safety and wellbeing.

- DECYP is **progressing** this recommendation.
- DECYP is collaborating with agencies through new or expanded initiatives, including Arch centres, the Safe Families Coordination Unit, and co-located Tas Police support to strengthen responses to family violence and child safety.
- While DECYP has improved communication with stakeholder agencies overall, its engagement with school principals indicates that some communication challenges persist.

## Recommendation 5

Work with DPFEM and DOJ, as system owners, to find a solution to barriers that prevent non-government ARL workers from accessing information systems that would enable them to perform their jobs more efficiently and effectively.

- DECYP has **implemented** this recommendation.
- DECYP engaged with the other agencies to provide all ARL non-government staff with access to the Safe at Home Information System and Family Violence Management System by October 2023.

*'[Non-government] staff are now able to undertake the mandated system checks ... and use these to inform and triage decision making, ensuring consistent, timely and compliant practice across both departmental and non-government workers.'*

**DECYP**

## Recommendation 6

Prioritise the resourcing of liaison officers within the ARL to increase both their capacity to work within communities and with service providers, as well as provide ongoing training and education required to support a more proactive and preventative approach to child safety and wellbeing.

- DECYP advised that this recommendation is **no longer applicable**.
- DECYP advised that the Community Liaison Officer role will no longer exist. However, it will retain other liaison roles.
- DECYP has developed a communication strategy, which includes a redesigned website, to ensure community and stakeholder awareness of the ARL restructure, including changes to roles and scope.

## Recommendation 7

Develop effectiveness indicators for the ARL to better understand if the original objectives of SFSK are being met. The indicators to complement the throughput and efficiency indicators already in place and to include measures of client satisfaction.

- DECYP is **progressing** this recommendation.
- DECYP reported challenges with service demand and complexity as the reasons for not yet implementing measures to track service effectiveness.
- DECYP has introduced 2 interim activity and efficiency measures to monitor the ARL's performance while the service is restructured:
  - a department-wide complaints and feedback framework
  - an internal dashboard of service information.

# Responses

In accordance with section 30(2) of the *Audit Act 2008*, this report was provided to the Minister for Children and Youth, and the Secretary, DECYP with a request for submissions or comments.

We did not receive any submissions or comments on the report.