

Tasmanian NPM Civil Society Advisory Council

Meeting communique: 21 June 2024

Location: Office of the Ombudsman, Hobart TAS
Time: 12pm – 3pm

On 21 June 2024, the Tasmanian National Preventive Mechanism, Mr Richard Connock, held the first meeting of the Civil Society Advisory Council and welcomed all new members.

The creation of the Civil Society Advisory Council responds to Recommendation 6 in the Tasmanian NPM implementation report *Preventing torture and ill-treatment in Tasmania*,¹ released in December 2023 (the implementation report).

Following a public expression of interest process in April 2024, the following persons have been appointed as members for a two-year term:

Maggie BLANDEN Maggie is a proud palawa woman from lutruwita/Tasmania and the great-granddaughter of matriarch Aunty Ida West AM. She is a passionate advocate for Indigenous self-determination, sovereignty, and urgent reform of the criminal justice system.

Currently working in the legal and human rights space, Maggie was recently recognized at the Australian Human Rights Awards for her dedication. Maggie is honoured to serve as a member of the Tasmanian NPM Advisory Council, where she advocates for justice and systemic reform, particularly for First Nations people who are overwhelmingly overrepresented in the criminal justice system and places of detention.

Anthony BULL Anthony is a lived experience prisoner advocate with a personal focus on justice and prison reform. With extensive advocacy experience, he currently serves as a committee member of the Prisoner Legal Service and JusTas.

¹ Available at www.npm.tas.gov.au

Monique HURLEY Monique Hurley is a Managing Lawyer at the Human Rights Law Centre where she works to ensure that people in prison are treated with dignity, and that governments are held to account when they are not.

Monique has broad and extensive legal and human rights experience working across jurisdictions and environments, including law firms, the courts, Aboriginal legal services and community legal centres. Monique has a Bachelor of Arts/Law from Monash University and a Master of Laws from Columbia University where she studied as a Fulbright scholar.

Heidi LA PAGLIA Heidi La Paglia Reid (she/her) is a proud Autistic, disabled mum and advocate with lived experience of involuntary institutionalisation and mis-treatment in multiple settings.

In her professional work, Heidi has over a decade of experience working in professional and voluntary roles in the disability and women's rights sector. In 2023, Heidi set up her own consulting business specialising in gender equity, disability rights and neuro-inclusion, through which she advocates for and assists government and non-government entities to fulfil their human rights obligations.

Jacob SMITH Jacob is a proud palawa man from lutruwita/Tasmania. He serves as Chief Executive Officer of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service, which provides legal assistance to Aboriginal people in Tasmania and operates a number of programs in the justice system.

Tash SMYTH Tash is Chief Executive Officer of Mental Health Lived Experience Tasmania (MHLET), Tasmania's peak body for people with a personal lived experience of mental ill-health.

After a successful career in business startups Tash turned her focus towards making a positive difference for people who are subject to social injustice, stigmatisation and profound isolation. Tash joined Mental Health Lived Experience Tasmania in 2019 and has been leading the organisation as CEO since 2021. Tash is passionate about mental health advocacy believing that the way to positive systems change is through listening to the voice of people with lived experience. Tash applies a human rights lens to the work she does in advocating for systemic reform.

Peter WILLIAMS Peter currently serves as the CEO of OneCare Limited, a prominent not-for-profit aged care provider in Tasmania.

With a career in the healthcare industry that began in 1990, Peter is a Registered Nurse and has earned multiple postgraduate

qualifications, including a Master's in Clinical Education and Business. In 2022, he was honoured as a Tasmanian Churchill Fellow, receiving the Meg Gilmartin national scholarship. This accolade supported his research into international aged care models, focusing on their applicability to the Tasmanian context.

Meeting discussion was focused on introductory and administrative matters. Members provided personal introductions and received a detailed briefing on OPCAT and the Tasmanian NPM:

- Richard Connock introduced the Tasmanian NPM jurisdiction, the purpose of the Civil Society Advisory Council as part of the Office's governance structure, and gave an overview of his concurrent jurisdictions as Custodial Inspector, Tasmanian Ombudsman, and Health Complaints Commissioner.
- Mark Huber, Director, Office of the Tasmanian NPM, provided an introduction to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT) and the Tasmanian NPM implementation project, project outcomes and recommendations to date, and current work underway in relation to health and social care.
- Sam Christensen, Principal Inspection Officer, Office of the Custodial Inspector, introduced the Custodial Inspector jurisdiction, how it fits within the new Tasmanian NPM structure, and recent activities.

Members also discussed and agreed on a Civil Society Advisory Council Charter.² Members agreed to the publication of this and subsequent communiqués on the Office's website after each meeting.

Discussion focused broadly on the implementation of the Office of the Tasmanian NPM, matters that may arise in future meetings, and how the Civil Society Advisory Council could contribute to the success of the Office as it begins to operationalise.

Members expressed support for the Tasmanian NPM's implementation work and ongoing civil society engagement. It was agreed that future meetings would include discussion of Office and implementation strategy, and ways that the Civil Society Advisory Council may be able to assist with public outreach.

The next Civil Society Advisory Council has been scheduled for **September 2024**.

² Available to download at www.npm.tas.gov.au

About the Tasmanian NPM Civil Society Advisory Council:

The Tasmanian NPM's Civil Society Advisory Council is a permanent body integrated into the Office's organisational framework. It is set up to meet two to three times per year, and its members are appointed for two year terms.

Civil society engagement with NPM bodies is a key recommendation of the United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Recognising that this approach is best practice, NPM bodies around the world have adopted various models to ensure civil society actively participates in their activities.

The purpose of the Civil Society Advisory Council is to provide specialist advice on matters critical to the success of the Tasmanian NPM. It will informally report and provide advice in relation to Tasmanian NPM activities, on the exercise of functions, and promote regular civil society engagement with the NPM Office. Meetings will also provide a forum to obtain stakeholder views on related observations or emerging issues. Through the Advisory Council, the Tasmanian NPM will also work directly with stakeholders to ensure their concerns and aspirations are understood and considered in developing Tasmanian NPM strategies.

