

**TASMANIAN FAMILY VIOLENCE PRACTICE COMMUNITY  
LAUNCH SPEECH BY  
HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AM  
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA  
HOBART, TUESDAY 7 JUNE 2016**

Good evening everyone.

I begin by paying respect to the traditional and original owners of this land the Muwinina people – to pay respect to those that have passed before us and to acknowledge today's Tasmanian Aboriginal community who are the custodians of this land.

Thank you Dr Theresa Doherty and Ms Liz Little for inviting me to launch the Tasmanian Family Violence Practice Community and also to hear Dr Linda Murray's presentation, the first of which I understand will be a series of regular presentations and practitioner panels.

As some of you will know, sexual and family violence is one of the key issues I have chosen to focus upon during my term as Governor, using that role to raise awareness of the issue of gender violence and its underlying causes. Whilst my particular focus is on primary prevention, changing attitudes and behaviour that are the underlying drivers of family and sexual violence, I am well aware there is an ongoing need to address the reactive side of things, namely tertiary prevention or response and secondary prevention or early intervention.

As many of you would be aware, the initiative for a family violence practice community came about during the Australian Association of Social Workers sponsored workshop *Domestic Violence: taking down the walls and looking inside* which was held in September 2015.

It was at this workshop that Liz Little, in her words: *floated the idea of establishing a Family Violence Practice Community (CoP) in Tasmania in the following interest areas:*

- *Responses for Victim/Survivors*
- *Children living with or experiencing violence*
- *Perpetrators of family violence (all forms)*
- *Service integration and systems improvement.*

I am sure that Liz is well known to most of you here this evening, but for those of you who do not know, Liz has an academic background in social work, she was a senior lecturer in the School of Social Work at the University of Tasmania before moving to the Public Service. In 2001 she took up the position of a Principal Consultant with the Department of Justice with responsibility for designing and implementing Tasmania's well known Safe-at-Home family violence program. More recently Liz has been a peer assessor for ANROWS applications (Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety).

I am informed that the purpose of this Family Violence Practice Community is to:

- set up a statewide interdisciplinary network of practitioners working in the area of family violence (encompassing domestic violence, child protection and intra-familial sexual abuse);
- develop practice frameworks and service models to build bridges across these fields;
- identify and share examples of innovative and effective practice at the local, regional and state level;
- engage in interdisciplinary skills development;
- identify collaborative research opportunities;
- provide independent feedback to Government and other key stakeholders about the operation and effectiveness of current policies and practices in responding to family violence.

My introduction to the idea of a Tasmanian Family Violence Practice Community was at the first meeting of the Family Violence Research Network, a network of University of Tasmania researchers, which was organised by Professor Richard Eccleston and Theresa Doherty of the Institute for the Study of Social Change at the University, at the instigation of Liz Little.

The first meeting of the FVRN (held on 19<sup>th</sup> April) was attended by academics from the faculties of medicine, education, law, social work and specialist research units including: the Tasmania Law Reform Institute; the Tasmanian Institute for Law Enforcement Studies; the Housing and Community research Unit; and the Menzies Centre.

Participants shared information about their current research interests in the family violence field and agreed to continue sharing information and identifying collaborative opportunities across disciplines and with field practitioners.

This, the first meeting of the Family Violence Practice Community is, at the same time, the first joint meeting of the Family Violence Practice Community and the University's FVRN.

In conclusion, I commend this new initiative and take great pleasure in launching it. I am sure that it will build bridges between practitioners and between practitioners and researchers with many benefits including collaborative research opportunities. And I look forward to seeing it grow in membership, by including for example, all those involved in the Government's *Safe Home, Safe Families Agenda*.

Thank you.