



*Submission in relation to the*

**Tasmanian Liquor Licensing Reforms**

12 December 2025

*Engender Equality is Tasmania's statewide specialist family violence organisation.*

Engender Equality welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Tasmanian Government's proposed liquor licensing reforms. It is commendable that the consultation paper has stated the Government's intention to adopt a "risk-based approach to managing the harms from liquor" and to consider alcohol's role in family and domestic violence. In order to do this, Engender Equality advocates for a well-informed analysis of the role of alcohol in reinforcing behaviours and systems that condone violence against women.

We also strongly encourage a harm reduction approach to addressing the consumption of alcohol in our communities.

This reform process must include the meaningful participation and leadership of Tasmanian Aboriginal organisations. The role of alcohol as an instrument of colonisation must be acknowledged. It is essential to support culturally relevant, self-determined approaches to alcohol use, harm reduction and community safety.

### **A family violence lens**

Alcohol does not cause intimate partner violence however systems and culture can enable conditions where violence is condoned, permitted and encouraged.

Evidence shows that men's alcohol use results in significantly more harm to women and children than women's alcohol use, including increased risk of aggression, intimate partner violence, and broader relational harms.

It is therefore essential that this phenomena is unpacked and includes understanding how alcohol-affected behaviour by men can contribute to aggression, control, economic abuse, and reduced family cohesion, as documented in international evidence.

Reforms should strengthen accountability for the person who uses violence and the services, institutions and cultures that enable their behaviour. This includes police responses, court processes, alcohol-serving environments, and societal norms.

### **The gendered drivers of violence**

Research shows that alcohol use interacts with gendered drivers of violence, including:

- rigid masculine norms about control, dominance and aggression
- men's peer cultures that reward heavy drinking, and promotes men's right to consume alcohol, without accountability.
- environments that isolate men's leisure from family, care and community
- social norms that excuse men's behaviour when drinking
- outdated assumptions that women are responsible for "managing" men's alcohol use.

Notably, the evidence highlights that even occasional heavy drinking episodes by men (not just alcohol use disorder) can lead to harm for women and children in their lives.

These gendered drivers create fertile conditions for violence against women and children.

A strong alcohol policy must address the gendered social conditions that support male power and privilege.

*When he drank he was like a different person. He went from being my partner to being a very scary person. When I tried to talk to him about it he could never understand how it impacted me. But every time he drank he was volatile, on edge and hair trigger sensitive. It was like he had this evil in him that came out with alcohol. (victim-survivor)*

## **Systems that reinforce inequality**

Tasmanian drinking cultures are produced through systems, institutions and norms that privilege men's autonomy, leisure and bonding. Heavy drinking is normalised in male-dominated spaces such as sporting clubs, pubs, industrial workplaces, sheds, racing culture and groups of "mates." These environments frequently celebrate aggression, risk-taking and disrespect towards women as markers of masculinity.

At the same time, women are expected to perform unpaid labour—childcare, domestic work, emotional support, and aging-parent care—limiting their access to leisure, community life and safety.

These structural inequalities:

- reinforce male entitlement and power
- deprioritise relational responsibility
- normalise male behaviour being excused because of drinking
- create conditions where violence is minimised or hidden.

*When he started drinking, the rules changed. He could say or do anything, and everyone would shrug it off. If we were socialising, I would be anxious, waiting for him to melt down. (victim-survivor)*

## **Preventing systems abuse**

A systems abuse lens demands that the reform process recognises how laws, policies and institutions can unintentionally harm victim-survivors by:

- shifting responsibility away from perpetrators
- reinforcing harmful gender stereotypes
- increasing surveillance or control of certain communities
- failing to address the structures that uphold male violence
- ignoring the voices and expertise of victim-survivors.

These harms are often hidden and not recognised in policy despite their significant impact on women's lives.

## **Conclusion**

Liquor reform must apply a gendered lens that prioritises the safety of women and children and strengthens accountability for people who choose to use violence.

**This submission draws on key evidence from existing research and expert commentary, including La Trobe University's *Harms to Women, Children and Men from Alcohol Use: An Evidence Review and Directions for Policy* (Livingston et al., 2023) and the foundational position developed by Our Watch on alcohol, gendered drivers of violence, and primary prevention. These documents provide essential evidence about the gendered patterns of alcohol-related harm and inform the recommendations made in this submission.**