

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE Escalating relocation price tags and rare rentals stall escapes

High costs trapping victim-survivors

Matt Maloney

FOR years, the abuse Sarah's* former partner inflicted upon her wasn't always physical.

It was carefully calculated financial control.

Expenditure was tightly controlled and her independence slowly eroded.

When the psychological abuse finally tipped into physical danger, Sarah knew she had to leave. She said adding up the cost for relocating became so overwhelming that she considered whether she was better

off remaining in a home she no longer considered safe.

"I had \$340 in cash I'd managed to hide," Sarah said.

"In Tasmania's housing market, \$340 doesn't even pay for a week's rent, let alone four weeks' bond."

She said it was only through the help of her mother and the kindness of friends that she was finally able to leave, for which she considers herself extremely lucky.

Even with the help and generosity, she said it took the better part of a year for

the financial strain to lessen.

Recent national research estimates that immediate relocation and basic set-up costs to flee domestic violence exceed \$7000.

Engender Equality chief executive Alina Thomas said that while the \$7000 benchmark was conservative, Tasmania's elevated cost of living placed an even heavier burden on women, who routinely carry the weight of unpaid care for children and other family members.

Anglicare Tasmania's Social Action and Research Centre co-ordinator Gin-

ny Toombs said the cost of leaving a relationship was compounded by the housing affordability and availability.

"Victim-survivors can't leave because there's nowhere to go," she said.

"Soaring rents and persistent low rental vacancy rates result in increasing numbers of people experiencing homelessness, including living with others in overcrowded conditions, living in cars and tents."

Ms Toombs said this shortage created a severe bottleneck with emergency shelters.

"Even if people can get into crisis accommodation, it can be difficult to move out of it because there's nowhere to go long term," she said.

"That creates a blockage where there is less crisis accommodation available for people who need it."

Ms Thomas said government assistance schemes, such as federal packages offering up to \$5000 alongside state-level flexible support, provided vital immediate relief, but fell short in practice.

She said support packages required formal police involvement or intervention,

which was a barrier that disqualified many victim-survivors.

"That actually excludes a lot of people," she said.

"It forces people to engage with police against their better judgement."

"Tasmania Police are already reporting they are overwhelmed by complex family violence cases, yet we've created systems where you have to engage police just to be eligible for a payment."

*Name has been changed to protect a victim-survivor's identity.

National burger chain submits application for 24/7 drive-thru restaurant

Bailey Forbes

A NATIONAL burger chain has submitted its application for a new store, which features a unique feature at select stores across the country.

Grill'd, a national burger chain which focuses on making burgers healthy

has made its pitch to take over 49-55 Frederick Street, Launceston, just across from Brickfields Reserve.

Planning documents lodged with the City of Launceston council have revealed how the store could shape up, and some of the planned features could make it one of the more

unique stores in the country.

The proposal would have the restaurant operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The site would also feature a two-lane drive-thru, which would require the existing western side of the building to be demolished.

The restaurant would have

16 parking spaces, seven bicycle spaces and one motorcycle space, falling short of the 31 parking spaces the planning scheme requires.

A traffic report conducted by the applicants said because the drive-thru can accommodate a queue of up to nine cars, the requirement is met.

The burger chain originally requested to have illuminated signage on the roof of the restaurant, however, this concept was scrapped as it didn't meet the development criteria.

Most of the building's white brick facade would be turned into a wood veneer.

The planning documents

say the restaurant would be able to seat about 132 patrons at any given time.

Grill'd opened its first store in 2004 and now operates 175 locations across the country, making it the biggest Australian-owned burger chain. It opened its first Tasmanian store in North Hobart in 2024.