

Thursday September 11, 2025

Win for victims to access records

Amber Wilson

A pathway may soon be cleared for whistleblowers and victim-survivors of child sexual abuse attempting to gain access to their own records.

An “unforeseen legal obstacle” recently emerged for survivors who had given evidence to Tasmania’s child sexual abuse commission of inquiry in confidential, private sessions. But a new Bill has passed the House of Assembly removing barriers for those survivors to access the information they had provided.

Justice Minister Guy Barnett said the commission of inquiry held more than 120 private sessions between 2021 to 2023.

“The records of a private session with the commission cannot be provided to the participant of that session unless they, and any person they spoke or wrote about, consent to that information being disclosed,” he said in a statement.

He said while the current provisions were aimed at protecting privacy, a new exception enabled a participant to record, use or have disclosed to them, their own private session information.

“This reform is critical for victim-survivors and whistleblowers. It reinforces that it is their choice what they do with their own information, and that they are free to retell their experiences as they wish,” Mr Barnett said.

Independent MLC Meg Webb said the “unfortunate obstacle” addressed by the Bill came to light when someone came to her for help accessing their own information in a commission of inquiry.

She said provisions of Tasmania’s Commission of Inquiry Act prevented the release of the information unless any other third parties mentioned also agreed, “potentially re-traumatising the participant during that process”.

She welcomed the Bill being passed in the lower house.

It will also need to pass the Legislative Council.