



# **Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT)**

## **Statement of Intention: Tasmania OPCAT Network (TasOPCAT Network)**

### **in the Tasmanian Institute of Law Enforcement Studies (TILES)**

*Australia ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT) in 2017. This Protocol aims to prevent torture and other forms of mistreatment in places where people are deprived of their liberty, such as prisons, immigration detention centres, police detention facilities, psychiatric wards and care facilities. OPCAT establishes National Preventive Measures (NPMs). NPMs are independent visiting bodies coordinated by the Commonwealth Ombudsman and established at domestic level within each State and Territory. NPMs focus on proactive, preventive measures to limit deprivation of liberty. NPM functions are: independent visits; advice; education; cooperation.*

The Tasmanian OPCAT Network (TasOPCAT) was formed in March 2020 as a potential project within Law Enforcement and Public Health (LEPH) which is a research stream of the TILES. Interim TasOPCAT objectives, with a Tasmanian perspective of Australia's international obligations under OPCAT, are to: share information about OPCAT; promote the benefits of preventive monitoring where people are, or may be, deprived of their liberty; promote implementation of OPCAT in Tasmania and Australia as a collaboration of university, government, the not-for-profit sector and civil society generally. TasOPCAT is open to individuals and organisations who seek to promote TasOPCAT objectives.

The TasOPCAT founding members are:

Dr Isabelle Bartkowiak-Theron, Project Leader, TILES LEPH

Dr Val Kitchener, TILES LEPH

Ms Diana Taylor, Applied Health and Community Support, University College

Professor Penelope Weller, RMIT University, Melbourne

As of April 2020, TasOPCAT is a collaboration of TILES, School of Law, the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute, and with the University of Melbourne.

The founding members are working on the establishment of an interim Steering Group to combine Tasmanian, Australian and international academics and practitioners of relevant professional experience in fields already including: law; policy; anti-discrimination; mental health; neurobiology; complex systems theory; policy analysis; methodology; and those with specialisation in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and the Convention against Torture.

Consistent with the work of LEPH at TILES, TasOPCAT promotes collaborative working frameworks such as Collective Impact as an enabling governance framework for an NPM in Tasmania. Collective Impact is an approach that provides practical ways to enable inter-sectoral and inter-disciplinary decision-making in policy, especially in public health and policing.

The Australian Government defines OPCAT jurisdiction in terms of primary places of detention. In Tasmania, the primary places of detention are: Risdon Prison facilities; Mary Hutchinson Women's Prison; Hobart and Launceston Remand Centres; mental health facilities – Department of Psychiatry (Hobart), Millbrook Rise, Roy Fagan Centre, Spencer Clinic (Burnie), Northside (Launceston); Ashley Youth Detention Centre and a number of police stations.

April, 2020

Interim Statement: subject to revision December 2020  
TasOPCAT positions do not necessarily reflect those of LEPH or TILES

**TILES and TasOPCAT Network**

<https://www.utas.edu.au/tiles/research/research-streams/law-enforcement-and-public-health/tasopcat-network>