

Media Release

## Mental Health Council Responds to State Budget: Where will the workforce come from?

The Mental Health Council of Tasmania (MHCT) is concerned that there is no additional investment for community mental health services in today's state budget. At a time where we're seeing an increased demand at every level of need across the state this is not a time to overlook every opportunity to improve service delivery and access.

The federal election saw a range of promises for mental health for Tasmania that may improve the shortfall seen in this budget and we appeal to the State Government to now work effectively in partnership with the Commonwealth to achieve a system that is truly integrated and delivering the best mental health outcomes for all Tasmanians. We task our Government with the responsibility to ensure that they do whatever is necessary to ensure funding is implemented through a coordinated, partnership approach with the Commonwealth Government.

All levels of mental health services continue to be overstretched and under resourced putting further pressures on the workforce and, in turn, the people they provide services for. As the peak body for community managed mental health services, MHCT strongly encourages the State Government to ensure all mental health investment includes targeted workforce initiatives, as all announcements will be meaningless unless we have the skilled and qualified staff to deliver much needed services.

MHCT CEO, Connie Digolis, says, *"Commitments towards new facilities and associated infrastructure are welcome, however, what we need to urgently address is meaningful forward planning for the expansion of the mental health workforce in Tasmania. In lieu of regional planning being completed; we can presume that Tasmania simply will not cope with any increases in demand across the state."*

*"We cannot deny the urgent and immediate need to alleviate the pressures on our hospitals. However, we must not lose sight of the bigger picture that, in every sense, prevention initiatives will save money and, more importantly, save lives. We should be addressing the needs of people with mental health concerns earlier, to stop this cycle of people arriving at hospital because they had no other viable alternative."*

MHCT will continue to consult with its members and the State Government in order to ensure that we are continually working toward a system that meets the health care needs of all Tasmanians.

\*ENDS

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**Please include the following crisis support services for any story regarding mental health or suicide.**

Lifeline: 13 11 14 [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)

Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467 [www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au](http://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au)

beyondblue: 1300 22 4636 [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

**More information on safely reporting on mental illness or suicide can be found at**

<https://mindframe.org.au/> and <https://www.tascharter.org/>