

Media Release

## Mental Health Council Supports Jeremy Rockliff MP Staying in Mental Health Portfolio

The Mental Health Council of Tasmania (MHCT) is pleased to see The Hon. Jeremy Rockliff MP will remain as Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing in the new Cabinet under Peter Gutwein's leadership. The Council and its members look forward to building on the work from 2019 with the Minister in the recently created portfolio.

CEO of MHCT, Connie Digolis, said, "Minister Rockliff is very passionate about mental health and suicide prevention, so having him continue as the Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing provides a level of continuity and consistency going forward and we can build on the hard work from last year as we progress into 2020 and beyond."

"With the creation of the Mental Health and Wellbeing portfolio in 2019, we saw a real momentum shift toward reforming the system and improving outcomes for Tasmanians and their families. There is so much more to be done in this sector so as people are able to access the right services at the right time. We need to see a Tasmania that is becoming mentally healthy, not individuals waiting until they are really unwell to seek and access supports," said Ms Digolis.

MHCT will continue to work closely with all areas of Government to advocate for the changes necessary to get the best possible services for Tasmanians.

"Reforming the mental health sector is a marathon not a sprint. We need to get this process right. However, there are some immediate measures that will assist that process and allow Tasmanians get the help they need in the interim," said Ms Digolis.

Such measures that MHCT is hoping to see in the upcoming State Budget include:

- Extending current funding cycles for many community services from 12 months to 3 years minimum to ensure continuity of service and workforce security.
- The development of a 'Centralised Mental Health Access Service', so as people can find information and support with no barriers to access.
- Trial and evaluate a Schools-Based Mental Health Peer Support Program
- Develop a state-based Suicide Prevention Quality and Improvement Program
- Recruitment of a Mental Health Peer Workforce Coordinator

More information on these reform solutions can be found via the [MHCT Budget Priority Submission 2020-2021](#)

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**Available for Interview:** Connie Digolis, MHCT CEO.

**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/>