

30 September 2021

Mental Health Council of Tasmania Media Release

Preparations in full swing for Tassie's biggest ever Mental Health Week

Mental Health Week in Tasmania this year takes place between 9-16 October. The new theme for Mental Health Week in 2021 is 'Awareness, Belonging, Connection', reflecting the important factors that help people maintain their mental health and wellbeing:

- *Awareness* is about understanding the things we need to maintain and boost our mental wellbeing, and knowing when we need to reach out for help and where to get it.
- *Belonging* is about looking out for each other, ensuring we feel safe and supported, and understanding that however we feel, we're not alone, and that there are others going through the same thing.
- *Connection* is about our relationships with our friends, families, and those that we care about, as well as the groups, clubs, and networks around us that we rely on to help keep us happy and healthy, wherever we live, work, or play.

Mental Health Council of Tasmania (MHCT) CEO, Connie Digolis, said Mental Health Week this year is a chance for all Tasmanians to consider and connect with the people and communities that they rely on to help them be mentally healthy, through a range of events and activities.

"We've seen increasing discussions across government, community, and the media, about the impacts of the pandemic on our mental health. And while it has, and continues to be, a difficult time for everyone, I think that as a result, we've all become more aware of how important our mental wellbeing is, and of the people and things that we rely on to maintain and boost it," she said.

To celebrate Mental Health Week, schools, community organisations, businesses, and councils across the state, from King Island to Eaglehawk Neck, are holding a variety of events and activities, which incorporate the new theme for 2021. Many of these events have been helped through grant funding provided by the Tasmanian Government and Primary Health Tasmania, and facilitated by MHCT. With over 40 events already registered for the official program, this year looks set to be the biggest Mental Health Week yet.

"It's been inspiring to see the way Tasmanians have supported each other, as well as their friends and family interstate over the past 18 or so months. Mental Health Week is an opportunity to celebrate the care and compassion we've shown for ourselves and each other during that time, and come together and connect with each other at the many events and activities happening across the state," said Ms Digolis.

As part of the week, Tasmanians are also being encouraged to show their support by 'Turning Tasmania Orange'. Orange has been chosen as the official colour for Mental Health Week in Tasmania because it's warm, and inviting, and has a positive and uplifting influence. To show their support Tasmanians are being asked to add a splash of orange to their week by dressing in orange, hosting an orange morning or afternoon tea, or popping some orange light globes or decorations in their window to show that mental health and wellbeing is important to them. They can also share their celebrations online using the hashtags *#TurnTassieOrange* and *#mhw2021*.

Several councils across the state, including Burnie, Launceston, Devonport, Huon Valley, and Kentish Council have committed to decorating or lighting up landmarks across their towns in Orange, to show support for the week and to demonstrate that mental health and wellbeing is important to them and their towns and communities.

People can find the full program of Mental Health Week events happening across the state at www.mhct.org/program

A suite of short videos introducing the new Mental Health Week theme, plus other promotional resources, can be found at www.mhct.org/mhw/resources

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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

Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467 www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au

beyondblue: 1300 22 4636 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/>