

26 August 2021

Mental Health Council of Tasmania Media Release

An ambitious investment in Tasmania's mental health and wellbeing

The Mental Health Council of Tasmania (MHCT) welcomes the funding announced as part of today's budget, aimed at improving the state's mental health system and creating better mental health and wellbeing outcomes for all Tasmanians.

The announcement follows MHCT's recent advocacy campaign, *'A Tasmanian State of Mind'*. This campaign called for an increased emphasis on supporting all Tasmanians to stay well, by empowering individuals and communities to maintain and boost their mental wellbeing, while also improving access and provision of much needed mental health services.

MHCT CEO, Connie Digolis, acknowledged that while the Government's investment in mental wellbeing and mental health services is welcome, it won't be without its challenges, "These ambitious initiatives are set to be a game changer for everyone's mental health and wellbeing, and today's budget is a very promising start. This is bigger though than a budget or election cycle – for these initiatives to be successful there must be long-term commitment to working together and ensuring the best mental health and wellbeing outcomes for all Tasmanians."

Today's budget includes an investment of over \$100 million for mental wellbeing and mental health supports and services, including:

- \$50 million for state mental health services, including funding towards the CAMHS reform project
- \$2.2 million for community mental health services, to address increasing demand
- \$1.9 million towards the implementation Tasmania's Peer Workforce Strategy and a Youth Peer Worker model
- \$7.8 million to continue and expand new mental health services put in place in response to the pandemic, including MHCT's #checkin campaign, and the 1800 'A Tasmanian Lifeline' phone service
- \$8.5 million to establish Hospital in the Home in the North West
- \$5.1 million to establish an Emergency Co-response model in the South; and
- \$2.1 million for the Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI) to assist people living with mental ill-health to recover in the community.

Throughout recent MHCT consultations with communities across the state, Tasmanians have consistently emphasised the importance of mental health and wellbeing. Ms Digolis said that she is pleased that the Government has listened and is taking action, "The mental health and wellbeing of Tasmanians is intrinsic to how we function as individuals, as communities, as an economy and as a society. Through initiatives that increase mental health awareness and understanding, we empower all Tasmanians with the tools they need to look after their mental wellbeing. That is why this whole of population approach is vital to the future of our state."

Having developed Tasmania's Peer Workforce Strategy in 2019, Ms Digolis said MHCT were looking forward to implementing it, "We are excited to bring Tasmania up to speed with the rest of the country by implementing the Strategy and embedding Peer Workers at all levels of care. The unique skills and insights of Peer Workers are invaluable in supporting others on their own recovery journey," said Ms Digolis.

MHCT looks forward to working with the Government, it's members and stakeholders as we work together to build a mental health system that supports all Tasmanians now, and for generations to come.

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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/>