



**Mental
Health
Council**
OF TASMANIA

www.mhct.org

Annual Review 2020-21

→ A leading voice in the Tasmanian mental health system



**Mental
Health
Council**
OF TASMANIA

*The Mental Health Council of
Tasmania acknowledges the
palawa people of lutruwita as
the traditional and original
owners, and continuing
custodians of this land.
We respect their spiritual
relationship with their country,
and honour and respect their
ongoing cultural and spiritual
connections to these lands.*

Contents

OUR YEAR IN REVIEW	2
.....	
OUR TEAM	4
.....	
MHCT CHAIR REPORT	6
.....	
WHO WE ARE	8
.....	
WHAT WE DO	10
.....	
OUR MEMBERS 2020-2021	16
.....	

Our year in review

CEO, Connie Digolis



The last 12 months have continued to throw up many challenges for the Mental Health Council, our members, and our community. But with those challenges have come many opportunities. Never before have we seen such a focus across the media, government and community, on the importance of mental health and wellbeing. This has brought the work of MHCT and our members to the forefront, with many of the things we have long been advocating for now gaining traction.

Continuing the work we started at the beginning of the pandemic, we have regularly met with our members to discuss the impacts of COVID-19 on our communities, our workforce and on Tasmania's mental health system more generally. Through this work MHCT has been able to provide a clear and consistent voice to our government, bringing to their attention the ongoing issues and concerns which have been highlighted by COVID-19.

This process has also been instrumental in demonstrating the passion and dedication of our members and sector, and the invaluable work we do to support Tasmanians. I want to thank all our members and stakeholders that participated and assisted by providing insights and data, and voicing their concerns to ensure our sector was, and continues to be heard.

We have been determined to ensure that no Tasmanian would be left behind, as we get through an uncertain period together. This focus has seen us visit and speak directly with communities from across the state, to hear about the many unique barriers that Tasmanians face in achieving and maintaining good mental health.

This was the year we engaged with Tasmanians from every walk of life. Amplifying the voice of young people and their families, of older Tasmanians, of people living in our regional towns, people living with mental illness and those providing them support, has been both a privilege and an eye opener as we continue to strive for better outcomes for all.

→ influencing mental health reform and system improvement

It shaped our #checkin and A Tasmanian State of Mind campaigns and our advocacy work for centralised access to seamless service navigation and referrals. In a time when things have never been so uncertain, our vision for a better mental health system for all Tasmanians has never been clearer.

I can't look at the achievements of the past year without acknowledging the hard work and dedication of the MHCT team. It's been a year of many twists and turns, but they've reacted and responded quickly and effectively to changing circumstances. They have not just risen to the challenge – they have excelled – and put MHCT in a remarkable position to influence meaningful change in the coming months and years. A big thanks also to the MHCT board, who have been encouraging and understanding throughout. Their support and guidance have helped MHCT flourish and set us up to succeed with our goals into the future.

I am optimistic that all of our hard work will have a positive impact on Tasmania's mental health sector in the year ahead, and look forward to working with our members and stakeholders as we continue towards our goal of ensuring that all Tasmanians have access to the support they need to be mentally healthy, wherever they live, work or play.

Connie Digolis

CEO

Mental Health Council of Tasmania



Our Team



Shareen Pearson

Corporate Services Manager

"I'm proud of how the MHCT team came together and supported each other through some very hectic work periods, using compassion and humour to guide us through what was a challenging year."



Bree Klerck

Sector Development Coordinator

"For me the highlight was seeing a strong focus on mental health literacy and community-led approaches in PESRAC's final report."



Nick Sullivan

Media and Communications Officer

"I'm proud of MHCT's work during the state election campaign, advocating for greater focus on prevention by empowering communities with the information and skills they need to look after their mental wellbeing."



Sally Errey

Stakeholder Engagement Coordinator

"Having joined MHCT in March 2021, I hit the ground running, with the launch and planning for our state election campaign "A Tasmanian State of Mind". I'm proud of the work done expanding the MHCT membership base and developing stakeholder strategy. It's rewarding working with such a talented and dynamic team."



Ezra Thomas

Project Officer

"My greatest achievement this year was speaking with 374 young people, 187 community members, 48 people with lived experience of mental ill health, and 38 mental health service providers, resulting in a report highlighting the mental health and wellbeing needs of young Tasmanians."



Julie Martin

Operations Manager

Julie left in December 2020 for a self-described, and well earned 'gap year'. Thank you for all your fantastic work during your time at MHCT.



Cat Delpero

Media and Communications Manager

Cat went on maternity leave in September 2020, and not long after welcomed her son Felix to the world. Congratulations Cat and the Delpero family.



MHCT Chair Report

Jules Carroll



Jules Carroll, Chair

To say it has been a big year for the Mental Health Council and our sector would be something of an understatement. Increasing conversations across media, government and the community about mental health and wellbeing, has enabled MHCT to carve a path to new conversations and opportunities, and highlighted the importance of the work of our sector in helping Tasmanians to be happy and healthy.

This is evidenced through the new MHCT Strategic Plan which was launched in November 2020. The new Strategic Plan, developed in consultation with members and other key stakeholders across the sector, puts into practice our vision for every Tasmanian to have access to the resources and support they need for good mental health and wellbeing. It expands the scope of MHCT's work, going beyond systemic advocacy and improvement, outlining a number of key initiatives that encourage a whole of population approach to mental health and wellbeing by increasing community engagement, awareness and education, and strengthening the community mental health sector.

While our sector has demonstrated passion and commitment to supporting Tasmanians as we get through these uncertain times, the increasing pressure we've seen on services during the past 12 months has emphasised gaps and shortages across our sector that need to be solved by attracting new people to the sector to support our existing, dedicated workforce, and by providing opportunities to our existing workforce to ensure we can retain them.

The Premier's Economic and Social Advisory Council (PESRAC) was assembled in the early stages of the pandemic to provide advice to the Premier on strategies and initiatives to support the short to medium, and the longer term recovery from COVID-19. With the release of their final report in March of this year, PESRAC made a number of recommendations aimed at minimising the mental health and wellbeing impacts of the pandemic, and ensuring Tasmanians are safe and supported as we move into the future.



The Tasmanian Government accepted all of PESRAC's recommendations, which was another significant recognition of not only the impact of the pandemic on our mental health and wellbeing, but also of the need to react and respond to the needs of Tasmanians by supporting the mental health sector.

I would like to thank Connie and her team for their ongoing dedication to the mental health and wellbeing of all Tasmanians. While the work of MHCT and its members has always been valuable, the past year has certainly highlighted its importance, and I'm proud of the way that we've responded as a sector to the many challenges that have been presented.

A big thank you also to my fellow board members. At a time when everyone has faced numerous challenges of their own, they've volunteered their time, and provided expert insight to help set MHCT up for success now and into the future.

While this year has not been without its challenges, it has been inspiring to see the inclusive and collaborative approach MHCT and our members have taken to overcoming these challenges, ensuring Tasmanians have the support they need to guide them through this uncertain period, and into the future.

Jules Carroll

Chair

Mental Health Council of Tasmania

OUR BOARD

Jules Carroll	- Chair
David Tilley	- Deputy Chair
James Versteegen	- Treasurer
Paul Campbell	- Board Member
Deb Fast	- Board Member
Nicky Osborne	- Board Member
Naomi Walsh	- Board Member

Who we are

OUR VISION

EVERY TASMANIAN
HAS ACCESS TO THE
RESOURCES AND SUPPORT
NEEDED FOR GOOD MENTAL
HEALTH AND WELLBEING.

The Mental Health Council of Tasmania (MHCT) is the peak body for community managed mental health services in Tasmania. We represent and promote the interests of our members and work closely with government and agencies to ensure sectoral input into public policies and programs. We advocate for reform and improvement within the Tasmanian mental health system.

→ A leading voice in the Tasmanian mental health system





OUR PURPOSE

STRENGTHEN AND ADVOCATE
FOR OUR COMMUNITIES
AND SERVICE PROVIDERS
TO SUPPORT THE MENTAL
HEALTH AND WELLBEING
OF ALL TASMANIANS.

OUR ROLE

Provide leadership by advocating for continuous improvement across all facets of mental health and suicide prevention

Provide trusted advice to our members and decision makers to enable a robust and contemporary mental health system

Be a collective, representative voice to ensure future sustainability of the sector, the community and the MHCT

Form and support strong networks and collaboration to support sector development and capacity building

Promote the reduction of stigma and champion mental health awareness and the value of good mental health

Influence policy development and implementation in the interests of our members and the needs of the broader population

OUR VALUES

- ▶ COMPASSIONATE AND RESPECTFUL
- ▶ COLLABORATIVE AND SUPPORTIVE
- ▶ RESPONSIVE AND ADAPTIVE
- ▶ LEADING AND ENGAGING

What we do

MHCT would like to acknowledge funding support for a number of MHCT projects and initiatives from the State Government through the Department of Health, and Primary Health Tasmania.

As the peak body for mental health in Tasmania, MHCT is accountable to its members and committed to continuous improvement and real reform across the Tasmanian mental health system. With the launch of our new strategic plan in November 2020, MHCT has been busily working across the four Priority Areas it outlines in partnership with our members, stakeholders, government agencies, and other peak bodies.

PRIORITY AREA ONE: SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT

GOAL: To ensure all Tasmanians have access to the supports they need

HIGHLIGHTS



Through our 'A Tasmanian State of Mind' election campaign, we called for: access to centralised, seamless referrals and navigation.

2021-22 Budget Priority Submission: Mental Wellbeing: Healthier, happier people and communities – highlighting several key focus areas to support the Tasmanian mental health system.

Collaborating with the Tasmanian Department of Health and Primary Health Tasmania as a key stakeholder to help develop Rethink 2020 and the Rethink 2020 Implementation Plan

Highlighting the impacts of COVID-19 on consumers, carers, families and friends, and the sector through:

- 9 COVID-19 Sector Impact reports
- COVID-19 Youth Impact report
- COVID-19 Older Tasmanians Impact report

The MHCT submission to the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council (PESRAC), and our response to their interim report.



MHCT developed numerous submissions to help inform and influence mental health policy, including submissions to:



- Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS inquiry into the Quality and Safeguards Commission, and Inquiry into Independent Assessments
- Tasmanian Department of Health's 'Our Healthcare Future' consultation
- Legislative Council Inquiries into Rural and Remote Health Services, and into Disability Services



"There's no question our mental health is being impacted and challenged, it should not reach a point where we are unwell and might be unwell for a length of time."
– Connie Digolis, CEO (responding to the 2020 federal budget)

PRIORITY AREA TWO: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

GOAL: To increase understanding of the role everyone can play in good mental health and wellbeing in the Tasmanian community

HIGHLIGHTS

Through our 'A Tasmanian State of Mind' election campaign, we called for:



Community capacity building



Mental health and wellbeing education



Launched the improved **#checkin** website in December making it more tailored and accessible for more Tasmanians, including the introduction of a dedicated workplace section

→ Coordinated 2020 Mental Health Week and distributed

\$40,000

TO

47

in Mental health Week grants

organisations

supported by the Tasmanian Government.

→ Facilitated a Community Wellbeing Grants program

\$250,000

TO

35

organisations

to host events that reconnect communities, supported by Primary Health Tasmania

CONNECTIONS

2,779 > Facebook

242 > Instagram

630 > email subscribers

MHCT WEBSITE



37,327

pageviews



12,945

visitors

MEDIA

67

interviews and quotes across the media, including TV, radio and print.



"Thank you again to the MHCT for the opportunity to provide this event to the North-West Community." – Mental Health Week Grant recipient

PRIORITY AREA TWO: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



We all have a role to play
5-10 OCTOBER

“Given the challenges that 2020 has presented, **Mental Health Week** this year couldn’t be more important.”

THE HON. JEREMY ROCKLIFF, MINISTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

\$40,000

grants funds

TO

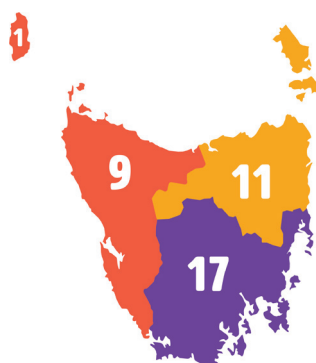
47

organisations

53 APPLICATIONS

- > 3 Local Councils
- > 3 State Government Departments and Services
- > 18 Not-for-Profit Organisations
- > 5 Community Houses/Centres
- > 10 schools or tertiary education providers
- > 3 libraries
- > 11 other community groups

47 FUNDED EVENTS



+ 9 Statewide/Online

55 PUBLIC EVENTS

registered on our program



+ 14 Statewide/Online

3,781

IN-PERSON EVENT ATTENDEES

18,726

ONLINE EVENT ATTENDEES

In the lead up to Mental Health Week, MHCT CEO, Connie Digolis, wrote an open letter to all Tasmanians. When shared to Facebook and through all of Tasmania’s major newspapers. This reached over 15,500 people through MHCT social media channels, and countless others through print media

“This year has shown that we are stronger and more resilient than we have given ourselves credit for. We have adapted. We have endured. We have made sacrifices to help keep our families and communities safe, happy and healthy. We still have a way to go, but we will get through this together.”

Connie Digolis, CEO (from open letter/MHW2020)

PRIORITY AREA TWO: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



#checkin

campaign and website

"I encourage all Tasmanians to take some steps in their day to day lives to look after their own mental health and wellbeing, and that of their loved ones."

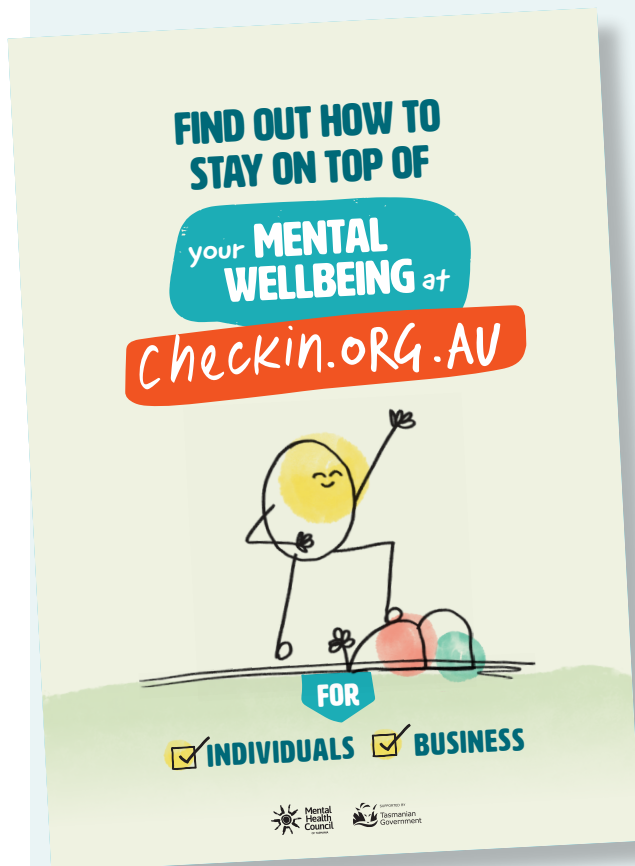
THE HON. JEREMY ROCKLIFF, MINISTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

27,395

PAGEVIEWS

5,075

VISITORS



In December 2020 we launched the upgraded checkin website, www.checkin.org.au, which included the introduction of a dedicated workplace section, designed to help business owners, managers, and employees to create mentally healthy workplaces.

A statewide campaign to promote the website was run from December to May across television, radio, print, buses, online, and social media.



PRIORITY AREA THREE: WORKFORCE

GOAL: To support the development of a highly skilled and sustainable Tasmanian mental health workforce

HIGHLIGHTS

Through our 'A Tasmanian State of Mind' election campaign, we called for:



Development of a nation leading mental health workforce

→ Coordinated:

- 3 Mental Health Leaders Forums
- 9 Regional Mental Health Group Meetings
- 6 COVID Psychosocial Working Groups
- 6 COVID Carer, Consumer, Family and Friends meetings
- 8 COVID Mental Health Sector Network meetings



Delivered Peer Worker training courses to consumers and carers over 3 in person sessions and an online refresher training

Continued to support the Community of Practice for Organisations Engaging Peer Workers

Brought together youth mental health service providers for:

1 statewide meeting and 3 regional workshops, to discuss ways to collectively address service demand



Collaborated on a joint COVID-19 support plan with Primary Health Tasmania and the Mental Health Alcohol and Drug Directorate.

Worked with Communities Tasmania to support the development of a Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy:

Consultations held in 12 LGAs, including 374 young people, 187 community members, 48 people with lived experience, and representatives from 38 service providers across Tasmania

SUICIDE PREVENTION



Sponsored and presented the Mental Health Council of Tasmania Outstanding Contribution LiFE Award



Continued to support and promote the Tasmanian Communications Charter, and the Safely Talking Toolkit

"This has cemented in me the growing inkling that Mental Health Peer Work and advocacy is something I have true passion for."

– Peer Worker training participant

"Honestly, I have not felt this inspired in as long as I can recall".

– Peer Worker training participant

PRIORITY AREA FOUR: MEMBERSHIP

GOAL: To engage, support and strengthen our work with members to achieve an integrated mental health system

HIGHLIGHTS



39

member
organisations



12

individual
members



7

associate
members

MHCT continues to consult with and represent its members and the sector through many committees and working groups including:



State Mental Health Services

- › Reform Steering Committee,
- › Integration Hub, Safe Haven and Continuing Care Stream, and Acute Care Team Project Control Groups



Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drug Leadership Group



Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Committee, and Suicide Prevention Community Network



Community Mental Health Australia Policy Network, and Executive Leadership Group



Department of Health, Primary Health Tasmania, and Mental Health Council of Tasmania Working Group



Rethink 2020 Writing Group, and Implementation Plan Working Group



Premier's Health and Wellbeing Advisory Council



"The communication between MHCT and government is vital as you represent your members who are at the grass roots level and have the best grasp of people's reality in day-to-day life."
– MHCT member



Our Members 2020–2021

MHCT is a member-based peak body, and we acknowledge the dedication of our member organisations, all of whom make a difference to the lives of Tasmanians through the provision of the high-quality programs and supports.

MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

Advocacy Tasmania

Anglicare Tasmania

Australian Red Cross

Baptcare

Bethlehem House

Caroline House

CatholicCare

Choose Life Services

Club Haven

Colony 47

CoRES Australia

Cornerstone Youth Services
(headspace Launceston)

Flourish

GROW

iTrain Australia

Lambert Training & Events

Langford Support Services

Life Without Barriers

Lifeline Tasmania

Live Well Tasmania

Migrant Resource Centre

Mindfulness Programs Australasia

Mission Australia

Positive Solutions

PSYCH2U

Psychology CAFFE

Relationships Australia

Richmond Fellowship Tasmania (RFT)

Royal Flying Doctor Service

Rural Alive and Well (RAW)

Rural Health Tasmania

Salvation Army Bridge Program

Teen Challenge Tasmania

The Hobart Clinic

The LINK (headspace Hobart)

Wellways

Working It Out

yourtown – Kids Helpline

Youth, Family & Community
Connections (YFCC)

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

Daryl Lamb (Life Member)

Diana Taylor

Emmanuelle (Emmy) Bostock

Kate Griggs

Laura Smith

Maree McCulley

Mark Davis

Matt Hill

Patrick Carlisle (Life Member)

Renate Hughes

Ross Barwick

Therese Ryan

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Carers Tasmania

Epilepsy Tasmania

Pharmacy Guild of Australia,
Tasmania Branch

RESPECT Occupational Therapy

Salveo Healthcare Services

Well Minds Work



Annual Review 2020-21

CONTACT US

Level 1
131A Collins Street
Hobart 7000
Tasmania

Tel 03 6224 9222

Email enquiries@mhct.org

Web www.mhct.org



@mhctas



mentalhealthcounciltas



@mhctas