

**12/09/2024**

Mental Health Council of Tasmania Media Release

## **Budget lacks long term commitment to community mental health sector**

Thursday's state budget does little to provide certainty or ensure the ongoing viability of Tasmania's vital community mental health sector.

Mental Health Council of Tasmania CEO, Connie Digolis, said community managed mental health organisations were plagued by short-term funding agreements, which amplified serious workforce issues.

"Our members across the community managed mental health sector have been telling us for many years that a combination of short-term contracts and long-term underfunding makes it is nearly impossible for them to offer job safety and security, impacting their ability to attract and retain staff. The one and two year commitments for our sector in this budget only perpetuates these problems."

She said that longer contracts would provide certainty and help to increase the viability of services and availability of vital community-based supports that so many Tasmanians rely on.

"Community mental health organisations and their staff deserve the same level of certainty that their public sector counterparts enjoy. The supports they provide aren't just a 'nice-to-have' luxury. They are essential, supporting thousands of Tasmanians to manage and stay on top of their mental health, participate in their community, live their best lives, and stay out of our hospitals."

The Premier in parliament on Wednesday acknowledge the "enormous challenge... to the mental health and wellbeing of communities across the globe and in Tasmania." But Ms Digolis said the solution wouldn't come from beds alone.

"While having modern and appropriate facilities are important in the delivery of top-quality mental health care in our state, the significant increases in mental health concerns we seeing aren't due to a lack of beds in our hospitals and acute mental health services. These increases are, however, directly related to underinvestment in prevention and early intervention."

"A 'strong plan' for the future needs to empower all Tasmanians to thrive. If our government is serious about wanting us to thrive, then they must investment in long-term supports and services that help people be and stay mentally well, and out of hospital."

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

A Tasmania Lifeline: 1800 984 434 [atasmanianlifeline.com.au/](https://atasmanianlifeline.com.au/)

Lifeline: 13 11 14 or Text 0477 13 11 14 [lifeline.org.au](https://lifeline.org.au)

Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800 [kidshelpline.com.au/](https://kidshelpline.com.au/)

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

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

[mindframe.org.au/](https://mindframe.org.au/) and [lifeinmind.org.au/the-charter](https://lifeinmind.org.au/the-charter)