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Mental Health Council of Tasmania Media Release

Three-quarters of Tasmanians missing out on Mental Health Support

Nearly three-quarters (73.5%) of Tasmanians who need community psychosocial support are missing out. With state and federal budget announcements fast approaching, the Mental Health Council of Tasmania is calling on both levels of government to work together to find and fund a solution to this startling shortfall, which leaves thousands of vulnerable Tasmanians without essential mental health support.

The alarming figures are highlighted in a report published last year by Health Policy Analysis, which was commissioned by the Commonwealth Government as part of the bilateral mental health agreement. The report estimated that nearly 9,500 Tasmanians with moderate to severe mental illness are missing out on support through the NDIS or other state or federal funded programs. It also showed that those that are able to access support aren't able to access as much as they need.

MHCT CEO, Connie Digolis, said psychosocial supports were a critical part of the mental health system that helped people with mental illness remain in the community by supporting them with a range of daily tasks, such as help with daily activities, rebuilding and maintaining connections, building social skills and participation in education and employment.

“Psychosocial supports help people with moderate to severe mental health issues live independently in the community. Evidence shows us that without access to psychosocial supports people become increasingly unwell, and require more acute, complex and costly forms of intervention and care.”

An MHCT analysis of eleven psychosocial programs currently being delivered by organisations across the state estimates that the state and federal governments need to jointly invest around \$200 million annually to close the gap and ensure people can access the support they need.

“We're not talking about something that is nice to have. We're talking about supports that are essential for thousands of Tasmanians to live their best lives and participate in their community. This is a basic human right, not a luxury for a lucky few.”

MHCT have recommended a phased approach to closing the gap, which would allow time for community organisations to scale up their workforces and plan for increased service delivery.

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