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Mental Health Council of Tasmania Media Release

MHCT Calls on Candidates to Prioritise People Over Projects

Ahead of the state election, the Mental Health Council of Tasmania has called on all candidates to affirm their commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of all Tasmanians.

On Thursday MHCT outlined three priorities for Tasmania's mental health system which would help people access timely mental health support, provide necessary funding certainty, and reduce the pressure on a health system at breaking point.

MHCT CEO, Dan Vautin, said, "We know all the candidates will say that the mental health and wellbeing of Tasmanians is important to them and one of their top priorities. We're calling on all candidates: commit to funding certainty for our members, commit to allocating 5% of the mental health budget to mental health prevention and promotion, and prioritise improvements in service coordination across the system".

Mr Vautin emphasised that community managed mental health organisation are the backbone of Tasmania's mental health system, helping people manage their mental health and live independently in the community.

"The supports provided across our sector lead to significantly better mental health outcomes for the people that receive them. But too many Tasmanians are missing out on the support they need, when they need it. We need to transition funding to support prevention to take the pressure off our hospitals and GPs, while also implementing systems that improve access and coordination across services."

He added, "For too long the conversation has focussed on our system's struggle to keep up with people in crisis. We should be asking why people are reaching crisis point in the first place. The standard response continues to be about increasing the capacity to respond to crisis - and this must change."

Psychosocial and other community-based supports lead to better mental health outcomes and reduced hospital admissions, readmissions and homelessness, while increasing quality of life, productivity, education and employment prospects.

"These supports aren't just 'nice-to-have' – they are essential," Mr Vautin said. "We have to start measuring the success of our mental health system by the number of people we can support to stay out of our hospitals, not by the number of people we can fit into them."

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