



**Mental
Health
Council**
OF TASMANIA

www.mhct.org

Annual Review 2024-2025

→ A leading voice in the Tasmanian mental health system



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The Mental Health Council of Tasmania acknowledges the Palawa people of Lutruwita as the traditional and original owners, and continuing custodians of the land on which we work. We recognise and value their rich and continuing connection to country, to land, water and culture, and pay respects to Elders past and present.

We acknowledge people with lived experience of mental ill-health and recovery and we recognise our work relies upon valuing, respecting, and drawing upon the lived experience and expert knowledge of consumers, their families, carers and friends, service providers, their staff, and local communities.

Our Members 2024–2025

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

Butterfly Foundation

Catholic Care

Choose Life Services

Cornerstone Youth Services
(headspace North/North West)

EACH

GROW

The Hobart Clinic

Home Base

iTrain Australia

Kentish Regional Clinic

Life Without Barriers

Lifeline Tasmania

The LINK (headspace Hobart)

Live Well Tasmania

Men's Resources Tasmania

Mental Health Family & Friends

Mental Health Lived Experience
Tasmania

Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania

Mindfulness Programs Australasia

Mission Australia

New Mornings

Positive Solutions

Psychology CAFFE

Relationships Australia

Richmond Futures

Royal Flying Doctors Service

Rural Alive and Well (RAW)

Rural Health Tasmania

Salvation Army

Seedwings Art Therapy

St Vincent de Paul Society

Stride (Head to Health)

Teen Challenge Tasmania

Well Minds Work

Wellways

Working It Out

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Asthma Australia, Tasmania

Break O'Day Council

Carers Tasmania

Clarence City Council

Central Coast Council

Epilepsy Tasmania

Pharmacy Guild of Australia
Tasmania Branch

RANT Arts

Salveo Healthcare Services

Sam Project

TasTAFE

Triple P International
(Positive Parenting Program)

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

Patrick Carlisle (Life Member)

Connie Digolis (Life Member)

Daryl Lamb (Life Member)

Susanna Carlyon

Mark Davis

Racheal Leigh

Graeme Lynch AM

Maree McCulley

Therese Ryan

Mallory Schipper

Michelle Swallow

Diana Taylor

CEO Update

Dan Vautin



Dan Vautin, CEO

What a time to step into the role of CEO at the MHCT during a time of enormous challenge both for the MHCT and for our members.

In these first two months, I've had the joy of connecting with our team, our members, and many other important stakeholders from across Tasmania. I have learned so much and would like to share what I've observed so far.

The diversity of support our members provide Tasmanians is extraordinary. Coming from the Alcohol and other Drugs Sector, I've long admired the community mental health space, but being immersed in it now has deepened my appreciation for the skill and dedication of the thousands of individuals who form the backbone of Tasmania's mental health system.

Our Board of Directors, who volunteer their time to help guide our strategic direction, are incredibly passionate, and their dedication to creating better mental health outcomes for all Tasmanians grounds the work we do. The board, along with our Chair, John Kirwan, have been especially generous and patient as they've helped bring me up to speed.

And I've seen the impact of MHCT's work in action - from the launch of the game changing Take a minute app in May, to the hundreds of Tasmanians who we've helped upskill and introduce to peer work, to the dozens of submissions, reports, committees and groups that influence and shape government policy.

These highlights reflect the expertise, collaborative spirit, and tireless advocacy that are the hallmarks of a strong peak and engaged membership.

Toward the end of the year, MHCT faced significant funding challenges that led to difficult decisions and the loss of valued team members. In my short time here, I've seen firsthand the strength of our team - their unity, their passion, and unwavering commitment to realising our vision. Whilst painful, this experience has given us renewed energy to drive positive change.

As we look ahead, our focus remains steadfast: to advocate for a mental health system that supports all Tasmanians to be at their best. We will continue to amplify the voices of our members, collaborate purposefully, and champion the right to accessible and affordable mental health support at all levels, for all Tasmanians.

I am not naive to the challenges ahead. But we have a great team, a skilled and engaged board, and a strong member network, which form the necessary foundation for an optimistic future as we shape the Tasmanian mental health system for the better.

Dan Vautin

CEO

Mental Health Council of Tasmania

OUR BOARD

John Kirwan
Chair

Mark Mewis
Deputy Chair

Andrew Little
Treasurer

Ben Hughes
Board Member

Dr. Becc Nothrop
Board Member

MHCT Chair Report

John Kirwan

2024/25 saw its third state election campaign in as many years. This cycle of political change has created a challenging environment for MHCT's advocacy work, with shifting ministers, promises, and priorities. Despite this, MHCT continues to navigate these complexities with strategic focus and resilience.

From the Productivity Commission at a national level, to the Tasmanian Government's own PESRAC report, all have recommended more certainty and longer contracts than 1, 2 or 3 years, but we are yet to see these recommendations implemented. These commitments are long overdue.

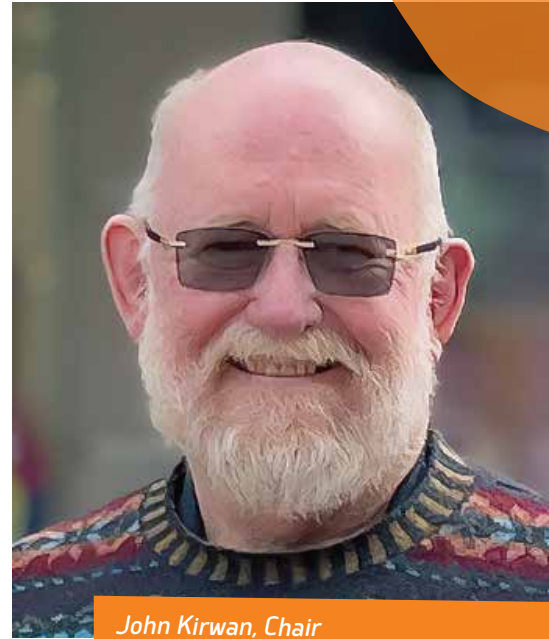
While leaders increasingly acknowledge the importance of mental health and wellbeing, their responses often default to 'more of the same' – incremental changes that lack the bold vision needed for true reform, not short-term band aids. MHCT's influence, however, remains a driving force for change, pushing beyond rhetoric toward meaningful transformation. We need a clear, preferably multilaterally supported policy and direction, plan and funding to make it happen

MHCT's visible output – submissions, media appearances, training programs, social media engagement, and even an app – is impressive. Yet what's less visible, and harder to quantify, is the strategic work behind the scenes: engaging with stakeholders across the sector, building coalitions, and steadily advancing our vision of a Tasmania where everyone has access to timely, affordable mental health support.

That is the work that I so often find myself in awe of – the relentless and tireless efforts of everyone at MHCT to promote the mental health needs of all Tasmanians, and the value of the community managed mental health sector and those who work across it to support thousands of Tasmanians.

Looking to the future, the 20-Year Preventive Health Strategy presents a significant opportunity to embed mental health as a core pillar of wellbeing. MHCT is uniquely positioned to ensure that prevention, early intervention, and community-based care are central to this long-term vision. MHCT's detailed submission to the consultation highlights not only the potential benefits of a preventive approach to mental health, but also the key role the community sector must play to make it a reality.

I would like to acknowledge outgoing CEO Connie Digolis, who finished up in May. Connie's leadership has been transformational – not only for MHCT, but for the entire sector. During her tenure, she helped shape and influence some of the most significant reform projects Tasmania has seen. While there is still much work ahead, it's clear we would be further from our goals without Connie's unwavering advocacy for prevention, early intervention, and sector-wide collaboration.



John Kirwan, Chair

My fellow directors and I were proud to award Connie MHCT Life Membership as a small recognition of her remarkable contributions.

As we enter a new chapter, MHCT remains committed to driving reform, amplifying the voices of our sector and community, and shaping a mental health system that truly meets the needs of all Tasmanians.

I complete my term on the board and as Chair at the AGM. My personal thanks go to past and present board members, who commit their time and energy; MHCT staff, whose hard work makes it all happen; and our members – because without members, there is no MHCT.

John Kirwan

Chair

Mental Health Council of Tasmania

Our Team



Dan Vautin

Chief Executive Officer



Amanda Aitken

Community Capacity Building



Ella Bellamy

Policy Support Officer



Steve Bobs

Training & Development Project Officer



Emily Carter

Administration & Communications Officer



Laura Cini

Mental Health & Wellbeing Coordinator



Olivia Clayton

Digital Communications Lead



Sophie Cliffe

Administration Support Officer



Sally Errey

Stakeholder Engagement Lead



Hannah Godfrey

Youth Mental Health Access Project Officer



Ben Hirst

Lived Experience and Training Manager



Rhiannon Hamilton

Lived Experience and Training Project Officer



Laura Johnson

Youth Mental Health Access Project Officer



Ian Kam

Project Support Officer



Laura Martin

Acting General Manager



John McNamara

Community Capacity Building



Stuart Schultz

Training & Development Project Officer



Nick Sullivan

Communications Manager



James Weir

Take a minute Project Officer



Dean Yates

Policy and Advocacy Lead

FORMER TEAM MEMBERS

Connie Digolis

Chief Executive Officer

Bree Klerck

General Manager

Shareen Pearson

Corporate Services Manager

Trudy Schmitzer

*Lived Experience
Workforce Coordinator*



Mental Health Week

TASMANIA

5-13 October

45

public events

62

grant applications

42

grant recipients

\$40k

in grants awarded

MHCT coordinated Mental Health Week again in 2024.

As part of this, we:

- Set up a steering committee who helped create the new theme for 2024.
- Coordinated a small grants program.
- Promoted Mental Health Week across the state.
- Hosted a launch event at the Botanical Gardens, attended by the Minister and multiple media outlets.



"Sharing a smile with a stranger, spending time in the garden, hearing your favourite song on the radio..."

What are the things that give you a glimmer of calm and peace on a busy day? The small moments that wouldn't make the news, but make you feel good?

Having coffee with an old friend, watching a breathtaking sunset, listening to birds singing in the trees...

This Mental Health Week, take a minute to appreciate the little things!"

Mental Health Week across Tasmania



STRATEGIC GOAL: Advocate for a mental health system that meets the needs of its people.

MHCT has continued its systemic advocacy to improve the mental health system for all Tasmanians. Throughout 2024–2025, we have maintained a strong commitment to representing sector priorities across a range of committees, networks, working groups, and consultations.

Our advocacy has included the development of reports, policy submissions, and briefing papers, providing trusted advice to government on key areas of reform. We have also worked to elevate the voices and needs of Tasmanians and the essential community-managed mental health sector – particularly throughout the state election campaign.

Major pieces of work included a submission to the 20-Year Preventive Health Strategy, a report which included a series of recommendations to address unmet psychosocial supports needs in response to the Health Policy Analysis report, and the Final Take a minute Evaluation Report. Broadly, these reports and submissions highlighted the need for greater investment in prevention and early intervention, including the social and economic benefits of doing so.

Head to mhct.org/resource-library to read our submissions

REPRESENTATION

Over
30

committees, networks,
working groups and
consultations.

REPORTS, SUBMISSIONS

8

reports, submissions,
briefing papers.

MEDIA

61

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

STRATEGIC GOAL: Strengthen and support a thriving community-based mental health and wellbeing sector.



This year marked a significant period of growth and development for the LEX Training Hub.

Three advisory groups were established to provide strategic guidance: the Steering Committee, Course Advisory Group, and Peer Workforce Advisory Group, ensuring diverse stakeholder input across mental health, alcohol and drugs, and suicide prevention sectors.

The Introduction to Peer Work course was successfully redeveloped through co-design with people with lived experience, and the Hub was officially launched in November 2024. The annual Peer Workforce Survey and Mental Health Lived Experience Workforce Mapping Survey were distributed to gather critical data about Tasmania's lived experience workforce.

Throughout the year, the Hub delivered training across Hobart, Launceston, and Burnie, including Introduction to Peer Work, Foundations of Peer Work, and Leading a Lived Experience Workforce. Online delivery was introduced in April 2025 to improve accessibility for regional Tasmanians.

The team also developed the Organisational Readiness Program, featuring a Lived Experience Workforce Commitment Framework with eight standards to support best practice in organisational readiness. Participant feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with facilitators praised for creating valuable learning experiences.

As the financial year concluded, the Hub entered a new phase with modified funding, requiring some program restructuring while maintaining core offerings. The focus moving forward is on sustainable delivery of Introduction and Foundations courses, continuation of the Readiness Program, and development of peer supervision infrastructure.

This transition builds on strong foundations established through collaboration with individuals and organisations committed to growing Tasmania's lived experience workforce in alignment with Rethink 2020 and the Tasmanian Drug Strategy.

LEX TRAINING HUB COURSES



2



100+
PARTICIPANTS

STRATEGIC GOAL: Advance good mental health and wellbeing for all Tasmanians.



The Take a minute campaign grew significantly in 2024–2025, with over 1,000 Tasmanians joining the 7 minute challenge and many more participating through workplaces and community groups.

Visibility increased through social media, local influencers, sporting clubs, and major events like WorkSafe Tasmania's conference and the Compassionate Tasmania Symposium. The campaign was a semi-finalist in the Tasmanian Community Achievement Awards and presented at a national mental health conference.

Workplace engagement expanded, supported by new resources including the *A minute with...* video series. Researchers from Be Well Co contributed a chapter on the campaign to a wellbeing literacy textbook.

Two new project officers joined in December, boosting regional capacity. In May, the campaign launched its app, enabling team-based wellbeing activities. The final evaluation confirmed strong impact, and funding through December 2025 ensures continued delivery and advocacy for mental health prevention.

FOLLOWERS

3865 Facebook

586 Instagram

857 LinkedIn

WEBSITE



37,095
pageviews



13,685
visitors

ENEWS SUBSCRIBERS

227 Members

1130 General subscribers



In 2024–2025, the Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing Program launched as a youth-focused adaptation of the Take a minute campaign. Designed to equip young Tasmanians with tools to support mental wellbeing, the program quickly established statewide coverage with Hannah and Laura joining as Project Officers.

Youth involvement was central, with Advisory Groups formed in late 2024 to co-design branding, resources, and training content. Throughout the year, the team worked closely with young people to develop Youth Peer Leader training and materials.

A major milestone came in May with the official launch at Newstead College, where 18 students completed training and began leading wellbeing activities. Hannah and Laura continue to engage schools and youth organisations across Tasmania.

Funding secured through December 2026 ensures the program's continued growth, empowering young Tasmanians to support their communities through peer-to-peer education.





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