Mental Health Council
OF TASMANIA



www.mhct.org

Annual Review
2025-2026

→ A leading voice in the Tasmanian mental health system

Contents

OUR MEMBERS 3

CEO UPDATE 4

MHCT CHAIR REPORT 5

OUR TEAM 6

LEx HUB 8

POLICY AND ADVOCACY 10

WHATEVER THE WEATHER 12

MENTAL HEALTH WEEK 14

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 2025–2026

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 high-quality programs and supports.

MEMBERS

- 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
- Kentish Regional Clinic
- Kookaburra Kids Foundation Australia
- Launceston City Mission
- 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
- Youth, Family & Community Connections (YFCC)

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

- The Australian Academy of Media
- Asthma Australia, Tasmania
- Break O'Day Council
- Carers Tasmania
- Central Coast Council
- Clarence City Council
- Epilepsy Tasmania
- GenU
- JayRad Therapy Services
- 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)
- John Kirwan (Life Member)
- Daryl Lamb (Life Member)
- Susanna Carlyon
- Mark Davis
- Racheal Leigh
- Graeme Lynch AM
- Maree McCulley
- Catherine Pross
- Therese Ryan
- Mallory Schipper
- Vanessa Sharman
- Michelle Swallow
- Diana Taylor

CEO Update

Dan Vautin


Dan Vautin, CEO

When I stepped into the role of CEO in May 2025, MHCT was navigating significant change. Since then, we have seen a snap state election, a new Minister, an interim State Budget, then another budget, all of which has created a sense of deep uncertainty and instability. As a peak body, our responsibility has remained clear: to represent our members and advocate for a sustainably funded mental health system that better supports all Tasmanians.

A consistent message from our members has been the need for greater stability. Increasing demand, short-term grants, rising costs and workforce pressures affect organisations' ability to plan, retain skilled staff and provide consistent support.

"Our members and Tasmanians are doing it tough, and there is a great deal of unmet need"

It has been a tumultuous year for MHCT, our members, and Tasmania's community-managed mental health sector.

In response, we continued to advocate for longer-term funding agreements, fair indexation, earlier contract decisions and stronger investment in community-based mental health services, and for dedicated funding for psychosocial supports in the next National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement.

We remain committed to a mental health system that invests in prevention and early intervention, values lived and living experience, strengthens community-based supports and helps people access assistance before they reach crisis.

Our advocacy is grounded in diverse consultation and member engagement. Regional meetings, leaders' forums, roundtables, surveys and everyday conversations have helped us understand the pressures facing services and identify practical opportunities for improvement. Thank you to everyone who has shared their time, knowledge and experience with us.

Alongside this work, MHCT continued to support the capability and connection of the sector. The LEx Training Hub strengthened Tasmania's lived experience workforce, our youth mental health initiatives brought young people and communities into the design of practical resources, and Mental Health Week again demonstrated the creativity and commitment of communities across the state.

We also take great pride in our contribution to the next Rethink & Beyond Mental Health Strategy, Preventive Health Strategy and the many ways that we share the collective expertise and insights of our sector.

I want to acknowledge the MHCT team. They have been instrumental in helping me through my first full year as CEO, and I am immensely proud of everything we have achieved together, especially given the turbulent start. Having seen the team's skills and knowledge in practice, I am genuinely excited about what we will achieve together as we move into 2027.

I would also like to thank our Board for its guidance, our members for their trust, and acknowledge the collaborative spirit of our partners across state government, community services, lived experience, research and advocacy.

Significant challenges remain, but we are also alive to the opportunities to improve Tasmania's mental health system. MHCT will continue working with our members and partners to pursue practical, evidence-informed change so Tasmanians can access the support they need, when and where they need it.

Dan Vautin

CEO
Mental Health Council of Tasmania

MHCT Chair Report

Mark Mewis

The 2025–26 year has been one of transition and challenge, but also significant opportunity for MHCT and Tasmania's community-managed mental health and wellbeing sector.

During a period of political change, funding uncertainty and ongoing pressure across the mental health system, the Board has remained focused on MHCT's purpose, strategic direction and long-term sustainability. While governments, ministers and policy settings may change, the need for an accessible, responsive and sustainable mental health system remains constant.

MHCT's Strategic Plan 2025–2030 provides a clear framework for this work: advocating for a mental health system that meets the needs of its people, advancing good mental health and wellbeing for all Tasmanians, and strengthening a thriving community-based mental health and wellbeing sector. These goals have guided the Board's oversight and the organisation's priorities throughout the year.

A key strategic concern remains the sustainability of the sector. Short-term contracts, inadequate indexation, workforce pressures and uncertain commissioning arrangements hamper organisations' ability to plan, retain skilled staff and respond confidently to community need. The Board strongly supports MHCT's continued advocacy for funding and policy settings that recognise community-based supports as an essential part of Tasmania's mental health system.

The reform processes now underway provide important opportunities to strengthen that system. MHCT will continue to promote approaches that invest in prevention and early intervention, value lived and living experience, strengthen psychosocial and community-based supports, and produce meaningful and measurable improvements for Tasmanians.

The Board recognises that MHCT's influence depends on its credibility, relationships and ability to bring together the experience of members, communities and partners. Some of this work is publicly visible, while much of it occurs through sustained engagement and careful advocacy over time. Both are essential to achieving lasting change.

I want to acknowledge the MHCT staff, who have navigated significant organisational and external change while remaining focused on the organisation's purpose. Their adaptability, expertise and commitment are among MHCT's greatest strengths.

I also thank Dan for his leadership as CEO. Taking on the role during a period of transition has no doubt led to many sleepless nights, but Dan's dedication and leadership were instrumental in guiding MHCT through these challenges. The Board has valued his focus on members and his commitment to ensuring MHCT remains a strong, practical and respected voice.



Mark Mewis, Chair

Finally, I thank my fellow Directors for the time they generously volunteer, and for the expertise and care they bring to their roles. Strong governance provides the foundation for MHCT to respond to change, manage risk and remain focused on long-term impact.

MHCT enters the coming year with strong leadership, an engaged membership and a clear strategic purpose. There is still much to do, but the Board is confident in the organisation's ability to advocate, connect and lead towards a mental health system that better supports all Tasmanians.

Mark Mewis

Chair
Mental Health Council of Tasmania

Our Team



Dan Vautin

Chief Executive Officer



Amanda Aitken

Community Capacity Building



Emily Carter

Administration & Communications Officer



Sophie Cliffe

Executive & Administration Support Officer



Alethea Coombe

Executive & Administration Support Officer (Leave cover)



Hannah Godfrey

Youth Mental Health Access Project Officer

Shanthini Gurung

Finance Manager



Dr Tasdik Hasan

Policy and Advocacy Lead



Laura Johnson

Youth Mental Health Access Project Officer



Laura Martin

Senior Manager: People and Programs



Nick Sullivan

Communications Manager

LEX TRAINING HUB



Rhiannon Hamilton

Senior Project Officer



Beth Langfield

Peer Supervision & Engagement Officer



Tim Bird

Training Facilitator



Bella Holmes

Training Facilitator

OUR BOARD

Mark Mewis *Chair*	**Andrew Little** *Treasurer*	**Dr. Becc Nothrop** *Board Member*	**Kylie Delaney** *Board Member*
Chris Hannan *Deputy Chair*	**Ben Hughes** *Board Member*	**Nina Nelson** *Board Member*	**James Thomas** *Board Member*

LEx Training Hub

The LEx Training Hub continues to strengthen Tasmania's lived experience workforce through training, organisational development and peer supervision. Its training pathways supported people with lived experience of mental health challenges, suicide, and alcohol and other drug use to apply their expertise safely and effectively in peer work and related roles.

Training delivery continued across the state and online, including Introduction to Peer Work and Foundations of Peer Work. These courses supported both aspiring and current Peer Workers to build confidence, strengthen reflective practice and develop a clearer understanding of lived experience values, boundaries, self-care and the role of peer work within broader service systems.

The LEx Hub also continued to support organisations to better understand, value and embed lived experience roles. Through organisational readiness programs, MHCT worked with services to strengthen systems, workplace culture and team understanding so lived experience workers can contribute as respected and equal members of multidisciplinary teams.

We worked alongside the Tasmanian Eating Disorder Service (TEDS) as it prepared to embed peer work roles within the service, delivering a Cultural Collaborative Workshop to more than 20 TEDS team members.

Similar work with Open Arms Tasmania brought people from across the service together over multiple workshops. Open Arms reflected that the workshops:

> ***"allowed us to hear different perspectives, challenge assumptions and have meaningful conversations about what it truly means to embed lived experience across our service."***

In 2025–26, the LEx Hub began piloting external peer supervision for peer workers, drawing on the Peer Supervision Framework developed by the Mental Health Coalition of South Australia's Lived Experience Workforce Program.

Peer supervision is recognised nationally and in Tasmania as essential to a thriving lived experience workforce. It provides a dedicated space for professional reflection, support and growth, led by people who understand the role and the unique opportunities and challenges it brings.

The LEx Hub's broader role continued to grow through involvement in suicide prevention and sector development activities. The LEx Hub sponsored the Priority Populations category at the 2026 Tasmanian LiFE Awards, and team members also facilitated a workshop at the Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Forum exploring the role of lived experience in suicide prevention and community connection.



"This is what I want to be when I grow up!"
-Mel, course participant



LEx TRAINING HUB COURSES

3 ONLINE COURSES

63 PARTICIPANTS

4 ORGANISATIONAL READINESS WORKSHOPS



External Peer Supervision

At its heart, peer work recognises the value of lived experience expertise. Peer supervision carries this value forward by ensuring the distinct nature of that expertise is also recognised in how peer workers are professionally supported.

The first pilot group supervision session was delivered in March 2026. Early feedback points to the value of peer supervision in building confidence in peer practice, strengthening connections between peer workers and creating opportunities for reflection grounded in lived experience values and guiding principles.

Peer workers have particularly valued having a space outside their workplace where they can reflect openly and connect with others.

As one participant explained, they valued ***"the opportunity to connect with fellow peer workers but also peer supervisors who are skilled in reflective practice and who are open to other perspectives."***

5 PEER WORKERS

5 SUPERVISION SESSIONS

Policy and Advocacy

Throughout 2025–26, MHCT represented the community-managed mental health sector across major government reforms, policy processes and public debate. Our advocacy focused on practical changes that would give services greater stability, address gaps in support and strengthen Tasmania's mental health system.

A major priority was the sustainability of community-managed mental health services. MHCT continued to advocate for five-year funding agreements, contract reviews at least six months before expiry, and indexation that reflects the real cost of delivering services.

While there has been encouraging movement towards longer agreements, consistent implementation, fair indexation and timely funding decisions remain important priorities for the sector.

Closing the psychosocial support gap also remained central to our advocacy, with more than 10,000 Tasmanians estimated to be missing out on the supports they need. MHCT continued to press for meaningful and sustained investment in community-based psychosocial supports and for governments to address this unmet need through the next National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement.

MHCT contributed feedback and submission to major state and national reform processes, including the review of the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement, Rethink & Beyond, Tasmania's 20-Year Preventive Health Strategy, the Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Strategy and the Tasmanian Disability Inclusion Plan.

Our submissions and advice focused on translating reform commitments into practical improvements, including clearer accountability, stronger community-based supports and better coordination across the mental health system.

Through the Coalition of Community Service Peaks, MHCT also joined cross-sector advocacy on the sustainability of Tasmania's community services. Working collectively provided a stronger voice on shared pressures including funding, workforce and increasing demand, while highlighting the value of investing in community-based services that can provide support earlier.

This advocacy was informed by the knowledge and experience of MHCT members and the broader sector. Forums, regional meetings, surveys and direct conversations helped identify emerging issues, test policy positions and bring sector expertise into our submissions, government engagement and public advocacy.

Alongside this engagement, projects such as Assisting Communities through Direct Connection (ACDC) and our collaboration with the Tasmanian Centre for Mental Health Service Innovation (TCMHSI) contributed additional evidence from communities and young Tasmanians, helping MHCT better understand where systems and supports can be improved.

REPRESENTATION

Over **50** committees, networks, working groups and consultations.

REPORTS, SUBMISSIONS

6 reports, submissions, briefing papers.

MEDIA

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

FOLLOWERS

4135	Facebook
764	Instagram
1226	LinkedIn

ENEWS SUBSCRIBERS

230	Members
1266	General subscribers

WEBSITE

41,401	20,524
pageviews	visitors

Highlight: **Assisting Communities through Direct Connection**

The Assisting Communities through Direct Connection (ACDC) project, commissioned by Community Mental Health Australia, worked directly with Tasmania's Nepali and Bangladeshi communities to better understand their experiences of mental health, help-seeking and access to support, and identify opportunities for more culturally responsive services.

The project combined in-depth interviews, community discussions, surveys and a roundtable. This included eight Nepali and 17 Bangladeshi people participating in individual interviews, two Nepali community-sector workers contributing through a group discussion, and 22 people taking part in a Bangladeshi community roundtable.

A broader community survey also received 47 responses, providing another avenue for community members to share their experiences and priorities.

Participants highlighted barriers including cost, uncertainty about available services, stigma and concerns about privacy, cultural safety and visa status.

Across the consultations, communities called for better information about support options, more affordable services, culturally responsive workers, trusted and accessible information, and opportunities to remain involved in designing future responses.

The findings provide MHCT with a stronger evidence base for advocating for mental health information and supports that better reflect Tasmania's increasingly diverse communities, while also identifying practical opportunities for continued co-design with Nepali and Bangladeshi Tasmanians.

25 INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

47 SURVEY RESPONSES

22 ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANTS

Highlight: **Tasmanian Centre for Mental Health Service Innovation**

MHCT's collaboration with the Tasmanian Centre for Mental Health Service Innovation (TCMHSI) has strengthened the evidence base for our work to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young Tasmanians.

Through the independent evaluation of Take a minute (Youth), TCMHSI identified encouraging outcomes for young Peer Leaders, including increased confidence, stronger communication skills, greater awareness of support pathways and connection with peers and staff, while also identifying important lessons for the design and implementation of future youth wellbeing initiatives.

Alongside this work, the Pathways Project Report captured the experiences and perspectives of Tasmanian young people and parents navigating mental health support, highlighting the importance of clearer information about where to seek help, stronger human connection and trust, greater awareness of early support options, and choice in how young people access support.

These findings contributed to the evidence base for Whatever the Weather, reinforcing the need for a simple, shared language that can help young people and the people around them recognise when support may be helpful and understand where to start.

Together, the projects have provided MHCT with valuable evidence to inform future prevention and early intervention initiatives and advocate for a mental health system that is easier for young Tasmanians and their families to understand and navigate.

Read the **Youth Pathways Report**

Read the **Take a minute (Youth) Report**

find mental health support that fits

Whatever the Weather is a statewide pilot designed to help young Tasmanians aged 15–24 better understand changes in their mental health and wellbeing, talk about what they are experiencing, and identify an appropriate place to begin seeking support.

Using the familiar idea of changing weather, it creates a simple, non-clinical shared language for young people, families, trusted adults and practitioners to discuss mental health needs and possible next steps.

The initiative was informed by evidence and developed through consultation, co-design and progressive testing with young Tasmanians, parents and carers, service providers, researchers and other stakeholders. This process shaped a suite of practical resources, including a dedicated website, videos, posters and brochures.

Guided by the Initial Assessment and Referral Framework, the resources translate information about mental health needs and levels of care into accessible language, helping young people and the people who support them recognise when help may be useful and identify an appropriate place to start.

Whatever the Weather is designed to bridge the gap between noticing that something has changed and knowing what to do next.

Rather than expecting young people to understand clinical terminology or navigate a complex service system on their own, the resources provide clear prompts and practical options that can support conversations with family, friends, trusted adults and services.

This shared language also gives the people around a young person a clearer way to start a conversation and help identify an appropriate next step.

The pilot moved from co-design into statewide implementation in the following months.

So far, we have recorded approximately 700 engagements, distributed more than 1,200 printed resources, engaged 26 organisations and events across five Tasmanian regions, and attracted 4,753 video views.

Resources were also translated into six additional languages: Mandarin, Nepali, Farsi, Arabic, Burmese and Tigrinya.



"The accessibility and immediate comparison to the weather broke down an invisible barrier that made the discussion easy"

Whatever the Weather Co-design

Whatever the Weather was shaped by the experiences and perspectives of young Tasmanians, families and Tasmania's community mental health sector.

Twenty young people aged 15–24 participated in the formal co-design process through seven online sessions and one in-person session in early 2026. Further input came from two parent and carer consultations involving nine participants, and engagement with 30 member organisations, helping ensure the resource reflected a broad range of perspectives.

Young people actively shaped the resource's language, imagery and approach to help-seeking through discussion, activities and review of draft concepts. They favoured simple, human language and visual approaches over numeric levels that could feel clinical or hierarchical.

Their feedback helped refine the weather concept itself, including testing weather names and pairing imagery with clear explanations. Participants also highlighted the importance of accessible support options, inclusive design and strong links between printed and digital resources.





20
young Tasmanians

9
parents and carers

30
member organisations



Mental Health Week

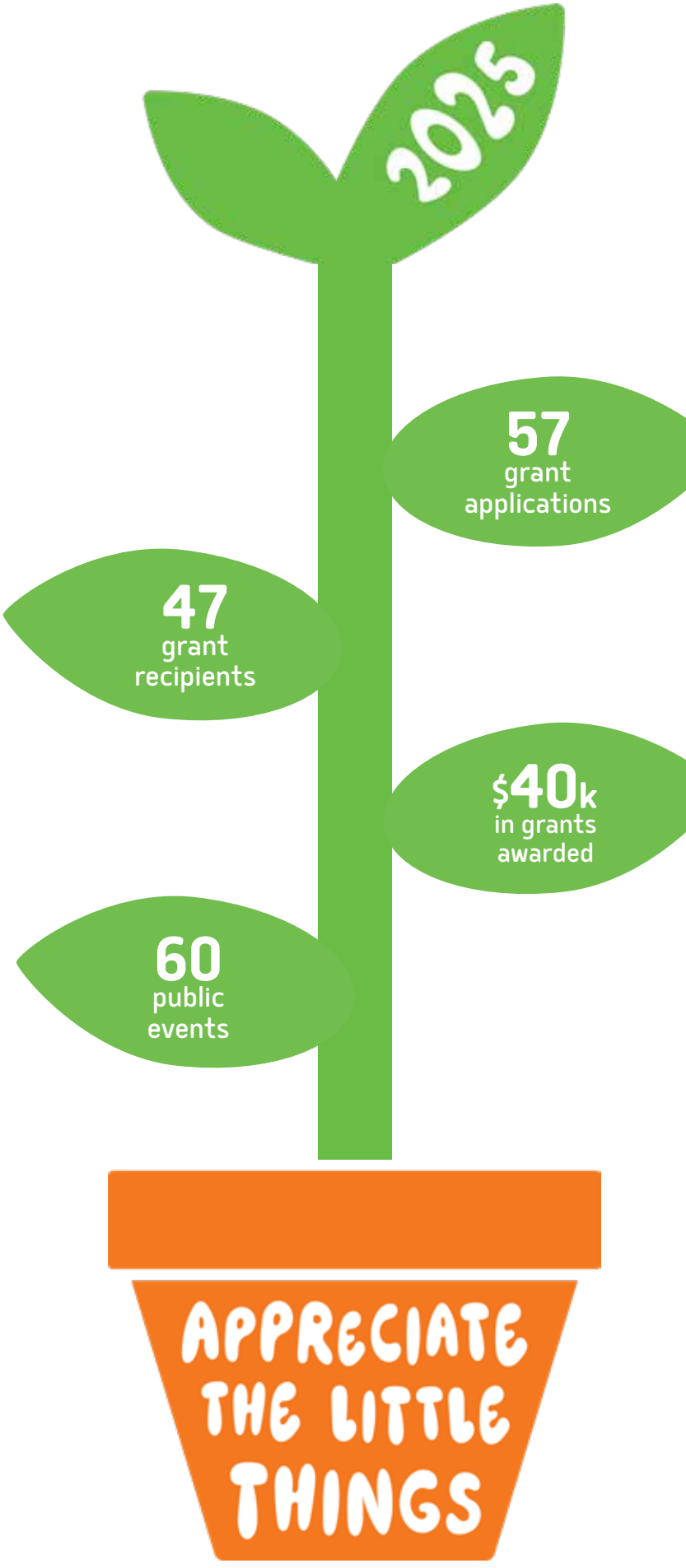
Mental Health Week returned from 4 to 12 October 2025, bringing communities across Tasmania together to promote mental health and wellbeing, reduce stigma and encourage conversations about the things that help us stay well.

Following the strong response in 2024, Appreciate the little things returned as the theme for 2025. Its simple, strengths-based message encouraged people to recognise the everyday things that support mental health and wellbeing, from spending time with others and getting outside to creating something or simply taking time to notice the good things around us. MHCT launched Mental Health Week alongside Minds Do Matter, the annual statewide art exhibition facilitated by member organisation RANT Arts. Guests contributed to a paper-chain activity by sharing something small they appreciated, creating a visual representation of the many different things that contribute to good mental health and wellbeing.

Across the week, communities made the theme their own through festivals, exhibitions, creative workshops, school activities, walks and local gatherings. Events reached urban, regional and rural communities across Tasmania, demonstrating the value of locally led activities that create opportunities for connection, participation and positive conversations about mental health and wellbeing.

MHCT supported this community activity through the Mental Health Week grants program, practical resources and statewide promotion, helping organisations adapt the theme to their own communities and audiences. The strong demand for grants and diversity of events demonstrated the value of giving communities the tools and flexibility to promote mental health and wellbeing in ways that are locally relevant and meaningful.





44,000

Tasmanians participated in events across the state









Mental Health Council OF TASMANIA

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CONTACT US

Level 6
39 Murray Street
Hobart 7000
Tasmania

Tel 03 6224 9222
Email enquiries@mhct.org
Web www.mhct.org

mentalhealthcounciltas
@mhctas
mentalhealthcounciltas

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