

MEDIA RELEASE

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Positive mental health important for young people but more skills needed

Young people want to gain skills to help themselves maintain positive mental health and to support others, and make it easier to seek support from services when it is needed.

According to a Report by the Tasmanian Youth Forum (TYF), young people have an understanding of what it means to be mentally healthy and recognise the need to know about different strategies and supports to maintain their mental health.

The TYF *'Mental Health Matters: What young people said'* Report outlines 14 key findings (attached) from the TYF *'Mental Health Matters'* Statewide Youth Forum and Survey of 230 young people from across Tasmania.

The Report will be launched by the Minister for Health, Michael Ferguson during the opening comments of the National Suicide Prevention Conference at the Hotel Grand Chancellor at 9:30am Monday morning.

Joanna Siejka, YNOT CEO, said that "Young people say they are most likely to go to their friends or family for support, but recognise that these people know the least about mental health."

"Through the Forum and Survey, young people contributed their solutions and ideas and were very passionate about increased opportunities to develop their own mental health support skills, as well as those of their friends and family, so that they are better able to support the mental health of each other."

The Report found that young people want to encourage their peers to seek help and talk to people if they are experiencing difficulty with their mental health. However, young people report finding it hard to ask for support and access services for their mental health, and often perceive that there are barriers in doing so.

The Forum and Survey provided an opportunity for young people to discuss their concerns about maintaining positive mental health and their ideas for reducing barriers to seeking help.

A complimentary Report titled *'Mental Health Matters: What you said'* will also be launched to communicate the findings to young people. The Reports will inform the Tasmanian Government's development of a Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy for Tasmania.

TYF is an initiative of the Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT), the peak youth body representing the youth sector in Tasmania. TYF aims to give young people the opportunity to facilitate, increase their knowledge and to be heard in their communities. YNOT and TYF are funded by the Communities, Sport and Recreation Tasmania in the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

The *Mental Health Matters* Statewide Forum was supported by the Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT), the Community Development Division (Department of Premier and Cabinet), the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Headspace Launceston and Youth, Family and Community Connections.

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ynot is the peak body representing the voice of Tasmanian youth

Key Findings of the TYF 'Mental Health Matters: What young people said' Report:

Finding 1: Young people rely on multiple sources and forms of support for their mental health and wellbeing.

Finding 2: Stigma, fear and judgement are the main barriers that prevent young people from seeking help with their mental health.

Finding 3: Mental health services in Tasmania need to be available in all locations of the State with easy accessibility for young people to reduce barriers accessing these services.

Finding 4: Young people want Tasmania to be a safe and healthy place for everyone and understand that this requires structural and societal changes across multiple areas.

Finding 5: Young people understand that they need to take care of their mental health and wellbeing, and use multiple strategies to keep mentally healthy.

Finding 6: Young people want people they turn to for support to listen to what they have to say and ask them what they need to be supported.

Finding 7: Being mentally healthy is something that is important to young people.

Finding 8: Young people are more likely to access mental health services in times of crisis or need, rather than as a way to maintain their mental health.

Finding 9: Young people recognise the importance of having capable and professional staff at services who can help support their mental health

Finding 10: Young people are most likely to go to their friends and family for support with their mental health and wellbeing.

Finding 11: Young people report that friends and family are less likely to be well informed about mental health and wellbeing than professionals or other sources of support.

Finding 12: Young people want more skills to support their friends and family with their mental health

Finding 13: Young people want a positive and caring environment when they seek support to talk about their concerns.

Finding 14: Young people want to encourage their peers to seek help and talk to people if they are experiencing difficulties with their mental health.