



Monday, 4 November 2019

### Media Release

#### It's time to work together to improve the mental health of young Tasmanians

On Wednesday, participants from Tasmania's mental health services and the broader community sector will come together to hear from experts in youth mental health and work together to collectively explore strategies and solutions that support the ongoing development of an innovative and integrated youth mental health system for our state.

The **Tasmanian Youth Mental Health Forum** brings together key decision makers, practitioners and youth mental health service providers to explore how we can continue to integrate services and improve outcomes for young people. The forum is a partnership between the Mental Health Council of Tasmania, Primary Health Tasmania (Tasmania PHN), the State Government and the Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT).

Connie Digolis, Mental health Council of Tasmania CEO, is pleased to see such a significant response from the sector who have demonstrated a willingness to participate and share ideas.

*"This Forum comes as a result of conversations with government agencies, service providers and families about difficulties in navigating and accessing services and an increased universal demand for youth mental health services. We have been continually talking about the need for an integrated mental health system, and this couldn't be truer for young Tasmanians and their families that deserve access to care and support that will meet their needs at the right time,"* said Ms Digolis.

Tania Hunt, CEO of the Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT), has been instrumental in organising the Forum and will be part of an expert panel during the Forum.

*"Crucially, over the two days we will hear from young people around what has worked for them and some of the barriers they have faced to accessing the type of care they needed when unwell. During consultations, young Tasmanians have identified mental health as their leading health concern. Young Tasmanians have reported significant challenges in accessing appropriate and timely mental health care and support and therefore need to be included in the conversation in planning for an integrated mental health system,"* Ms Hunt said.

Following the Forum, community information session will be held across the state in early 2020 to share the Forum outcomes and hear more from young people, families, frontline workers in services and other stakeholders. Dates for these sessions to be announced in the coming weeks.

-Ends-

**Media Opportunity – Interviewees available at 11.20 am Wednesday 6 November. Filming and photo opportunity will be available during the following session: 11.35 am – 12.00pm Wednesday 6 November - 'Perspectives from Young Tasmanians.'**

**The Forum is at the C3 Conference Centre, 64 Anglesea Street South Hobart. (not open to the public)**

**Available for interview with limited availability:**

**Professor Jane Burns** - Professor of Social Innovation, Swinburne University

**Dr Joanna Henderson** - Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Canada

**Grant Akesson** - Primary Health Tasmania, Mental Health Stream Lead

**Tania Hunt** - YNOT (Youth Network of Tasmania) CEO

**Leanne McLean** - Commissioner for Children and Young People Tasmania

**Matthew Etherington** - 2019 Tasmanian Young Achiever of the Year

**Connie Digolis** – CEO Mental Health Council of Tasmania

**Media Enquiries: Cat Delpero on 0499 303 007**

The full range of speakers is included in the program attached to this email. To arrange an interview prior to or post the forum please contact Cat Delpero.

**Please include the following crisis support services for any story regarding mental health or suicide.**

Lifeline: 13 11 14 [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au), Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467 [www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au](http://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au),  
beyondblue: 1300 22 4636 [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

**More information on safely reporting on mental illness or suicide can be found at**  
<https://mindframe.org.au/> and <https://www.tascharter.org/>