



**Cornerstone Youth Services (CYS)** is the lead agency for headspace Northern Tasmania and is comprised of a local partnership of organisations responsible for the delivery of mental health, drug & alcohol and primary care services as well as community-based providers of vocational assistance and training, employment support and other locally relevant services such as supported accommodation to young people, and local government.

**Cornerstone's Mission is to strive to achieve innovation and excellence in youth health and wellbeing.**

Headspace is located in the CBD of Launceston and provides a holistic health service to young people 12-25, aimed at reducing the burden of disease caused by mental health and related substance use disorders. Adolescence and young adulthood is the peak period for the first onset of many types of mental illness. Over 75% of all serious mental health problems commence before the age of 25 years. This period represents a critical period for intervention. Early, effective intervention during adolescence and young adulthood is essential to reduce the risk of ongoing impairment or disability associated with mental health and related substance use disorders. Only 1 in 4 young persons with mental health problems receives professional help. Even among young people with the most severe mental health problems, only 50% receive professional help and fewer still receive optimal evidence-based care.

We aim to offer a 'one-stop shop' where drop ins are seen by an intake worker or health care provider in the first instance. Follow up appointments are then made if required with the appropriate worker after that initial intake screening 'chat'. Encouragement of help-seeking behaviour is the goal.

The CYS/headspace Northern Tasmania team is comprised of administrative staff, social workers, psychologist, occupational therapists, Aboriginal youth alcohol and drug workers, youth health nurses, and general practitioners. Co-located workers are: DHHS Alcohol and Drug Service, Anglicare Supported Youth Team, CRS Vocational Support and DHHS Mental Health Services (Psychiatry Registrar).

Innovative therapeutic programs conducted over the past 12 months include:

- two creative arts-based programs (funded through Sally's [Suicide Prevention] Charity Ride money) were conducted simultaneously over 13 weeks - one targeting 14-18 year old girls who were engaging in self-harming/self-sabotaging/risk-taking behaviours which included factors such as patterns of engaging in abusive relationships, substance use/abuse, cutting, unsafe sexual practices. Difficulties in regulating emotions was also a common feature of this group; and the other - young people between the ages of 14-20yrs who were, for a variety of reasons, disengaged, or in the process of disengaging, from school, work or family and therefore more vulnerable to risk in various forms as a result of this. So successful were these that plans are in progress to 'keep going' into 2012;
- a series of 8 week anti-social behaviour diversion programs for male youth aged 15-16 years (referred from Launceston high schools) commenced in 2010 and continues to run. The Mind & Body course targets young men who: display aggressive and occasionally violent behaviour as well as disengagement from their education through non-attendance; inappropriate behaviour and consistent patterns of defiance; and a number had also been charged with minor offences and were engaged in the justice system.