



Media Release

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Forgotten Children

There is a group of children in your community who live with and support those living with a mental illness. In their complex lives they often help their parents with household chores, get siblings ready for school, and organise appointments, taking on adult responsibilities. On a daily basis they are simply not understood and forgotten about.

Mental Health Council of Tasmania Executive Officer, Michelle Swallow said today "The theme for Mental Health Week this year is 'Let's Make a Difference.... Understand, Support and Act'. We can make a difference by better understanding young carers who deal with mental health issues, by supporting these young people and by taking actions in our communities and schools that support the mental health and wellbeing of all".

"Many Tasmanians living with a mental illness are supported by their families, friends or other carers, and often these carers are young people. These children of parents with a mental illness (COPMI) are children and adolescents aged 8 – 18 years", Ms Swallow said.

"The Mental Health Council of Tasmania is launching on Friday a new resource '**Climbing Fences**' a booklet of stories written by, and for, young Tasmanians caring for a parent or family member with a mental illness".

The development of this booklet was made possible by funding from the Tasmanian Community Fund, Rotary Kingston and a number of other sponsors. Project Coordinator Elizabeth Clements said "Through my involvement of working with these young people it became clear that we needed to capture the information sharing that happened when we brought them together, to develop a resource that other young people could access. This project has given children a voice to share their experiences".

The Launch is being held at the 'Make a Difference' Expo at the Royal Botanical Gardens on Friday at 10:00am. We will be giving away 1000 copies of the book through out the day, with the help our amazing acrobat circus performer Ruby from RubyFly productions.

For further information or interview, contact:

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