



Media release
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Mental health firmly on agenda

The Mental Health Council of Tasmania and Council on the Ageing Tasmania (COTA Tas) are set to examine the gaps in knowledge around mental health and wellbeing at a joint forum today as a precursor to Mental Health Week which runs from 9-15 October.

With World Mental Health Day on Monday 10 October, Mental Health will be firmly on the agenda over the next week and the forum will seek to gather feedback from older members of the community as well as hear reports following consultation in the community.

COTA Tas CEO Maxine Griffiths said the COTA Champions report was one of the most exciting and important points of business on the forum agenda.

“Over the past couple of months we have had representatives out in the community talking with older people about what is important to them when it comes to everyday life and what they have to say is extremely enlightening,” said Ms Griffiths.

“Mental health and wellbeing is very much aligned with interacting with other people and feeling included in and part of the local community.

“The theme of the week this year, *Keeping the Balance: Investing in Your Mind and Body*, is very close to the feedback we are getting from older people around Tasmania.

“They want to stay active, they want to continue to contribute, and this forum will hopefully give us another avenue for them to have their say on issues in Tasmania.”

CEO of the Mental Health Council of Tasmania (MHCT) Michelle Swallow said the aim of the forum was to hear about the experiences of older Tasmanians in trying to keep mentally healthy and well.

“We want to know what works to keep people mentally healthy and well and to discover some of the barriers encountered as well as assess what else could be done in the future,” she said.

“The information gained from the forum will help COTA Tas and the MHCT to liaise with Government and inform the community about what is needed to help older people stay socially connected and have a sense of meaning in their lives.”

Minister for Human Services Cassy O’Connor will address the forum in the afternoon and attendees will be asked to participate in group activities to actively gain insight into the key areas of need in Tasmania.

ENDS

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