



Media Release

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Missed opportunity to address Mental Illness

The 'cautious' state budget is a missed opportunity to make long term investment in mental health. It risks further marginalising and stigmatising those Tasmanians living with mental illness.

CEO of the Mental Health Council of Tasmania (MHCT), Ms Michelle Swallow today said "that while welcoming a number of budget initiatives including strategies to address homelessness and elder abuse, the Tasmanian government had chosen to ignore investment in mental health issues".

"The Australian Bureau of Statistics identifies that half of us will experience a mental health disorder at some time in our lives, and one in five Tasmanians experienced mental illness in the last twelve months."

"Much of the spending in Mental Health comes from Commonwealth monies rather than funding by the State", Ms Swallow said. The MHCT had called on the State government to put further spending into mental health initiatives, including increased spending on Mental Health Advocates and a social marketing strategy to address stigma and discrimination.

"The Tasmanian community would greatly benefit from investment in health promotion, prevention and early intervention, rather than waiting for people to become acutely unwell before providing them with support and services", she said.

"The stigma attached to mental ill health often stops people from disclosing. Fear of discrimination stops people talking about their experience, or seeking support. The longer people leave seeking help, the more significant will be their need when they request assistance from health and social services".

For further information and to arrange interviews, contact:

Michelle Swallow
CEO
Mental Health Council of Tasmania
0407 600 811