



Media Release

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It's not a 'clever, kind and connected Tasmania'

The stigma that surrounds mental illness is neither clever nor kind, and certainly continues to exclude people from connecting to their communities through work, education, sport and entertainment options.

The Mental Health Council of Tasmania (MHCT) says it is time to tackle stigma by developing campaigns that destigmatise through social marketing.

A policy forum will be held on Friday 13 March at the Baha'i Centre to bring together mental health stakeholders from around the state, including consumers and carers, the community sector and government service providers and policy makers. Guest speaker Jeff Cheverton; Churchill Fellow, Executive Director QLD Alliance and Board Member of the Mental Health Council of Australia will lead discussion about how Tasmania can improve social inclusion for people with a mental illness.

"Jeff is the ideal person to lead this discussion," Michelle Swallow MHCT Executive Officer says. "Jeff's research into successful social marketing campaigns internationally highlights the importance of destigmatisation for the community in terms of improved quality of life as well as financial benefit to the economy."

People living with a mental illness in Tasmania face daily barriers to being able to participate in the wider community. Sadly, mental illness continues to be highly stigmatised in the community. Ms Swallow says "destigmatisation is essential for the social inclusion of people living with a mental illness. The Mental Health Council of Tasmania has strongly advocated for this in the past through our 2009-10 Budget Priority Statement."

"This policy forum is an important opportunity to build on these recommendations to further promote the importance of destigmatisation to ensure Premier David Bartlett's 'clever, kind and connected Tasmania', becomes reality."

For further information and to arrange interviews, contact:

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