



Media Release

30 June 2010

Real Action Plan for Better Mental Health?

The Mental Health Council of Tasmania (MHCT) welcomes today's announcement by The Hon. Tony Abbott MHR, Leader of The Opposition and The Hon. Peter Dutton MHR, Shadow Minister for Health and Ageing to provide \$1.5 billion to expand frontline services to cut the burden of mental health disorders within Australia.

CEO of the Mental Health Council of Tasmania (MHCT), Ms Michelle Swallow today said "The Federal Opposition's **Real Action Plan for Better Mental Health** is a great start for mental health consumers in delivering 20 new Early Psychosis Prevention and Intervention Centres, 60 additional youth *headspace* sites and 800 acute and sub acute early intervention beds."

The Coalition's report acknowledges that mental illness most often first manifests in young adults in the age ranges of 12 – 24 years. Early intervention is critical to help these young people to deal with their illness and regain their health.

Ms Swallow said "The Coalition has proposed a major increase in frontline services; however it is disappointing that resources have not been allocated to enable people experiencing mental health issues to live fulfilling lives in their own communities". "Australian Government programs such as the Personal Helpers and Mentors Program, which are currently run in Tasmania, successfully enable people with a lived experience of mental illness to be supported in their local communities by community run organisations."

"Organisations and services which focus on a wellness and recovery approach must also be included in the proposed plan by The Coalition", Ms Swallow said.

"Another crucial area which needs urgent funding is a national anti-stigma initiative which addresses the discrimination and stigma associated with people experiencing mental health issues. The MHCT calls on The Coalition to address this area in their Real Action Plan."

For further information and to arrange interviews, contact:

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