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Mental Health Council of Tasmania Media Release

Coordinated State and Federal Government Approach Needed for Vital Mental Health Supports

One year after a landmark report revealed nearly 10,000 Tasmanians are missing out on vital psychosocial support, the Mental Health Council of Tasmania (MHCT) is urging state and federal governments to act decisively to close the gap.

The August 2024 Health Policy Analysis (HPA) report, developed as part of the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement, found that nearly three-quarters of Tasmanians living with moderate to severe mental illness are not receiving the support they need to live independently in the community.

“These are vital supports that help Tasmanians be and stay well,” said MHCT CEO, Dan Vautin. “Closing the gap is a joint responsibility of state and federal government. We’re calling for a coordinated funding strategy and service expansion to ensure all Tasmanians with moderate to severe mental illness can access the support they need.”

Psychosocial supports, typically delivered by community-managed mental health organisations, are tailored to individual needs. They can include assistance with housing, education, employment, and relationships - key factors in maintaining wellbeing and independence.

Without access to these supports, many people become increasingly unwell, often requiring more acute, complex, and costly interventions.

“People experiencing mental illness are overrepresented in our hospitals and justice system,” Mr Vautin added. “Psychosocial supports are not just helpful, they’re essential. They keep people well, connected in the community, and out of crisis.”

Last month, the Productivity Commission released an interim report assessing the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement. The report found the Agreement is not fit for purpose, citing inadequate funding commitments, poor governance and oversight, and a lack of actions linked to meaningful system reform.

“These findings echo what we’re seeing on the ground in Tasmania,” said Mr Vautin. “We still have a mental health system that is fragmented. We need a national agreement that delivers a better mental health system, ensuring supports are both affordable, and accessible when and where people need them.”

Commonwealth, state and territory health and mental health ministers are expected to meet later this year to discuss psychosocial supports as part of a new national agreement.

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