

# Media release

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## A new, shared approach to Tasmania's mental health plan

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Key players in Tasmania's health system have come together to evolve and strengthen the state's mental health plan, taking stock of key achievements and highlighting new areas of focus for the years ahead.

*Rethink 2020* is a collaboration between Primary Health Tasmania, the Tasmanian Department of Health, and the Tasmanian Health Service, and represents a shared approach to mental health service planning and delivery in Tasmania.

It comes five years after the Tasmanian Government published its plan to improve mental health outcomes for all Tasmanians: *Rethink Mental Health Better Mental Health and Wellbeing – A Long-Term Plan for Mental Health in Tasmania 2015-25*.

Organisations including as Flourish Tasmania, Mental Health Families and Friends Tasmania, the Mental Health Council of Tasmania, and the National Disability Insurance Agency also played key roles in developing *Rethink 2020*, which updates the initial plan.

*Rethink 2020* takes stock of key milestones achieved so far – such as progress towards mental health integration hubs, improved youth mental health support in the north west, and the launch of a mental health peer workforce strategy – while also elevating new areas of focus as key mental health priorities for the state.

These areas include:

- suicide prevention
- improving coordination of services for people with severe and complex mental illness
- improving the physical health of people with mental illness
- providing mental health services across a 'continuum of care'.

Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing Jeremy Rockliff said it was important to update the original *Rethink* at its midway mark to ensure the plan kept pace with mental health reforms happening on a national and state level.

"Five years on, we've got a deeper and richer understanding of best-practice mental health care, and all the factors that play into it," Mr Rockliff said.

"By reflecting on the original *Rethink* and updating it alongside our key partners, we can put our state in a better place than ever to keep working towards good mental health outcomes for all Tasmanians."

Primary Health Tasmania (Tasmania PHN) chief executive Phil Edmondson said uniting state and federal bodies in the effort to strengthen and integrate mental health support for all Tasmanians was a logical, and vital, step.

"When the first *Rethink* was released in 2015, Primary Health Tasmania was in its infancy as the state's single primary health network, and now almost half of our Australian Government funding is dedicated to

improving Tasmanians' mental health," Mr Edmondson said.

"By coming together to update the plan, map progress, and chart a new collaborative approach ahead, we're seizing on our unique opportunity in Tasmania to unite the work of one primary health network and one state health department for the greater, collective good."

Primary Health Tasmania and the Department of Health will undertake consultation in early 2021 to inform implementation of the plan.

The consultation will include people with lived experience of mental illness; people who have experienced suicidal distress; carers, families and friends; priority population groups; peak bodies; and service providers.

Visit [www.health.tas.gov.au/mentalhealth/rethink\\_mental\\_health\\_project](http://www.health.tas.gov.au/mentalhealth/rethink_mental_health_project) for more information and a copy of *Rethink 2020*.

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