

Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Community Network Meeting

Minutes: Hobart Meeting 28 October 2024

11:30am – 1:30pm | North Hobart Football Club

1. Welcome, acknowledgement of country and lived experience

Meeting opened at 11:30am by Michael Kelly. Acknowledgement of Country and Lived Experience was provided, along with providing information on available supports.

Present: Christina Medhurst (Relationships Australia Tasmania), Scott Harrod (The Sam Project), Cheryl Weily (Spring Bay Suicide Prevention Network), Kristy Mayne (RAW Tas), Jasmine Angus (Department of Health), Nicole Turner (Lifeline Tasmania), Tanya Stephenson (The Grief Recovery Specialist), Thir Thapa (Migrant Resource Centre), Tamara Speed (Relationships Australia Tasmania), Joss Fenton (Community Representative), Connie Alomes (Anglicare), Nikki Titmus (Mens Resources Tasmania), Cate Clark (Rokeby Neighbourhood Centre), Kristy Harrold (Relationships Australia Tasmania), Anna Holliday (Relationships Australia Tasmania), Michael Voumard (Standby), Kelley Jurgens (Community Representative, Volunteer with Lifeline & Standby), Gillian Smith (Skretting), Jasmin Dunn (Relationships Australia Tasmania), Rick Tipping (North Hobart Football Club), Stephen Smith (Lifeline), Maree McCulley (Community Representative), Timothy Jones (Community Representative), and Michael Kelly (Chair).

Apologies: Mark Davis, Jonathan Bedloe, Jacob Roberts, Kylea Aldred and Mez Newman

2. Confirmation of minutes of meeting held 31st July 2024

Minutes were circulated at the meeting. Previous minutes were accepted as being true and correct.

3. Meeting speakers

Cheryl Weily – Spring Bay Suicide Prevention Network

Cheryl is the President of the Spring Bay Suicide Prevention Network (SBSPN), a community led volunteer group based on the East Coast of Tasmania who support the Buckland, Orford, Triabunna and Swansea communities. The SBSPN host regular activities throughout the year that are open to everyone supporting suicide prevention awareness, belonging and connection.

Cheryl shared that people living within the region are at higher risk of social isolation due to high numbers of holiday homes in the region. Cheryl recognised the unique challenges they face and highlighted that awareness, connection and belonging are the heart of everything SBSPN does;

Awareness:

- They create opportunities for people in the community to do mental health and wellbeing training.

- Provide pathways to assist people who are at risk of self-harm and suicide through referrals to support agencies.
- Disseminate information and other resources pertaining to suicide and mental health

Connection:

- Build connections and engagement with the community that otherwise would not be there

Belonging:

- Promote social inclusion in the Spring Bay community through a variety of events and activities organised throughout each year which bring people together.
- Some examples of annual events include, Winter Solstice swim, Spring Bay Memorial

In 2023, the network secured a grant from the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal. Teaming up with Lifeline Tasmania, they launched the 'Accidental Counsellor Together' initiative. This program offered three free workshops in 2024, open to anyone in the community. The aim was to give the wider community communication skills and the Recognise, Respond and Refer framework so that everyone from the local farmer to the neighbourhood shopkeeper, had skills to support others –and to reduce stigma while creating a supportive network within the community. To reinforce the learning, Cheryl sent out fortnightly email reminders. A follow-up workshop was planned three months later to consolidate knowledge and skills.

Additionally in October 2024 the network led a community wide approach to Mental Health Week and Mental Health month. Across the region special free community events and workshops took place. The township was dressed in orange by participating businesses, badges were made from Triabunna school kids and scarves were made for locals to wear. The R U OK? Day conversation convoy also stopped by.

Cheryl shared what she felt had worked well:

- Going through the process of a Community Action Plan with the Suicide Prevention team at Relationships Australia really helped to plan and keep focus.
- Locally created resources like the mental health coasters shared with the pub & wineries, and the badges made at the school
- Having a document that outlined the summary of activities on offer for the week/month – which has now led to an ongoing summary of activities
- Having broad flexible options to meet different needs
- Building relationship and trust
- And remembering that it is about learning and sharing information with community and local service providers.

Gill Smith – Skretting

Gill opened by sharing her personal lived experience of supporting a family member who was experiencing suicidal thoughts. She discussed the lack of local support options at the time, which led her to seek assistance from the mainland. Gill explained that this experience and others have led her to a spot where she is focused on supporting the mental health of those around her, raising awareness and reducing stigma.

Gill Smith, is a HR manager at Skretting, a global aquaculture feed company with sites in Cambridge and Westbury, Tasmania. Skretting faced a tragic wake-up call after the suicide of an employee. This loss emphasized the urgent need for effective mental health support and resources within the workplace, highlighting the importance of a supportive environment that values mental health awareness.

This tragedy reflects a broader issue common in industries with similar work environments. Statistics show that men working in shift-based roles, particularly in manufacturing, are more vulnerable to mental health issues like depression and anxiety, which can sometimes lead to suicide.

In response, Skretting took strong steps to build a supportive culture of mental health awareness among employees. Recognising the need for accessible services, the company partnered with Rural Alive and Well (RAW) to provide regular outreach workers onsite and collaborated with Converge International's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to offer confidential counselling.

Additionally, 13 employees, selected by their peers, completed Mental Health First Aid Training, while all People Managers received Accidental Counsellor training. To deepen these efforts, Skretting launched a Community Action Plan for Suicide Prevention in partnership with Relationships Australia Tasmania. This plan aims to increase mental health literacy, reduce stigma, and encourage open conversations on mental health and suicide prevention throughout the organisation.

Gill shared other initiatives Skretting have put in place which include:

- Forming a Metal Health Committee who meets quarterly
- Developing a mental health strategy
- Introducing 'mood first' a way of checking in with employee at the start of shift, midshift and at the end of shift.

Rick Tipping – North Hobart Football Club

Rick Tipping is the Director of Wellbeing and Volunteers at the North Hobart Football Club. The club has a strong focus on the wellbeing of its community. Earlier this year they received recognition as the Best Sporting Club in Australia for providing effective programs and resources to support the wellbeing and mental health of their players, volunteers and other club members and were awarded with the Good Sports Award for Mental Health Excellence 2024.

Since developing a community action plan with Relationships Australia Tasmania, the club appointed a dedicated Wellbeing Officer and give members access to free professional counselling and mental health first aid and suicide prevention training. The club wants to make sure it is a safe environment for young boys and girls to be involved in.

Learn more and watch the video shared by Rick | [North Hobart FC are mental health champions - Good Sports](#)

Cate Clark – Rokeby Neighbourhood Centre

Cate Clark is the General Manager of the Rokeby Neighbourhood Centre. The Rokeby Neighbourhood Centre is place for all community members to come, share and be together. They offer a variety of different activities like walking and knitting groups, literacy classes, Zumba, and a kids' Halloween event.

Cate shared her lived experience of losing her sister, Samantha Brown, to suicide. She shared that it was tough losing her sister and there were a number of gaps in the system highlighted through the loss. As part of her work at the Neighbourhood Centre and in supporting others they started 'Think Pink'. From this she had conversations with others and decided that it was important to have a safe space at the Neighbourhood Centre where those who needed it could come and get support and also could be a space to have a quiet moment. This idea grew and took shape and in recognising her sister the Samantha Brown Safe Space was born. Earlier this year the Samantha Brown Room was opened. The room is a safe space for the community to use. It's a quiet space away from activities to have a confidential conversation and to share, a quiet space to think.

Jasmine Angus – Department of Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Directorate

Al and Marcus from the Directorate, who members might remember from previous TSPCN meetings, have been seconded to new roles within the Health Department.

Jasmin introduced herself and advised that she has been in the role part time for 5 weeks.

Jasmin provided the following updates:

Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Strategy (TSPS) – Update

- The second implementation plan is being finalised (has since been finalised and released publicly since the meeting).
- This is the second of three implementation plans across the 18-month period from July 2024 to December 2025. The actions under second implementation plan build upon the actions from the first implementation plan, as well as identifying new priority areas through literature reviews, consultation with a range of government, community and lived experience organisations.
- 54 out of 81 initiatives from the first implementation plan will be finalised by the end of the year.

Rethink 2020 – update

- Rethink 2020 is Tasmania's strategic plan for mental health, and is a partnership between the Department of Health, Primary Health Tasmania (PHT), and the Mental Health Council of Tasmania (MHCT).
- As Rethink 2020 expires in 2025, the Directorate, PHT and MHCT are currently in the final stages of developing the new 2024-25 Implementation Plan which will be realised prior to the end of the year.
- The 2023-24 Annual Progress Report has been released since the last TSPCN meeting in July.

- The government has a consultation paper supporting a 20-year preventative health strategy. Jasmine noted that while this work doesn't sit with the Directorate it has relevance to suicide prevention and to this network. To access more information on the 20-year preventative health strategy you can head to: <https://www.health.tas.gov.au/20-year-preventive-health-strategy>.

General business

RA TAS – 75 Conversations – Shared by Anna Holliday

As part of Relationships Australia Tasmania's 75th anniversary, they are embarking on an inspiring mission – to connect with seventy-five communities across Tasmania, and ask the question, 'what is a connected and respectful community to Tasmanians'.

They are looking to engage community members to participate in a brief workshop, which may include a video, a survey, and a group discussion. The session will take no more than an hour and can be tailored to fit the needs of your group.

As a thank you for your participation, all community groups who engage in the workshop will be entered into a draw to win a \$500 gift card. The winner will be announced in June 2025.

Register now to be a part of the conversation | tas.relationships.org.au/75-years/

Men's Resource Tasmania – Shared by Nikki Titmus

Reaching Men Workshop - Jonathan Bedloe and Glen Poole

Jonathan and Glen will be facilitating a pilot workshop – Reaching Men in Hobart, Thursday 14 November. They are looking for 10-15 people from organisations working in suicide prevention, or who are working on activities that are part of a broader approach to preventing suicide, to take part in this pilot.

The workshop will run for 3-4 hours and will include:

- Exploring and expanding our understanding of male suicide
- Exploring and growing our understanding as workers and as services addressing male suicide
- The principles of male-friendly services
- Examples of male-friendly suicide prevention activity
- Making a plan to apply your learning.

Learn more and get tickets here | events.humanitix.com/reaching-men

International Men's Day Breakfast

Men's Resources Tasmania will be hosting their annual International Men's Day Breakfast in Hobart on Tuesday 19 November. This year they have incorporated a series of awards to celebrate men's health champions. The categories include:

- Building Healthy Communities
- Looking Out for Your Mates

- Take Action, Stay Healthy
- Creating a Healthier Future

Learn more and get tickets here | www.facebook.com/mensresource Tasmania

2025 LiFE Awards and Forum – Shared by Christina Medhurst

In March 2025, the Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Community Network (TSPCN) will be celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Tasmanian LiFE (Living is For Everyone) Awards.

The awards are designed to acknowledge the outstanding contributions and commitment of those working towards the reduction of suicide within our communities. They recognise and celebrate the vital work being done across Tasmania, showcasing dedication, leadership, and innovation by individuals, organisations, community groups, and workplaces committed to saving lives and supporting those impacted by suicide.

Nominations for the LiFE Awards are now open until Monday January 6. We would love for you to help us spread the word amongst your networks and consider who you could nominate (self-nominations are also warmly welcomed).

Those nominated for an award will be invited to the award ceremony on **Wednesday 12th March 2025**, in Launceston.

While much has been achieved, there's still important work ahead. Help us recognise those making a real difference across our community. Your nominations help shine a light on these leaders and keep the positive momentum in suicide prevention going

More information and the nomination form can be found here | [LiFE Awards | Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Community Network](#)

To align with the national Suicide Prevention Australia (SPA) LiFE Awards, we've made a change to one of our sponsorship categories. This change will streamline the process for award recipients as they progress from the Tasmanian to the national level. The Outstanding Contribution by a Young Person category has been changed to Priority Populations which will broaden this category to be more inclusive. This category will be sponsored by Mental Health Council of Tasmania.

2025 Suicide Prevention Forum

The Suicide Prevention Forum 2025 will take place on Thursday March 13th in Launceston. Tickets will be available to purchase soon.

Next meeting: Wednesday the 12th February in the North-West, venue TBC

Meeting Closed at 1:40pm