



# THE TASMANIAN LiFE AWARDS

Award Nominees 2026



## Message from the Premier



Too often, our communities are shaken by the news of a life lost to suicide. Suicide is a loss that can touch anyone, whether it's a relative, a friend, work colleague, a neighbour, or someone we hold close in our hearts.

The ripple effects are profound. Those left grieving are often left with unanswered questions and complex emotions. Every life lost to suicide is one too many.

We have the ability, and the responsibility, to do better. Every Tasmanian deserves to feel safe, supported, and surrounded by care. They deserve to know that there are options, they are not alone and that help exists.

When we approach suicide prevention with compassion, patience, and genuine collaboration, we create the conditions for real change and for stronger, more connected communities.

Across our State, individuals, workplaces, and communities demonstrate remarkable courage and compassion every day. These efforts in prevention, intervention, and postvention are making a meaningful difference, and it is vital that this work is recognised and celebrated. The LiFE Awards play an important role in doing exactly that.

Each nomination reflects the dedication of hundreds of Tasmanians from every corner of the State who are working together to ensure people feel safe, supported, connected to care, and able to hold hope for the future.

It is also a reminder, that no Tasmanian is alone. This work is supported through our government's Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Strategy, together we are taking a whole of government, whole of service system, and whole of community approach to ensure meaningful action continues.

The growing number of nominations for the Tasmanian LiFE Awards shows that momentum in suicide prevention is building. In 2026, as we mark the 21st anniversary of the Awards, we are once again recognising a record number of nominees.

To all nominees: thank you for the care, compassion, and support you offer to fellow Tasmanians. We see the bravery and hope you bring to our communities, and your contribution is deeply valued. You are making a difference.

These Awards remind us that when we work together, we can build communities where people feel supported, empowered, and confident in their ability to help one another through life's challenges.

My sincere thanks go to the organisers, volunteer judges and sponsors. Your dedication over the past 21 years has played a vital role in sustaining and strengthening these awards and suicide prevention in Tasmania.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeremy Rockliff', written in a cursive style.

**Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP**  
**Premier of Tasmania**

## Message from the Chair



This year marks the 21st Tasmanian LiFE Awards and provides an important opportunity to recognise the individuals, groups and organisations who are making a meaningful contribution to suicide prevention across our state.

Each year, the awards shine a light on the commitment, care and leadership shown by Tasmanians who are working to strengthen connection and reduce the impact of suicide.

Once again in 2026, the LiFE Awards recognise the passion, dedication and impact of people working in this critical and demanding field.

Grounded in the national LiFE (Living is For Everyone) Framework, the awards reinforce a clear and consistent message. Suicide prevention is a shared responsibility and progress is strongest when we all work together.

The Framework continues to support collaborative, community-based approaches that recognise local understanding of the issues, solutions and a collective action approach.

The LiFE Awards highlight the diversity and innovation of suicide prevention responses developed to meet the varied needs of Tasmanians.

This year's nominations reflect work taking place across different settings and communities, from initiatives that embed prevention and wellbeing into everyday spaces such as workplaces, schools and community hubs, to programs shaped by lived experience, research, clinical leadership and grassroots community action.

Together they reflect the many ways people are responding in thoughtful, compassionate and innovative ways to the complexity of suicide prevention.

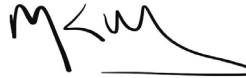
This year, we received 33 nominations across the five Award categories. They represent a broad cross-section of the work happening across Tasmania and demonstrate the depth of commitment to supporting individuals, families, workplaces and communities.

Every year, I am always incredibly inspired by the contribution made by so many Tasmanians involved in this work.

While the contributions are varied, they all make a real difference in the lives of people and communities, helping to reduce the impact of suicide in our state.

Congratulations to all nominees and a special thank you to those who took the time to prepare a nomination.

By recognising this work, you help acknowledge the effort, leadership and dedication that underpin suicide prevention across Tasmania and highlight the importance of continuing this work together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MK', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**Dr Michael Kelly**  
**Chair, Tasmanian Suicide**  
**Prevention Community Network**  
**and CEO, Relationships Australia**  
**Tasmania**

2026

# LIFE AWARD

Nominees

## Best Practice in Suicide Prevention in a Workplace LIFE Award

Proudly sponsored by TasNetworks

- Hamlet Inc.
- NAWIC Tas – National Association of Women in Construction
- Pigeon Whole Bakers Pty Ltd
- RACT – Mentally Healthy Workplace



## Communities in Action for Suicide Prevention LIFE Award

Proudly sponsored by Lifeline Tasmania

- 1000 Hearts
- Better Health 4 Dorset
- Cygnet Community Hub
- Exhale Choir
- Farm It Forward Tasmania
- Hilltop Hike
- Live4Life Break O'Day
- STiCH – Stronger Together In Circular Head
- THEIRS (Talk, Hear & Help, Educate, Inform, Refer, Support)
- The ReDress Hub
- Trivia People Tasmania



## Innovative Practice and Research LiFE Award

Proudly sponsored by Access EAP

- Dr Adriana Nevarez Flores (MBBS-Psy, PhD)
- Dr Ivan Nugraha (MBBS-MD)
- Dr James Peak (PhD)
- Dr Miranda Hann (MBBS, FRACGP)



## Priority Populations LiFE Award

Proudly sponsored by LEx Training Hub

- Albie House
- JCP Youth
- Loaves and Fishes Tasmania
- The Student Wellbeing Team at Smithton High School



## Outstanding Contribution LiFE Award

Proudly sponsored by SPEAK UP! Stay ChatTY

- Aimee Rowland
- Casey Musicka
- Cheryl McCartie
- Danny Mayson-Kinder
- Greg Smith
- Jodie Saville
- Miranda Stephens
- Tanya Stephenson
- The Mind Games



# Best Practice in Suicide Prevention in a Workplace LIFE Award nominees

## Hamlet Inc



Connection is a core value at Hamlet, a social enterprise cafe in Hobart that exists to empower people who are underrepresented in the workforce, with a focus on people living with disability.

At Hamlet, the mental wellbeing of both staff and participants is a core priority. Their approach includes formal and informal opportunities for conversations about wellbeing, recognising early signs of distress, and supporting people experiencing mental health challenges. Staff are trained in Mental Health First Aid and trauma-informed practice, ensuring they feel equipped to navigate difficult situations safely and compassionately.

At Hamlet, quarterly staff catch-ups create a dedicated space for individuals to explore both personal and work-related successes and challenges.

Ultimately, this work builds a culture where seeking support is viewed as a strength, not a burden. Feedback from the catch-ups informs Hamlet's continuous improvement plan, thereby ensuring mental health considerations are addressed at both an individual and organisational level.

Management has observed a shift in staff confidence to disclose mental health challenges and to seek support early. Staff frequently engage with their Employee Assistance Program, existing personal supports, or leadership when they notice themselves struggling. In practice, this has helped support return-to-work plans or flexible arrangements that keep them connected to the workplace in a way that feels safe for them.

This culture of openness has strengthened trust, reduced stigma, and created an environment where support is accessible and early intervention is the norm. Staff report feeling valued, heard, and supported, which contributes to reduced burnout, and improved overall workplace wellbeing.

## National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC Tas)



Since 2016, NAWIC Tasmania has reshaped Tasmania's construction culture by championing inclusion, opportunity, and visibility at every level, creating workplaces where staff feel safe, supported, and connected.

By breaking down isolation and promoting peer support, their initiatives not only advance careers but also strengthen mental wellbeing. This helps prevent workplace stress, ensuring every individual has the opportunity to thrive personally and professionally in Tasmania's construction industry.

Among its many initiatives, the chapter provides scholarships, enabling women to progress their careers, such as Tiana, who transitioned from a site-based role into stakeholder engagement and is now progressing into a leadership role in the industry.

Lived experience also informs their work. Many volunteers and mentors have navigated the challenges of being women or allies in a male-dominated

industry. This has helped shape their training, peer support, and community programs. Initiatives such as peer-to-peer mentoring and NAWIC Natters were developed in response to industry feedback, creating informal spaces to share experiences, ask for guidance, and access support, which is critical for mental wellbeing and suicide prevention.

NAWIC Tasmania advocates publicly to break stigma and promote open discussion about mental health. They speak at events such as the Fearless Festival, showcasing the power of shared experiences to bring issues out of the shadows and inspire young people.

Through diversity and inclusion workshops, mentoring pathways, and advocacy for inclusive jobsite standards and supportive policies, NAWIC Tasmania embeds a culture of respect, wellbeing, and open conversation within workplaces in the construction industry.

## Pigeon Whole Bakers Pty Ltd



Pigeon Whole Bakers is committed to prioritising and supporting the wellbeing of its community. As a company with more than 65 employees, they recognise that everyone experiences personal struggles, and they believe that supporting employees' mental health leads to significant benefits for both the individual and the business. Witnessing opportunities where they could create a healthy, happier team was what inspired them to create a community of support.

Historically, even as a smaller company, Pigeon Whole Bakers provided each team member with a one-off payment of \$500 to invest in initiatives that would foster positive mental health.

This included purchasing bicycles and equipment for sporting activities.

Pigeon Whole Baker's vision has been shaped by insights from organisations such as SPEAK UP! Stay ChatTY, and the Anti-Discrimination Commission, as well as the direct experiences of team members. The various initiatives, including their Employee Assistance Program, the presence of mental health first aiders within teams, and comprehensive anti-discrimination training, all contribute to fostering a healthy and supportive workplace environment.

These initiatives have increased awareness of available support and created an environment where mental health is valued and recognised. This has, in turn, created avenues for conversations free from judgement and fear, which has positively impacted the overall culture at Pigeon Whole Bakers.

## RACT – Mentally Healthy Workplace



RACT's 2024 wellbeing survey was the catalyst for change for the organisation. With a strong participation rate, their people sent a clear message – 60% prioritised mental wellbeing. This feedback inspired RACT to fundamentally rethink their approach. They realised they'd been operating reactively, waiting until people were struggling before offering support.

That year, they grew their in-house wellbeing capability by training the Safety & Wellbeing team and operational leaders as Accredited Wellbeing Practitioners. Employees now have multiple pathways to support, from professional psychology services to peer connection and proactive risk management. Mental health conversations have shifted from reactive crisis responses to everyday wellness discussions.

What made their approach special was making it evidence-based, and people-centered. Rather than implementing

disconnected initiatives, they adopted the Mentally Healthy Workplace framework (Deady et al 2024) to prevent psychological harm, promote the positive, and respond effectively when support was needed.

Engagement data confirms impact. RACT's 2025 annual engagement survey showed 95% of participants responded favourably to "My manager genuinely cares about my wellbeing" (up from 90% in 2024), evidence that their mentally healthy workplace initiative is driving real, measurable change.

RACT's Mental Health First Aid community of 150 trained team members has become a collaborative network of peer support. They connect and support each other through the biannual check-ins, creating a collective capability greater than individual efforts.

This collaborative approach, combining frontline engagement, peer support networks, and external partnerships, has created a comprehensive support ecosystem that no single team could achieve alone. It demonstrates that mentally healthy workplaces require collective effort and shared responsibility.

# Communities in Action for Suicide Prevention LiFE Award nominees

## 1000 Hearts



1000 Hearts was born from a simple but powerful idea – that small acts of kindness can change lives. Founder and director Sarah De Jonge believed that compassion could be made tangible through a tiny, hand-sewn heart that people could hold or share in times of need. What began as a personal act of comfort after loss became a global movement of hope and healing. It's a gentle way to support mental health, reminding people that they are loved, remembered, and never alone –one heart, one act of kindness at a time.

1000 Hearts is built on collaboration and community spirit. The project has worked alongside people with lived experience of mental ill-health and suicide, ensuring compassion is at the centre of everything they do. Volunteers from all walks of life help sew and distribute hearts. Together, they've created a movement of kindness that connects and heals communities.

1000 Hearts continues to grow through the stories and gratitude shared by people who receive and give hearts. Thousands of messages show how a simple fabric heart has comforted someone grieving, struggling with mental health, or feeling alone.

1000 Hearts has collaborated with schools, hospitals, mental health services, and the Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Community Network to ensure hearts reach those in need. Through this teamwork, thousands of hearts have been shared across Tasmania and beyond. The project's partnerships have built stronger relationships between community groups and services, fostering a shared commitment to compassion and suicide prevention.

## Better Health 4 Dorset



Better Health 4 Dorset is a not-for-profit organisation consisting of Dorset community members working together to support their community. The group are united by a shared concern about the rising impacts of mental health challenges and suicide in rural communities, and a belief that local people hold the solutions.

They saw that small towns often lacked accessible services but were rich in connection, care, and creativity. By combining those local strengths with evidence-based prevention approaches, they created a new, community-driven model for wellbeing. It wasn't just a new program, it was a new way of helping, built on trust and the

conviction that everyone has a role to play in keeping their community safe and strong.

Better Health 4 Dorset has embedded suicide prevention into everyday life, and their co-design approach has built trust, visibility, and local leadership, ensuring that suicide prevention is owned by the community, not just services.

Better Health 4 Dorset's strength lies in collaboration. They work closely with people who have lived experience of suicide, ensuring their voices shape every stage of planning and action. The group partners with schools, neighbourhood houses, service providers, and community networks such as Relationships Australia Tasmania, Rural Alive & Well, and the Dorset Council.

They engage volunteers, families, and youth through co-design workshops and community events. By uniting people, Better Health 4 Dorset has created a network dedicated to reducing stigma and building wellbeing together, which continues to inspire others across regional Tasmania to take positive steps for mental wellbeing.

## Cygnnet Community Hub



The Cygnnet Community Hub was established in 2016 following four suicides in the community in one week. Mez Newman and Cate Warren, who come from extensive health careers, recognised that there was an urgent need in the community for a suicide prevention model.

Mez and Cate were informed of a community action plan that they could pursue, which resulted in four workshops to explore the need for broad support to prevent instances of extreme adverse mental health events.

Following the workshops, the Cygnnet Community 'Hub', as it fondly came to be known, moved into the offices at Cygnnet Town Hall, where it has been operating under Mez and Cate's direction for the past nine years.

The Hub supports the community by connecting people, providing information, helping access to services, and supporting cultural activities of the town. It operates in the real world, not in a theoretical textbook environment, and staff follow up with people sometimes long after their difficult situation has been resolved. Nothing is

too big or too small for the team to tackle. They do not judge, and will sit and listen to a person's problems, and offer real life remedies and solutions.

The Hub works closely with other organisations to carry out their extensive range of programs and is supported by a team of volunteers who generously donate their time and expertise in carrying out the Hub's mission.

The Cygnnet community has come together to help achieve the ultimate goal of the Hub which is to build an inclusive, resilient community, one conversation at a time.

## Exhale Choir



Exhale Community Choir began in Devonport in 2020, born from a need to reconnect after the long isolation of COVID-19. What started as an invitation to “just breathe and sing together” became a lifeline for many. Led by music therapist Alexandra Morse, the choir welcomes 50 members of all backgrounds, providing a safe place where individuals can rebuild confidence and find joy.

The group's focus on mental health led to the development of a Community Action Plan for suicide prevention and wellbeing. This process sees choir members, mental health networks, and creative leaders identify actions that will have a lasting impact on the Devonport community.

Inhale, launched in 2025, is providing a safe space for women experiencing isolation or vulnerability to rediscover their voices and self-worth through group singing. Together, Exhale and Inhale embody the belief that community singing can nurture healing and hope.

Collaboration is at the heart of everything Exhale does. From its beginnings, the choir has grown through partnerships and generosity, including the Lifeway Baptist Church offering rehearsal space and support. Exhale has worked alongside organisations to create opportunities for people to participate in music and wellbeing activities.

A highlight of this collaboration is the ‘Big Sing’ in Devonport – a joyful community event uniting choirs from across the region. This partnership with renowned Australian artist Clare Bowditch showcased the healing power of music and invited new voices to join.

Exhale provides a space for people to rebuild confidence through shared music-making. As one participant reflected, “It’s the first time I’ve felt I truly belong somewhere.”

## Farm it Forward Tasmania



Farm It Forward Tasmania empowers individuals by teaching essential life skills in growing, cooking and crafting: fostering self-sufficiency and self-worth in a welcoming community of companionship, acceptance and dignity.

Michelle Williamson created Farm it Forward Tasmania in 2021, with the intention of growing a local and sustainable food movement, one backyard at a time. Back then, people wanted to learn how to cook the food they grew, so they offered seasonal vegetable cooking classes and then, little by little, they were approached by people wanting to teach others their art/craft/skill.

From its beginnings, Farm it Forward Tasmania went on to create a community garden situated on a five-acre block of land in Somerset, and they now run 60+ workshops a month. The workshops cover a range of interests, including preserving, sewing, basket weaving, multicultural cooking classes, dance exercise, propagating seedlings, pruning fruit trees, Nature & Wonder aimed at 0-5 years, and crafternoons where the residents of local nursing homes visit and make a craft.

Farm It Forward Tasmania is led by the local community, and the program is constantly evolving as people offer to run new activities. What makes it a success is that it is inclusive, welcoming all ages and abilities with open arms and a smile. The feedback received has been positive - the joy of upskilling while spending time with like-minded creative people, and there are countless stories of gratitude for having found Farm it Forward Tasmania when people were at a low point in their lives.

## Hilltop Hike



The Hilltop Hike is a three kilometre community walk to the top of Scenic Hill in Huonville, to raise awareness and funds for local mental health and suicide prevention initiatives. Founded in 2022 after the loss of two young people to suicide, it has become the Huon Valley's largest community-driven fundraiser.

The Hilltop Hike brings together local businesses, schools, sporting clubs, and families to walk side by side, raising funds to support programs like the Huon Valley PCYC's after school drop-in program. It's a welcoming space where youth can connect with mentors, and access support.

From the beginning, the Hilltop Hike has grown because people of all ages and backgrounds have stood behind it.

Entirely volunteer-run, every committee member has been personally touched by suicide. That shared experience gives their work authenticity and strength.

The difference the Hilltop Hike makes every year is evident, not just in dollars raised, but in the

impact those funds deliver. Each year a Huon Valley-based beneficiary is chosen, to ensure the money and benefits stay within the community.

Recently, a Community Ambassador Program was launched to give local voices a platform. The ambassadors represent different corners of the community, and they help carry the message beyond events and into everyday conversations.

The Hilltop Hike shows what can happen when people move together to create an inclusive community. Every step taken, every dollar raised, and every story shared is part of building a future where seeking help is normal, support is accessible, and everybody feels they belong.

## Live4Life Break O'Day



Break O'Day has taken community wellbeing into their own hands, implementing Live4Life, an evidence-based mental health education and youth suicide prevention model designed for rural communities. Led by Fingal Valley Neighbourhood House, a local school, and a Community Partnership Group, the program provides mental health first aid training and mental health ambassador opportunities for youth.

The Break O'Day community has long faced the challenges of rural living, including distance from services, and the impact of suicide on a small, close-knit population. Through their involvement in the National Suicide Prevention Trial, a group of residents and service providers

recognised a critical gap. While many initiatives supported adults, there was little available for young people, who were increasingly struggling with anxiety and depression.

When the opportunity arose to implement the Live4Life model, they saw the next step.

Live4Life's purpose is to bring communities together to support young people. What makes Live4Life unique is its peer led approach. Young people help co-design school events, lead campaigns, and inform community priorities, ensuring their perspectives are at the centre of every decision.

Findings to date show encouraging community-level change. Evidence suggests Live4Life has improved mental health literacy, encouraged open conversations, reduced stigma, and increased confidence in both help-seeking and help-offering. It has strengthened relationships between young people and trusted adults, and created opportunities for youth leadership. Through this teamwork, Live4Life Break O'Day is building a generation of young people who are confidently leading a lasting shift in how their community talks about mental health and suicide prevention.

## STiCH (Stronger Together in Circular Head)



STiCH found new ways to engage the community. Their wallet-sized contact cards are now a lifeline in many pockets, while events like the Jade Gala and STiCHED Up with Steven Bradbury bring people together to share stories, laughter, and hope.

STiCH - Stronger Together in Circular Head – is a volunteer-led group dedicated to improving mental health and reducing suicide in the Circular Head community. STiCH was created from heartbreak and hope. Members of the community saw the devastating impact of suicide and mental health struggles in their region and decided that something had to change.

Born from a desire to protect and uplift one another, STiCH is about people helping people. It's neighbours checking in, and conversations replacing silence. The group works tirelessly to ensure everyone in Circular Head knows that help is close by and that no one has to face life's challenges alone.

STiCH has built strong relationships, working alongside other community groups and wellbeing networks to share resources, coordinate events, and strengthen referral pathways for those seeking help.

Importantly, STiCH ensures that people with lived experience are not just participants, but voices in planning and decision-making. Their insight guides how STiCH shapes its messaging, designs community events, and develops resources.

STiCH has become a symbol of resilience for Circular Head, showing that real change happens when ordinary people stand side by side to make their community stronger and more connected. STiCH doesn't just talk about togetherness – they live it, every single day.

## THEIRS (Talk, Hear & Help, Educate, Inform, Refer, Support)



Specialists, victim-survivors, advocates and health professionals share their knowledge and experience at events. A key part of THEIRS' approach is bringing local services

together at events, which helps prevent organisations from working in silos and encourages resource-sharing and mutual support.

After their statewide schools and community tour with mental health advocate Jazz Thornton, which reached over 80,000 people, demand skyrocketed. What was initially intended for three communities has now expanded far beyond.

Small wins, such as a disengaged student leading a community awareness event, demonstrates tangible impact. THEIRS programs build capacity in parents and community members, equipping them to recognise distress and provide support. By combining peer-led initiatives and community-wide engagement, THEIRS demonstrates how teamwork unites communities to prevent suicide, strengthen resilience, and create lasting positive change.

THEIRS is a youth-led mental health and suicide prevention organisation on Tasmania's North West Coast. THEIRS began from a deeply personal place. Growing up in a small rural town, founder Laura Johnson struggled with mental health and suicidal thoughts. When her sister was also impacted by poor mental health, Laura was inspired to start THEIRS – events to bring people together, and provide education in holistic, trauma-informed, strengths-based ways. At the time, young people were rarely invited into rooms where decisions about mental health and suicide prevention were made. THEIRS has paved the way for youth voices to be included.

Today, THEIRS events and programs are co-designed with young people, team members, and community members, ensuring lived experience informs every aspect of their work.

## The Redress Hub



An inspiring outcome of this project has been The Can Do Crew based out of Youth Health North in Ravenswood. Many started out facing mental health challenges, unemployment, and even homelessness. Through the workshops, they've developed sewing and upcycling skills while rebuilding confidence and self-worth.

In 2022, The ReDress Hub: Keeping Things Circular was founded, a Launceston-based social enterprise dedicated to extending the life of clothing. Beyond saving textiles from landfill, The ReDress Hub has become a space for connection, creativity, and wellbeing – supporting mental health through shared purpose and community belonging.

The ReDress Hub began as a way to share skills in clothing making and mending but it became much more. While their workshops teach skills in repairing and remaking, events like the ReDressed Refashion Competition and Show engage the Tasmanian community. Another initiative, the ReGift Project, offers fully subsidised workshop places for people experiencing financial hardship.

Saturday Sewcials is another successful wellbeing initiative, where people gather to sew, knit, embroider, and share a cuppa in a relaxed environment.

*“When I’m at the ReDress Hub, it feels like I’m with my people. We come from different walks of life, but our shared creativity brings us together perfectly.”* – Participant

The ReDress Hub works with organisations like City Mission, Self Help, Relationships Australia Tasmania, and Youth Health North to better understand community needs and create meaningful opportunities for engagement. Through listening and adapting, The ReDress Hub has become a joyful, inclusive space that nurtures creativity, wellbeing, and human connection – one stitch at a time.

## Trivia People Tasmania



When Trivia People Tasmania started running trivia and bingo nights in Launceston, it was initially to help bring people back from social isolation after COVID-19. Organisers soon realised a lot of people were suffering from mental health struggles, and started doing 'mental health checks' at events, talking about signs of anxiety and depression, and sharing statistics and resources on suicide. Once they started sharing stories, feedback from players started to gather momentum, and this has led to deepened feelings of social cohesion within the players. Being able to talk about mental health and suicide prevention

openly in a social setting has benefited the community.

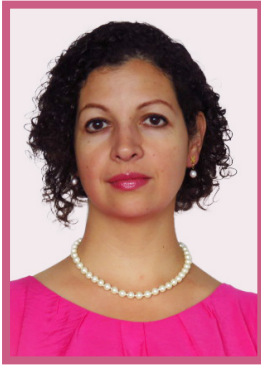
The trivia hosts who run the events are a diverse group of people with a gamut of lived experience. Their courage and determination is inspiring, and Trivia People Tasmania is seeking funding to have them participate in mental health first aid training to help them develop skills to continue to support themselves and their community.

To build their impact, Trivia People Tasmania has hosted fundraisers for Tour De Cure, Movember, SPEAK UP! Stay ChatTy, and Dolly's Dream. Working with Relationships Australia, the group has a vision to create a mental health and suicide prevention strategy. Through working alongside these organisations, they've been able to understand how they can make a difference in their community.

Thanks to their focus on supporting their players and the wider community, Trivia People Tasmania is helping to reduce the stigma associated with talking about mental health, suicide and suicide prevention.

# Innovative Practice and Research LiFE Award nominees

## Dr Adriana Nevarez Flores



Dr Nevarez Flores's work exemplifies innovation in both practice and research. She led the Tasmanian Centre for

Mental Health Service Innovation (TCMHSI) team in the design and implementation of Tasmania's first Evaluation Framework for the Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Strategy 2023–2027. Her evidence-based approach created a robust system for monitoring and improving suicide prevention and intervention initiatives across the state. Her work bridges research, policy, and practice, strengthening suicide prevention efforts and informing public health strategies nationally and globally.

Drawing on global models and local context, Dr Nevarez Flores adopted a unique approach, connecting real-world experiences, data, and outcomes. Her vision was to create a tool that could guide decision-makers, clinicians, and communities in

shaping more effective and compassionate responses. This initiative contributed to the evolution of Tasmania's suicide prevention strategy with insight and accountability.

Collaboration is at the heart of Dr Nevarez Flores's work. She has built strong partnerships across government, academia, health services, and the community. Her framework engaged consumers, clinicians, policy leaders, and people with lived experience to co-design and review evaluation methods. This inclusive process recognised that effective suicide prevention must be informed by those it aims to help.

This partnership approach created a statewide network of collaboration, empowering local voices and ensuring findings could be translated into action. The framework now serves as a shared foundation for coordinated, multi-agency suicide prevention efforts.

Her innovative approach has transformed how suicide prevention is measured and managed, providing a model to save lives and strengthen communities.

## Dr Ivan Nugraha



Ivan's PhD project, *Understanding the Intersection of Literacy and Suicide among Young Tasmanians*, examines how language-literacy challenges may influence suicide risk and access to mental health support among young Tasmanians. Ivan's project will highlight the impact of language-literacy on help seeking and communication, aiming to inform suicide prevention strategies that reach all youth, regardless of their ability to read, write, or communicate distress.

Ivan was undertaking his Master's in Global Mental Health in Glasgow, Scotland, when he discovered his current PhD opportunity at the University of Tasmania. Prior to this, Ivan had experience with the impact of language-literacy challenges

during clinical and community work with young people in a rural village in Indonesia. Many young people he engaged with were experiencing distress that often went unnoticed.

Although they were willing to seek support, they struggled to do so because they lacked the words or confidence required. This experience led Ivan to recognise that language-literacy, rarely considered in suicide prevention, may contribute to why some young people are left behind.

Discussions with academics, service providers, and stakeholders have highlighted how forms and online resources can unintentionally exclude young people. This has created a dialogue about improving accessibility and increasing awareness on this issue.

By integrating creative and visual methods, the study provides alternative ways for participants to express themselves beyond written or spoken language, reducing barriers for those with language-literacy challenges. Ultimately, through his PhD, Ivan aims to support the development of suicide prevention strategies that are accessible to all young Australians, regardless of their literacy skills.

## Dr James Peak



Dr James Peak has led ground-breaking research in suicide prevention and mental health. As a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Tasmanian Centre for Mental Health Service Innovation, he has driven projects that evaluate and improve government suicide intervention programs and mental health services.

His recent national study tracked Australians' mental health trajectories through COVID-19, one of the first to show persistent distress in young people and those with pre-existing conditions. James' innovative, evidence-based approach bridges research, neuroscience, and policy to deliver insights that strengthen suicide prevention systems and community wellbeing.

James was motivated by seeing gaps in how health systems respond to distress and suicide risk, particularly among people navigating complex service pathways. His neuroscience research explored how the brain regulates goal-directed behaviour, shaping his belief that understanding decision-making and stress at a biological and systems level could transform how we support people in crisis. The onset of COVID-19 brought this into sharp focus. James saw an urgent need to understand the pandemic's long-term mental health impact. This led him to co-design and lead the Australian arm of the COLLATE Project, a multi-year national study providing strong longitudinal evidence of persistent psychological distress.

At the Tasmanian Centre for Mental Health Service Innovation, James applies these insights to real world systems, advising government and services on how to target suicide prevention and recovery supports more effectively. His work combines data analysis with compassion and a commitment to lived experience inclusion. Ultimately, James does this work to ensure research improves the lives of those it studies.

## Dr Miranda Hann



Miranda is a GP specialising in gender affirming healthcare for the trans and gender diverse community in Tasmania. Providing access to gender affirming care is known to reduce the mental health burden and suicidal ideation for patients.

As a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, Miranda practices community driven healthcare. This means using appropriate language, active listening and treating the holistic person, versus the fractured care that often exists within our healthcare systems.

Miranda's goal is to eliminate the systemic barriers to healthcare. Mental health access can be financially challenging for patients. She refers patients to accessible services that actively work to be safe spaces for trans and gender diverse patients.

Healthcare is community work, and it cannot be done without involvement of the community. For Miranda, this means listening to patients to understand what works for them in their healthcare experiences. Miranda relies on social prescribing in her practice, as social isolation is a driving risk for mental health decline. She recognises that physical and mental health are intertwined – we cannot support one without supporting the other.

Miranda is on the board for Primary Health Tasmania and she serves on the Department of Health and Department of Justice LGBTQIA+ steering committees, driving change within our systems. She regularly speaks at Parliament to ensure that new policies allow ongoing access to essential healthcare for patients. This breadth of community engagement at different levels drives her clinical practice and her advocacy for her patients.

# Priority Populations

## LiFE Award nominees

### Albie House



Albie House was founded in 2017 after its director, Amanda Cuthbertson, experienced the devastating loss of her son to suicide. At that time, there were no dedicated support groups available in Tasmania. Determined to change this, she established Albie House with a clear mission: to provide safe, compassionate spaces for those navigating the challenges of suicide bereavement. Albie House delivers suicide bereavement groups, offering connection and hope to individuals and families. These groups are the only service of their kind in the state, and they are facilitated by a team of committed volunteers.

Studies highlight that bereavement outcomes improve when individuals engage in

support groups with others who understand the complexities of suicide loss. Suicide remains a major public and mental health issue in Australia, affecting families, schools, workplaces, and communities daily. The grief that follows such a loss is often complicated, and without appropriate support, it can lead to further mental health challenges.

Participants in Albie House groups frequently express how the experience has helped them feel less alone and better equipped to cope. The impact extends to the broader health system. Equipped with coping tools, participants often require less medical intervention and are better able to reintegrate into work, family life, and social activities.

By partnering with health professionals, community organisations, and government agencies, Albie House has built pathways that connect people to the help they need. This collaboration demonstrates what is possible when communities unite with a shared purpose: to provide healing, resilience, and hope for those navigating one of life's most difficult journeys.

## JCP Youth



JCP Youth empowers vulnerable and at-risk young Tasmanians to build confidence, resilience, and leadership through mentoring and experiential programs. By meeting young people where they are, JCP Youth helps them overcome challenges, and create lasting positive change in their own lives and communities.

Its founder recognised that many young Tasmanians – particularly those experiencing vulnerability, trauma, or involvement with Youth Justice and Child Safety Services – were struggling to find purpose, and connection. JCP Youth began with a simple but powerful belief: that every young person, regardless of their background or challenges, has the capacity to lead and contribute positively to their community when given the right opportunities and guidance.

Central to this mission is the BEAST Program, designed to meet young people where they are and walk beside them through challenge and growth. Alongside this, JCP Youth's school and outdoor recreation programs provide opportunities for young people to build leadership skills and confidence.

JCP Youth actively engages families, offering guidance, and encouragement to rebuild trust and connection at home. Most importantly, they work with young people, not just for them. Their voices shape the programs, their feedback drives improvement, and their leadership inspires others. Through genuine partnerships across systems and communities, JCP Youth continues to create positive, sustainable change.

Across all programs, JCP Youth's trauma-informed, strengths-based approach ensures that young people who face extra challenges are not defined by them. Instead, they are empowered to recognise their strengths, take control of their future, and become leaders in their own lives and communities.

## Loaves and Fishes Tasmania



Loaves and Fishes is a community-based organisation dedicated to alleviating hunger and promoting dignity for individuals and families in need. Through free meal programs, food pantries, and grocery distribution, they provide nutritious food in a welcoming environment.

What makes this work unique is its holistic approach. Instead of simply providing food, volunteers and staff take the time to listen and connect individuals to mental health services, housing assistance, and social programs. Each meal shared and every conversation held is an opportunity to remind people that they are valued and not alone.

Loaves and Fishes provides Mental Health First Aid training to their trainees, employees, and volunteers to help them

support others experiencing mental health issues and develop greater self-awareness of their own wellbeing. They also actively engage with young people who face barriers to employment, whether due to limited educational opportunities or mental health challenges. Through a traineeship program, young people earn a nationally accredited qualification that helps them build confidence and the ability to contribute positively to society. Loaves and Fishes' dedicated Wellbeing Team engages with trainees through regular interactions, and monitors their ongoing mental health. Feedback indicates that this wellbeing support is highly valued and effective.

Loaves and Fishes believes collaboration is essential to meaningful change. Many of the people who guide their work have lived experience with mental health challenges, ensuring their programs reflect real community needs. Ultimately, Loaves and Fishes helps people feel valued and supported, creating a positive ripple effect that strengthens the entire community.

# The Student Wellbeing Team at Smithton High School



This early intervention program offers one-to-one and group-based support to young people, with a focus on mental health literacy, emotional resilience and targeted therapeutic interventions. A sense of hope has been observed in the students referred to YouthARCH's programs.

The Student Wellbeing Team at Smithton High School is a dynamic group consisting of youth mentors, assistant principals, the school psychologist, and social workers. Together, they take a positive approach to mental health and collaborate to promote mental health initiatives across the school community.

A key aspect of their work is to support students of all ages and backgrounds, offering an ear to listen and pathways to support. Thanks to the Student Wellbeing Team's friendly, engaging ways, students at Smithton High School are open to referrals for help, and are willing to change.

One of these referral pathways is to YouthARCH. YouthARCH (Adolescent Reachout Circular Head) is a school-based mental health program.

The Student Wellbeing team understands the issues facing minority groups in their region, and they ensure young people are connected with services and individuals who can support them. They actively encourage services to work in their school to improve students' wellbeing. This includes Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation's support of Aboriginal students through mentoring and cultural day trips and events, and the Mental Health Council of Tasmania's mental health literacy programs.

Together with the school staff, the Student Wellbeing Team is committed to driving change in Smithton High School, growing a culture of support and positivity amongst the student community.

# Outstanding Contribution to Suicide Prevention LIFE Award nominees

## Aimee Rowland



Aimee founded Blue Tree Gallery, a space where art and mental wellbeing meet in Moina. She started this work after seeing how silence and shame around mental illness and suicide isolates individuals. The gallery began as a small idea in a converted shipping container and has grown into a space for art, honesty, and human connection.

After completing her honours research on *'The way Mental Illness is Placed and Represented in Specific Art Practices,'* Aimee recognised the need to raise awareness about mental health and suicide prevention. Her work

aims to create a safe space for those in need, normalising vulnerability by blending art with empathy. The pieces displayed at Blue Tree Gallery reflect this dedication, offering visitors a space to find comfort and connection through visual expression.

Advocating for suicide prevention has become the main focus of Aimee's efforts. By sharing her journey, she uses art to start conversations about mental health, suicide, and grief. Many visitors tell her the gallery is a space where they can finally exhale. Many open up about grief, trauma, or their own encounters with suicide, saying her kindness helped them find calmness and clarity.

Through her gallery, Aimee supports artists focusing on mental health and resilience, giving voice to their stories. She collaborates with local wellbeing groups, like Kentish House, and engages with community members to help with her creative projects. Aimee's dedication and courage make her a remarkable contributor to suicide prevention in Tasmania.

## Casey Musicka



From a young age Casey has been interested in people - how they operate, what people need to feel safe so they can flourish, and where this can go wrong for a lot of people.

Casey took this interest and turned it into action. Her goal is to give wholeheartedly to her community and to create a brighter future for our young people. As part of this, she volunteered and worked with the Break O'Day/Bicheno National Trial Site project from 2018-2023, hosting mental health outreach and café-style information stalls across the region.

In her own time, she assists with grant applications and workshops, aiming to improve access to services to reduce stigma and isolation. She hosts mental health professional meetings for Break O'Day and maintains an up-to-date mental health services directory.

She supports young people through Live4Life and fundraises via Lap it Up. She also helps maintain and deliver the Community Suicide Response Plan.

People in the community recognise her as someone they can approach for help or simply a listening ear. She doesn't seek attention or accolades - she just wants to see change, and she can see hope growing in her community. Having experienced how hard it can be, Casey is committed to helping others find light in their darkest moments, always in safe, measured, and professional ways.

Casey's work is grounded in collaboration through working groups and partnerships, where shared direction leads to real results. She values grassroots involvement and ensures that community voices, especially those with lived experience, inform decisions and actions.

## Cheryl McCartie



Cheryl is a founding member and volunteer president of the Dorset Suicide Prevention Network (DPSN). As a community-led group of local residents and health service providers, together they support the Dorset region in mental health wellbeing and suicide prevention. Under Cheryl's leadership, DPSN has been pivotal in bringing people and organisations together to tackle suicide prevention and building community capacity.

Cheryl is a full-time dairy farmer, yet she works tirelessly in suicide prevention through increasing awareness and reducing stigma in a rural community with historically high rates of suicide.

She initially became involved in suicide prevention through her personal experience with a family member. At the time it was extremely difficult to get support for someone at high risk of suicide.

From this personal experience, Cheryl learned a lot about suicide prevention, and she took on a role of connecting people with information for support.

As part of the farming community where people's

mental health is exposed to the volatile market and seasonal forces, Cheryl was able to play an important role. Through hearing personal stories, Cheryl began to realise many people were struggling and she took a leadership role in building community capacity for suicide prevention and response.

In a community where there had been almost no information or support available, the DPSN, under Cheryl's leadership, has taken an active role in providing training, a service directory, and support for community initiatives. The DPSN is now acknowledged as an exemplary example of what a community-led group can do in their community.

## Danny Mayson-Kinder



Danny founded the b kinder foundation in memory of her daughter Billie, who was killed in a tragic accident. Through her tireless work, hundreds of Australian schools have implemented evidence-based kindness and wellbeing activations. Danny has transformed her profound grief into powerful action, creating sustainable change in school communities. Her work addresses the root causes of youth suicide by fostering connection, inclusion, and emotional resilience.

This is Billie's legacy living on, creating the kinder world her daughter believed in. Danny's work ensures that Billie's spirit of kindness continues to touch lives and give hope to young people.

The b kinder foundation offers an evidence-based wellbeing program that includes the b kinder schools and student

leadership program, b kinder workbooks, b kinder summits around the country, and b kinder day on 22nd June annually. The foundation continues to evolve, with initiatives including the first b kinder council, in partnership with Glenorchy Council, and extending kindness into workplaces.

Danny's approach to suicide prevention is collaborative, bringing a range of stakeholders to the table, ensuring programs are informed by lived experience and expert knowledge. Danny engages with school principals, teachers, and importantly, students themselves.

What Danny has achieved stands out because she's tackled suicide prevention at its root – through kindness. It's the most difficult yet simplest thing: we need kindness, and we need to teach our youth to be kind before we need anti-bullying measures or crisis intervention.

Danny recognised that Billie's message of kindness wasn't just something to remember, it was something that could actively save lives.

## Greg Smith



Overcoming his own personal challenges from 20 years lived experience as an informal carer for family members, Greg founded Men Care Too, giving a voice to over one million Australian men in unpaid caring roles. Greg is a dedicated advocate for men in caring roles and promotes awareness of the caring role to the wider community.

During conversations with men in similar caring situations, he discovered a connection with peers and learned that belonging is how men can build a sense of hope for the future.

To strengthen local connections, Greg created the Men Care Too North West Mates Collective, a community driven initiative in the North West of Tasmania that seeks to address the mental health and social isolation challenges faced by men, particularly those in unpaid caregiving roles.

The group fosters social connections, a known protective factor against poor mental health and suicide, by hosting informal activities in community settings such as parks and coffee shops. These gatherings are aimed at creating opportunities for men of all ages and backgrounds to engage in conversations about mental health and caregiving, and they offer a place where support is peer-led and lived experience truly counts.

Working collaboratively with national initiatives Mr Perfect, The Man Walk and R U OK?, the Men Care Too North West Mates Collective offers a unique solution by creating non-clinical spaces that promote mental health conversations among men. This is a powerful way to address loneliness, situational stress, and life challenges that can often contribute to poor mental health.

## Jodie Saville



As a confident advocate for mental health and suicide prevention, Jodie's awareness of the systems and policies that shape people's experiences of mental health sparked her determination to create change. She recognised that stigma and gaps in local support left many people feeling isolated. Her vision was to create a community-led model of connection, education, and care, one that empowers people to support each other and ensures no one feels alone in their struggles. It was from this inspiration that Stronger Together in Circular Head (STiCH) was born. The group was founded on the belief that by standing together, we can make our community a safer and more supportive place for all.

Since bringing together like-minded community members in 2019, under Jodie's guidance, STiCH has delivered suicide prevention and mental health training, organised wellbeing events and strengthened both community connection and local support for those affected by suicide.

STiCH holds monthly meetings where the group reflects on its actions and plans future initiatives. Beyond these meetings, Jodie seeks guidance from colleagues and mentors, ensuring the work of STiCH remains impactful. A highlight of Jodie's leadership is the development of the region's 'Community Connection Guide,' now in its second edition and widely distributed throughout the region.

Through partnerships with schools, sporting clubs, service providers, individuals with lived experience, and government, Jodie ensures that STiCH's initiatives are making a difference - transforming the way the community approaches suicide prevention, making a lasting difference in the lives of individuals and creating a more resilient community.

## Miranda Stephens



Miranda is a clinical psychologist who has made an outstanding contribution to early intervention and prevention in mental health. Her work has empowered countless individuals to access mental health support before reaching crisis point.

Miranda was inspired by a belief that mental health support shouldn't only be available when people are in crisis, it should begin much earlier, through education, connection, and practical tools for everyday life.

Her programs, including Mindfulness Program Australasia and Mindful Mud, grew from this vision. The programs combine psychology, creativity, nature-based practices, and hands-on activities like clay to help people learn emotional awareness in an accessible way.

It is this innovative, heart-centred approach, grounding therapeutic concepts in creativity and community, that makes her work so impactful.

Miranda's contribution to suicide prevention stands out because she focuses on the foundations of wellbeing. By creating programs that teach people how to understand their emotions, self-regulate, and seek help early, she helps reduce the risk factors that contribute to suicide.

Miranda has worked alongside people with lived experience, teachers, therapists, and community groups to ensure that her programs are trauma informed, culturally sensitive, and accessible. Participants often report feeling less anxious, more connected to themselves and others, and more confident reaching out for support. These small shifts, multiplied across individuals, families, and communities, have a powerful impact on suicide prevention. Miranda's work is about building communities where people feel supported long before a crisis arrives. This preventative approach has created lasting change and offered hope to many.

## Tanya Stephenson



Tanya is a certified Life Coach and accredited Advanced Grief Recovery Specialist, specialising in grief, loss, and bereavement. Drawing from her own lived experience, which began with a family breakdown, followed by the suicide of her children's father and the death of her eldest son in a motorcycle accident three years later, she provides hope and support to others. Tanya has developed a unique, action-oriented grief and loss approach that empowers individuals to process emotions, address issues before they escalate to crisis, and move from isolation to healing. This helps to strengthen families and communities by minimising the devastating impact of suicide.

Tanya's professional care has given clients practical tools, prevented suicides and fostered recovery. Her dedication goes far beyond expectations; she frequently volunteers her time, sometimes sitting with individuals in crisis for extended periods at no cost, ensuring they have access to both clinical resources and her professional support.

Tanya is committed to continuous quality improvement in her suicide prevention work. She serves as a casual peer support worker for StandBy Support After Suicide in Tasmania, regularly managing crisis calls as part of the StandBy After Hours team. Tanya also volunteers for the Suicide Bereavement Group. Her commitment to learning is evident in her participation in speaking engagements and conferences, where she shares lived experience insights and collaborates with professionals and community members.

Tanya's unique blend of lived experience and compassionate care meets the needs of the community in an innovative and deeply personal way, making a significant difference in suicide prevention in Tasmania.

# The Mind Games



Thanks to Sherri Ring's innovative thinking, the Mind Games initiative was created as a way to raise awareness, empower leaders and fund critical research that drives real change and tangible outcomes in workplace mental health.

The Mind Games is a yearly event where workplaces enter a team for a day of fun, competitive activities to raise awareness and funding for mental health in the workplace. Corporate teams of five people are put through their paces in 10 fun challenges. The Mind Games Race for Research is a test of general skills, creativity and above all, team work.

Kicking off in 2019, the event has raised funds for the University of Tasmania's Menzies Institute for Medical Research for critical research into the prevention and

treatment of mental health problems.

The Mind Games has grown beyond a one-day event into a platform for a collective, innovative and impactful approach to leverage

the Tasmanian workplace to champion preventative mental health and wellbeing messaging to the broader Tasmanian population.

The community spirit and corporate sponsorship for this cause has snowballed to become an event that will continue into the future to raise much needed funds to improve mental health awareness in the workplace. The event is not only a day of fun team building activities, it also showcases a selection of panellists talking about wellbeing and leadership, and features highly respected Tasmanian leaders who are stepping up as ambassadors. This unique event deserves to be recognised for bringing the conversation of mental health into workplaces in such a positive way.

