



Media Release

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Employment uncertainty – where’s the response?

TasCOSS and the Mental Health Council of Tasmania (MHCT) today called on the State Government to make responding to the consequences of predicted increases in unemployment a whole of government priority.

“While the unemployment data out today indicates employment is holding up in Tasmania, it also shows that participation rates are continuing to fall,” said Tom Muller CEO of TasCOSS.

“Today’s figures need to be read alongside State Budget predictions that unemployment will reach 8% and stay there for two years”, said TasCOSS CEO Tom Muller.

“That will mean around 20,000 unemployed Tasmanians, and a significant rise in long-term unemployment.”

Michelle Swallow, MHCT Executive Officer said, “We know that increasing employment uncertainty increases levels of stress and anxiety in the workplace, while long-term unemployment often affects people’s overall mental health and well being.”

“At a time when there is rising homelessness and unemployment, Tasmania needs a targeted government response, with a particular focus on early support and community sector outreach mental health services”, said Michelle Swallow.

“Unfortunately, unlike other Australian State’s there is at the moment no process within State Government to look at the effects of rising unemployment and to begin planning how to enhance government and non-government services in response”, said Tom Muller.

TasCOSS and the MHCT are calling on the State Government to:

1. Immediately increase resourcing to the Social Inclusion Unit to drive a whole of government process to identify:
 - o The population groups that are most likely to be effected by rising unemployment;
 - o The geographic locations;
 - o The impact on community service organisations, and their capacity to increase services and support; and
 - o The impact on State Government mental health, public housing, drug and alcohol, and other services of rising unemployment.
2. Consider resourcing an initiative to build the awareness and capacity of businesses to support workers with a mental illness.
3. Consider increasing funding to community service organisations to increase their capacity to deliver crucial support services.

Tom Muller is available for interview on 6231 0755 or 0448 310 043
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