

SUBMISSION TO PREMIER'S ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RECOVERY ACTION COMMITTEE

Issue: Access to Information on Health Services & Community Supports for Many Tasmanians

ABS Statistics: 63% of adults in NW Tasmania have low health literacy levels

25% lack access to technology

Problem: The Government consistently acknowledges the above but fails to prioritise solutions

Result: Many vulnerable members of the community are disadvantaged in their access/utilisation

**De facto disenfranchisement contravenes the Charter of Healthcare Rights, relevant
Healthcare Standards & the Government's own Consumer Engagement Policies**

Proposed Solution- refer attached document on Health Information & Wellbeing Hub

In a nutshell, many vulnerable members of the community often require friendly face-to-face supported access to effectively utilise services: a website & telephone are inadequate substitutes

MHCT Commentary On Post-COVID Recovery

“A co-ordinated Promotion, Preventive and Early Intervention approach will be imperative to ensure that people experiencing psychological distress in Tasmania know when, where and how to access supports and services to avoid escalation and an increase in severity. These services must be available and accessible to so that individuals in the community can get help early to prevent further impacts on their mental health and wellbeing.”

Negative Commentary on Accessibility/Efficiency of Health Information System(sample only)

Royal Commission on Aged Care, - Interim Report, 2019

Tasmanian Mental Health Taskforce Report, 2018

Every Tasmanian Consumer Forum/Survey in period 2018-2020 (qualification required as relating to personal knowledge/attendance)

Action Required

Provide support for efficient community action OR fix a system that does not currently meet the needs of many of the most vulnerable Tasmanians or satisfy requirements imposed on Government to satisfactorily meet the health and wellbeing needs of the whole community.

These obligations require more than merely providing details of a website and telephone number

BURNIE HEALTH INFORMATION/WELL-BEING HUB

What is it?

It is a resource centre, staffed by well-trained volunteers, who provide a friendly face-to-face service to members of the public on the following:-

- information on the full range of health services available in the community, utilising a computer database and printed material prepared by the various Government departments and other health agencies.
- where requested, and appropriate, referrals and/or appointments will be made via computer or, in some cases, by telephone with the health agency.
- information on social /activity clubs and groups operating in the Burnie area, again utilising a computer database and material published by the groups.
- where a group offers a personal contact option, that may include transport if required, this linkage will be facilitated as appropriate.
- a display point for current relevant posters and promotional material relevant to health and community engagement.

What needs does it meet?

There is clear evidence that very many consumers are confused about how to access services not provided by a Hospital, Health Centre or G.P.

Likewise, many funded services are under-utilised because of a lack of awareness as to their existence.

Websites are often difficult to navigate when, and if, they can be located.

The most vulnerable members of the community sometimes require supported access in order to utilise services and miss out when this is not available.

A face-to-face service for the provision of health information that is comprehensive and empowering does not presently exist in Tasmania.

Social isolation of the elderly has been identified as the major issue impacting their mental health and well-being. Many groups actively seek more members and the Hub provides a linkage for information, personal contact and transport to increase participation. A friendly, face-to-face service will provide additional motivation for engagement.