

media release

Newly expanded Hobart centre boosts headspace support in Tasmania's south

Tuesday 29 June 2021

A newly expanded headspace centre in the heart of Hobart means more young Tasmanians than ever can get support from the youth mental health service provider.

Australian Government funding provided through Primary Health Tasmania has enabled headspace Hobart to redesign the layout of its centrally located Liverpool Street site, including a revamped reception area and three new consulting rooms.

The expansion has effectively doubled the area available, increasing the service's counselling capacity and giving staff more flexibility in how support can be delivered.

The Link Youth Health Service, which operates headspace Hobart, says there is now more room for family members or friends to attend appointments with a young person, and for group sessions to be held.

Observational windows in some of the new counselling rooms will help staff train youth mental workers at the newly expanded site, which can now also display artwork created by young clients to passers-by in the larger front windows.

Volunteers on headspace Hobart's Youth Reference Group informed every part of the refurbishment process, such as a decluttered reception area, warm lighting, and a neutral yet welcoming colour palette.

University student Eliza McGovern is one of those volunteers, and says she relished the chance to have a say about the "nitty gritty" of how the updated centre would look and function.

"It was fascinating to think about the role of the environment on a particular demographic — in this instance, young people — and make sure it was a really welcoming space," the 23-year-old says.

"I also think it's great that there's now space to run group sessions in some rooms, when it's appropriate, because young people don't exist in silos.

"If you can connect up the care they're getting from headspace with their network, and the rest of their life, it can be really powerful."

Miss McGovern says access to mental health support is vital for today's young people given considerable stressors around insecure employment and housing, as well as global issues such as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of climate change.

"It does feel like there's an undercurrent of anxiety in our generation, but I think this shared experience lends itself to young people being open to and supportive of one another's lived experiences and challenges," Miss McGovern, who has lived experience of mental ill-health, says.

Given The Link's Hobart site is located behind the Liverpool Street-facing headspace Hobart centre, the whole area can now function like a youth mental health 'precinct' in the CBD, headspace Hobart centre manager Angela Waite says.

"The expansion of the centre means we've doubled the shopfront, boosting its visibility among young people who come into the Hobart CBD," Ms Waite says.

Primary Health Tasmania spokesperson Mark Broxton says the expansion of the Hobart centre is part of a statewide program to bolster headspace services, which includes the opening of a new Devonport centre and Burnie satellite service with the past 12 months.

“Primary Health Tasmania is proud to support the three headspace centres and one satellite service in Tasmania because we know how vital it is that young Tasmanians have a dedicated youth mental health provider in their local region,” Mr Broxton says.

“We have every hope that this real investment in young Tasmanians’ wellbeing will help reduce the incidence of poor mental health as they move into adulthood.

headspace CEO Jason Trethowan says the expanded headspace Hobart site will help young Tasmanians get the youth-friendly mental health support they need.

“We know one in four young Australians will experience a mental health issue, and that 75% of these mental health disorders develop before the age of 25.

“It’s important that any young person going through a challenging period can get support so, it’s great to see headspace Hobart expand their service for more young people to access help when they need it,” Mr Trethowan.

headspace services are for people aged 12 to 25 years. As well as early intervention support for young people with mild to moderate mental ill-health, headspace Hobart offers alcohol and other drug, sexual health, GP and work and study services.

- ENDS -

For media interviews, please contact:

- **headspace Hobart/The Link:** Angela Waite on 0408 232 838
- **headspace National** media team on 0413 025 385
- **Primary Health Tasmania:** Alexandra Patrikios on 0431 727 106.

About headspace

headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation, providing early intervention mental health services to 12-25 year olds. Each year, headspace helps thousands of young people access vital support through our headspace centres in 124 communities across Australia^[1], our online and phone counselling services, our vocational services, and our presence in schools. headspace can help young people with mental health, physical health (including sexual health), alcohol and other drug services, and work and study support. Centre details, as well as fact sheets and resources for young people and their families and friends, can be located on the headspace website: headspace.org.au

^[1] *As at September 2020 and inclusive of licensed headspace centres, satellites and outposts*

About Primary Health Tasmania

Primary Health Tasmania (Tasmania PHN) is a non-government, not-for-profit organisation working to connect care and keep Tasmanians well and out of hospital, under the Australian Government’s Primary Health Networks Program. The Australian Government provides funding for headspace services around the country through PHNs, who commission ‘lead agencies’ to deliver the services. The Tasmanian lead agencies are The Link Youth Health Service (Hobart) and Cornerstone Youth Services (Launceston, Devonport and Burnie).