



Championing the rights and interests of women

December 2017 Communiqué

- The Tasmanian Women's Council (the Council) met in Hobart on 5 December 2017.
- The meeting was attended by the Minister for Women, Jacqui Petrusma MP, who acknowledged the valuable work of the Council throughout 2017. The Minister also individually acknowledged the contributions of each Member, both within the Council and in the broader community, to address and promote women's issues in the hope of improving the lives of the women of Tasmania.
- The Council hosted Liz Little, Chief Executive Officer of Rural Alive and Well, to discuss mental health and suicide prevention in rural and remote Tasmania.
- Although suicide is a predominately male phenomenon, suicide rates for women over 65 are increasing, which is potentially related to limited resources during retirement, onset of certain illnesses and diseases, and homelessness as a result of family violence.
- Ms Little informed the Council of the Australian Government-funded national trial, which aims to explore how a coordinated approach can help local communities reduce suicide rates. The focus of the Tasmanian component of the trial will be men and women over the age of 65 in the Break O'Day, Launceston, Burnie, Devonport and Central Coast local government areas.

If you or anyone you know needs help, please call Rural Alive and Well on 1 300 4357 6283; or beyondblue can be contacted anytime on 1 300 224 636.

- The Council farewelled Christine Hepburn, and acknowledged her inspirational work and valuable contribution to the Council over the past seven years, especially in her roles as Deputy Chair (2014), Chair (2015 and 2016) and Independent Expert Member (2017).
- Members provided updates on recent activities relating to the Council, notably Sue Martin attended the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Women and the Economy Forum in Vietnam to promote gender equality and inclusive economic growth.
- Further, Holly Mason-White noted that *Addressing Financial Abuse: A Domestic and Family Violence Community Resource Guide Tasmania*, an initiative of the Sexual Assault Support Service in association with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, is now available at <https://www.sass.org.au/resources>.
- The next meeting of the Council will be held on 10 April 2018 in Hobart.

The Council seeks input from women and community organisations about any issues that are of concern to, and that could impact on, women in Tasmania. If you would like to talk with a member of the Council, please contact Communities, Sport and Recreation, Department of Premier and Cabinet on 6232 7434 or email women@dpac.tas.gov.au for members' contact details. We welcome your calls.

Annette Rockliff
Chair