

**40th ANNIVERSARY OF
MENTAL HEALTH FAMILIES AND FRIENDS TASMANIA
REMARKS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, MONDAY 9 DECEMBER 2024**

Good evening, everyone. I warmly welcome you to Government House to celebrate your significant milestone – the 40th anniversary of Mental Health Families and Friends Tasmania.

May I acknowledge the Muwinina people upon whose Country we gather. I acknowledge today's Tasmanian Aboriginal Community as ongoing custodians of Country. I recognise their enduring culture and deep connection to land, sea, sky, and waters.

In the early 1980s, Ethnee Shields and Anne Bevan began their important work in the mental health space to lay the foundations for a network of care and advocacy to support individuals. This network has grown to support communities across Tasmania.¹ Anne, we are delighted you are here with us this evening.

Since then, your organisation has undergone several transformations to today's Mental Health Families and Friends Tasmania with programs such as Safe Spaces Peer Support, and the Self-Advocacy Toolkit.

I commend the work of Mental Health Families and Friends Tasmania and its impact on and contributions to systemic and meaningful change.

Mental Health Families and Friends Tasmania has partnerships with organisations such as Headspace, Flourish, and our Mental Health Council of Tasmania²³⁴. These partnerships confirm your commitment to addressing the complex needs of mental health in our community. Your commitment to

¹ <https://mhfamiliesfriendstas.org.au/history/>

² <https://mhfamiliesfriendstas.org.au/ceo-communique-2/>

³ <https://mhfamiliesfriendstas.org.au/lived-experience-framework/>

⁴ <https://mhfamiliesfriendstas.org.au/ceo-communique-2/>

advocacy has also led to legislation recognising carers; a significant acknowledgement of the vital work that families and friends play in the mental health system.

Beyond programs, policies, and partnerships, are the human stories that illustrate the impact of your important work. Helping families and people realise that they are not alone – these are the stories that define your organisation and your 40 years of service.

We celebrate this 40th anniversary but acknowledge the challenges the future holds. The ongoing Lived Experience Review reminds us of the complexities of your work and the need to continually advocate for the rights and wellbeing of families and friends.⁵

To everyone who has contributed to the success of Mental Health Families and Friends Tasmania – volunteers, representatives, staff, and supporters – thank you, your dedication has made a difference.

Congratulations, and may the years ahead bring continued success to support more families and friends navigate the challenges of mental health.

Thank you, and please enjoy the reception.

⁵ <https://mhfamiliesfriendstas.org.au/lived-experience-review-survey-consultations/>