

**MENTAL HEALTH WEEK 2019**  
**REMARKS BY**  
**HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AC**  
**GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA, TUESDAY 8 OCTOBER 2019**

**[Vice-Regal Salute is played]**

Good evening and welcome to this reception to mark Mental Health Week 2019 on behalf of Mental Health Families and Friends Tasmania.

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land— the palawa people. I acknowledge the contemporary Tasmanian Aboriginal community, who have survived invasion and dispossession, and continue to maintain their identity, culture and Indigenous rights.

May I acknowledge among you:

- Maxine Griffiths, CEO;
- Lorelle Taylor, Board member;
- representatives of the Mental Health Council of Tasmania; The Hobart Clinic; Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania; Baptcare; Australasian Institute of Emergency Services; TasCOSS; Carers Tasmania; Headspace Hobart.

And of course Dick and I most warmly welcome all carers, family members and friends.

Many of you will have been at today's Mental Health Families and Friends Forum, at the Glenorchy District Football Club, and I look forward to hearing about the day from some of you. The program certainly looked to have comprised an impressive and diverse range of speakers. Just a glance at the programme and the speakers' profiles is enough to bring home the reality of life for carers of the mentally ill.

For me it brings back memories of what it was like for my mother coping with my father who suffered bouts of what was then called ‘manic depression’ – of the worry associated with a manic phase – usually indicated by the purchase of a new car, scary fast driving and somewhat eccentric extravagances such as engaging an architect to design a caravan or some hare-brained investment. It’s impossible to say which was the more worrying – the up or the deep depression that inevitably followed.

In hindsight, being able to share this experience with my students at the University had, I think, made it easier for a student to discuss problems he or she was having dealing with a parent or friend’s mental health issues.

I understand too that as well as being a component part of Mental Health Week, the Forum celebrated 35 years of ARAFMI<sup>i</sup>, restructured and renamed in 2012 as Mental Health Carers Tasmania; and now with your brand-new name, publicly announced on the 4<sup>th</sup> September this year.

I’d like to think therefore that this reception, as well as marking Mental Health Week 2019, is both a celebratory conclusion to your Forum – albeit an informal one – and also a celebration of your rebranded corporate identity as Mental Health Families and Friends Tasmania: this change being to more “adequately reflect the relational aspects between people with mental illness and their supporters”, in the words of Leigh Delaney, the Board President.<sup>ii</sup>

This reception and Government House also form a part of a very significant annual event, namely World Mental Health Day, which this year is held on Thursday; and with the week in Tasmania running from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> of October.

We at Government House are honoured that we can be associated with your work and with the very complex and so often difficult and troubling aspects arising from your professional and personal commitments to those with lived experience of mental illness.

Ladies and gentlemen, I congratulate all of you on what you do and I wish you the very best as we move through Mental Health Week 2019. Now please do enjoy the reception.

Thank you.

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<sup>i</sup> Association of Relatives and Friends of the Mentally Ill.

<sup>ii</sup> <https://mentalhealthcarerstas.org.au/name-change-for-mhctas/>, accessed 5 October 2019.