



**flourish**  
Mental Health Action  
In Our Hands Inc.

# VOICES

Vol. 2, No. 5, June 2017

## From The Editor's Desk

Stigma is a dirty word, both literally and figuratively. The word is derived from the Greek *stigmatos*, meaning a mark or stain, and referred (then) to the branding of slaves. Sadly, today the word is more often associated with mental illness. Discrimination against people with disabilities, including mental illness, can be addressed via a variety of means, but stigma is, as the word implies, a stain, and therefore harder to remove. Last year the Australian Federal Government linked terrorism to mental illness, and while the government was referring to overseas events, the impact was felt locally. Now the federal government wants to random drug test people who are on welfare, including disability support. Intended or not, the federal government, by their actions, is implying that people on welfare are likely to be taxpayer funded drug addicts. The mental health community works hard to address the issue of stigma, but when government policies or actions increase that stigma, then that work becomes so much harder.

Image: [uk.pinterest.com](http://uk.pinterest.com)



## Oscar: Still Winning Hearts And Minds



Back in February 2017, VOICES told the story of therapy animals, and in particular, those animals working in Tasmania's psychiatric in-patient facilities. Oscar works in the Department of Psychiatry, located within the Royal Hobart Hospital. When the new mental health unit became operational last November it was feared Oscar would not be allowed to work in the new unit, but all ended well and Oscar returned to work. Oscar was rather busy back then and we were unable to acquire an image of this loved little terrier. However, the Editor is pleased to say we finally have a photograph of this wonderful therapy dog.

Oscar was kind enough to take a few minutes off from his busy schedule and pose for a picture.

## Smooch, Lassie, Foxie, And Rosie

This poem was written by a friend many years ago for my two dogs Smooch and Lassie. Smooch lived until she was almost twenty, and her daughter Lassie, 14 years old. **Patty Howard**

Whenever I need a little sunshine in my life,  
I just take a walk down memory lane.  
Then all at once the sun comes shining through,  
Because I am with you again.  
It seems a smile is only ever as far away,  
As the memories of the heart.  
So as long as I remember you we will never be apart.  
And if a little rain should fall, then I will not let it get me down,  
Because your memory means more to me, and when my heart pictures forever,  
Then it will be your face I see, yes, a smile is only ever as far away,  
As the memories of the heart,  
So as long as I remember you,  
We will never be apart.



## Book Review: In Two Minds (edited)

Written by renowned psychiatrist, Gordon Parker, *In Two Minds* is a fictional, yet sympathetic account of one man's journey through mental illness. The principle character, Martin Homer, has a naturally cheerful disposition despite suffering two great losses during his childhood. Martin is a medical practitioner. His marriage is a happy one, despite failed attempts to have children. However, the death of Martin's mother sends him into depression, which then becomes a period of mania. During this period, Martin meets Bella, a woman with some pretty serious issues of her own. What happens next has far reaching consequences for them both.

Although this novel is slow in places, there is no doubt that it was written by someone who is an expert in mental illness. The author creates a sympathetic picture of Martin, even in the passages when his mania caused him to behave quite badly. Bella is portrayed as someone who is manipulative and behaves without conscience, yet it is also clear that she has been damaged by her past. *In Two Minds* is compelling reading for anyone interested in the human side of mental illness.

### Kathryn White (Reviewer)

Source: Mental Health Council Tasmania

## **Regional Mental Health Group Meetings**

The first round of Regional Mental Health Group meetings for 2017 were held in March. Discussion largely centered around upcoming changes and reforms that are occurring throughout the sector. The shifting sands of the mental health sector mean these meetings are an opportunity to discuss concerns and new innovations in a productive and collaborative way. Future meeting dates are;

### **Northwest**

Tuesday 18 July

Wellways, 1/41 Mount Street, Burnie

### **North**

Wednesday 19 July

Anglicare, 116 Elizabeth Street, Launceston

### **South**

Thursday 20 July

TasCOSS, Meeting Room 1, McDougall Building, Battery Point

Source: Mental Health Council Tasmania

## **Proposed Tasmanian Human Rights Act: Facebook Page Launched**

A Facebook page for the Human Rights Act campaign has been launched so more people can be reached. Please consider 'liking' the page and sharing with your networks.

It is 10 years since the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute recommended that Tasmania have a Human Rights Act. Like the ACT and Victoria, Tasmania needs a Human Rights Act to enhance people's level of rights protection. Tasmania's politicians and political parties are being asked to take a Human Rights Act to the election as a part of their policies. To ensure this happens, please sign the petition on the website and visit the Facebook page.

Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/tashumanrightsact/](http://www.facebook.com/tashumanrightsact/)

Website: [www.tashumanrightsact.org](http://www.tashumanrightsact.org)

Source: Richard Griggs, [richard.k.griggs@gmail.com](mailto:richard.k.griggs@gmail.com)

## **Anti-Poverty Week: 15 – 21 October 2017**

Poverty and severe hardship affects more than a million Australians. Globally, more than 1 billion people live in chronic poverty. The week focuses on poverty around the world, especially in the poorest countries, but also in wealthy countries like Australia. The aim is to strengthen public understanding of the causes and consequences of poverty and hardship internationally and locally. The United Nation's International Anti-Poverty Day is on Monday 16 October.

For more information, phone 1300 797 290 or email [apw@antipovertyweek.org.au](mailto:apw@antipovertyweek.org.au)

## Arts And Health Skills Development Opportunities

At present there are a number of courses happening in Tasmania to help people develop their skills and knowledge of arts, health, and wellbeing. They include:

### Creativity and Ageing

A practical unit where you can select from a range of activities in visual arts, music, and creative writing, to learn new skills and apply them in creative ways. Class begins 30 October 2017.

<http://www.utas.edu.au/arts/creativity-and-ageing>

### Arts and Dementia Care

Explore evidenced-based research on the benefits of music, dance, theatre, and the visual arts for those living with dementia and their carers.

<http://www.utas.edu.au/arts/arts-and-dementia-care>

### Foundations of Arts and Health

This unit explores ways to integrate creative practices into health programs and for personal healthcare to promote well-being. You will learn about the potential health benefits of visual arts, journaling, music and voice, dance and movement, drama and performance, story writing and poetry, and therapeutic environments.

<http://www.utas.edu.au/health/study/foundations-of-arts-and-health>

### The Art of Wellness: Visual Arts and Health

This is a free online course from the University of Tasmania Arts and Health Program. Students will learn how visual art practices are used in expressive therapies, community healthcare initiatives, and to enhance personal and community health. Central to the learning are many hands-on visual arts activities aimed at introducing the key principles of visual arts based practices in healthcare. The short course takes students around 6 hours to complete.

<http://arts-and-health.thinkific.com/courses/visual-arts-and-health>

**Don't Forget To Like Us On Facebook!**

**[www.facebook.com/flourishtas](http://www.facebook.com/flourishtas)**



Image: Pinterest.com

## Housing, Homelessness And Mental Health

During March and April of this year, the Mental Health Commission conducted workshops in eight jurisdictions across all Australian states and territories to discuss and get input regarding housing and homelessness issues for those that experience mental illness. Housing and homelessness is a priority for the Commission, because for people who are living with a mental health disability, getting and keeping their own home is hard to achieve compared to the general community. For the most vulnerable and unwell, cycles of homelessness, unstable housing, and poor mental health can become their total life experience.

In the workshops, a range of topics were discussed, including how the structure and dynamics of Australia's housing system affect housing and health outcomes for people living with mental illness; what we know about housing experiences of people living with mental illness; and, how can service systems improve the housing experiences of people living with mental illness. Finally, how could these issues be moved forward at the local and national levels, and how the Commission could support this. Consumers, carers, families and support people were also invited to share housing and homelessness experiences through an online consultation. The Commission wishes to thank all those that gave their time and experience to the workshops and online consultation process.

Source: National Mental Health Commission

## Taking Action: Innovation, Collaboration, And Accessibility



The theme for the 2017 Suicide Prevention Forum is about taking action through innovation, collaboration and accessibility to services for all Tasmanians. The Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Community Network (TSPCN) is thrilled to announce the forum's key speakers who come with years of experience and are leaders in the field of suicide prevention. From the University of Queensland, we have Judith Murray, Jono Nicholas from Reach Out, Jack Heath from Sane Australia and Heather Miller from Beyond Blue.

The Forum will be an excellent networking opportunity so we will have space available for resources/flyers from different registered organisations. If you would like to bring along material to display, please tick the appropriate box during the registration process. Please be mindful that this will be a shared area and space may be limited.

When: Thursday, 29 June, 2017

Where: Baha'i Centre, 1 Tasman Hwy, Hobart

Cost: \$90 (\$45 Concession)

If you have any questions about the forum;

Phone Lucy Apps on 1300 364 777 or email: [lucya@reltas.com.au](mailto:lucya@reltas.com.au)

## An Integrated Approach To Workplace Mental Health



The University of Tasmania has launched a white paper: *An integrated approach to workplace mental health: Nine priorities for implementation in Australia*. The paper has been produced by the University of Tasmania's Work, Health and Wellbeing Network in collaboration with national and international researchers, practitioners and policy makers. The paper highlights the need for an

integrated approach to workplace mental health, which encompasses three key areas; preventing harm, promoting the positive, and responding to illness. Three priorities for each key area have been identified to guide employers about ways in which they can achieve a positive impact on employee mental health outcomes. A copy of the white paper can be found at;

[http://www.utas.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/972395/WHW-Network-White-Paper.pdf](http://www.utas.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/972395/WHW-Network-White-Paper.pdf)

### **Dr Sarah Dawkins**

UTAS Work, Health & Wellbeing Network

Tasmanian School of Business and Economics

Phone: 03 6226 2829

## Do Not Judge Me

You know my first name.

You even know my last name.

You indeed know my genetic father, but

You do not know me. Do not judge me.

You do not know what I have seen or heard.

You know not my prayers unheard.

You have no clues of my struggles or complaints.

Do not judge me, because you do not really know me.

You cannot imagine exactly what I have been through.

You never saw my tears.

You never hear my midnight cries while you are deep asleep.

You do not know me, do not judge me.

You do not know my words nor my actions.

You even do not have a clue of my thoughts.

You do not know my pains before my aches nor do you know my journey before I began.

You do not know me, so do not judge me.

A Facebook friend allowed me to use this poem. **Patty Howard**

## **Mental Health Services Southern Partnership Forum**

The June forum will be held at the Moonah Arts Centre (23-27 Albert Road, Moonah) on Thursday 22 June between 10:00 am – 1:00 pm. Morning tea is provided.

There will be a Mental Health Services presentation by Chris Fox; a presentation by Flourish's Hermione Hickling on Active Consumer Engagement (ACEIT); a Mental Health Council Tasmania presentation by Connie Digolis; and Peer Workforce for Mental Health in Tasmania, presented by Renae Michelin.

Please RSVP by Monday 19 June to Jane Hayes. Phone 6166 1161 or via email: [jane.hayes@ths.tas.gov.au](mailto:jane.hayes@ths.tas.gov.au)

## **Comments And Submissions**

Feedback is always welcome. This can be done via SharePoint, e-mail, phone, or mail. Newsletter content does not necessarily reflect the views of the Flourish Board or staff. Flourish is not responsible for, and refutes all liability for, damages of any kind arising out of use, reference to, or reliance on any information contained within the newsletter. There is no guarantee the information provided in the newsletter is correct, complete, or up-to-date. Although links may be provided to Internet resources, including websites, Flourish is not responsible for the accuracy or content of information contained in these sites.

### **Newsletter guidelines**

Submissions should be neatly written or typed articles. A maximum of 500 words per story applies. More than one article per person is welcome, but dependent on space and other restrictions, publication is at the editor's discretion. The editor reserves the right to edit spelling, punctuation, and if needed, grammar. Contributors may be anonymous, use only their first name, or use their full name. If reporting on Flourish project/policy committee involvement, it is the responsibility of the author to check with the relevant organisation and/or the Flourish CEO, to ensure confidentiality is not being breached.

**Deadline for submissions for Vol. 2 No. 6 July 2017 is Monday 26 June**

## **Flourish Participation**

Membership of Flourish is free to all Tasmanian's who have a lived experience of mental illness. Participating in Flourish activities can provide you with information about mental health through our newsletter, website, Facebook page, and regional forums where people with an interest in mental health can meet and share their experiences and ideas. To participate, complete the attached form, and agree to the Flourish Code of Conduct. If you would like to discuss Flourish participation in more detail, please phone our office on 03 6223 1952 or email [admin@flourishtas.org.au](mailto:admin@flourishtas.org.au)

## **Flourish Code of Conduct**

The Code of Conduct guides all Flourish members. The term 'member' refers to employees, Board members, volunteers, Regional Advisory Group (RAG) members, Consumer Representative Consultants (CRS), and anyone undertaking work-experience. Flourish expects a high standard of behaviour from members and there is an expectation that members will conduct themselves in a professional manner. This code underpins other policies, e.g., Anti-Discrimination Act. The following principles form the Code of Conduct:

Members work in a professional manner, adhering to relevant professional and organisational codes of ethics, and working with respect, fairness and integrity at all times.

Workplace Health and Safety and the Anti- Discrimination Act are adhered to.

Flourish policy and procedures such as Anti-Discrimination and Harassment, Complaints, Privacy and Confidentiality are adhered to.

Members are respectful of colleagues and work to resolve conflict in an appropriate manner.

Members conduct themselves professionally and do not act in a manner that might jeopardise the safety of others or themselves or bring the name of Flourish into disrepute.

Members show due care when using all assets and property belonging to Flourish.

Members are aware of diversity in the workplace and are respectful of others.

Members are aware of harassment and bullying issues, discrimination and sexual harassment.

The Code of Conduct mandates the need for appropriate working relationships and the resolution of conflict in a safe and respectful manner. Where conflict is not resolvable members should refer to the Grievance Policy or the Bullying and Harassment policy.

I understand and agree to abide by the Flourish Code of Conduct.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

## Flourish Participation Application Form

Application date:

First Name:

Last Name:

Gender:

Date of Birth (optional)

Phone:

Mobile:

Email:

Preferred method of contact:

I agree to Flourish disclosing my contact details to other members for the purposes of contacting me about relevant matters (circle).                      YES                      NO

Do you have any special needs that Flourish should be aware of?

What activities would you like to participate in?

- |   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Flourish Action Group (FLAG)   | YES | NO |
| Which group?                      WEST      NORTHWEST      NORTH      SOUTH |     |    |
| 2. Consumer Representation Service (CRS)                                    | YES | NO |
| 3. Volunteering for Flourish  | YES | NO |

By signing this application for membership, you have read and agree to abide by the Flourish Code of Conduct. This is a requirement for participation in Flourish activities.

Signature of applicant:

### OFFICE USE ONLY

Application processed (date)

Information on register (date)

Letter sent to applicant (date)