



Media release

Wednesday, 10th April 2024

Tasmanians encouraged to let their shorts talk for mental health

A huge pair of shorts will appear on the Hobart Waterfront as a conversation starter at the launch of SPEAK UP! Stay ChatTY Shorts Day for 2024.

Shorts Day itself will be held on Friday, 21 June 2024, with all Tasmanians encouraged to wear shorts on the shortest day of the year to encourage conversations about mental health.

The event mission is to challenge mental health stigmas, normalise conversations and to raise vital funds for SPEAK UP! Stay ChatTY's impactful work here in Tasmania.

Mitch McPherson, Stay ChatTY's founder said, "Just as wearing shorts might be uncomfortable when it's cold, starting a conversation about mental health can also be challenging – Shorts Day was created to empower Tasmanians to don a pair of shorts on the shortest day of the year as a visual reminder of the importance of starting the conversation ...even if it's a bit uncomfortable".

Each year a new theme is launched to resonate with different areas of the community and foster inclusivity. "We know mental health is a multi-faceted landscape, and we want the Shorts Day message to connect with everyone. Whether you're working through a challenge, supporting someone through a tough time or generally want to amplify the importance of positive mental health messaging in your community – Shorts Day is a vehicle to connect and spark important conversations" Mitch McPherson said.

The theme for this year's event is Let Your Shorts Talk! – "We know the power of the visual reminder it's OK to talk about mental health and prioritise it. Stay ChatTY's origins are some our bumper sticker you can see on cars right across the state, this is another way we are looking to let the visual of shorts create important change" Mitch McPherson said.

And to take that messaging even further a huge pair of shorts will be revealed on the Hobart waterfront to signify this call to action. The huge shorts will be making their way around the state in the lead up to Shorts Day, visiting townships, schools and iconic Tasmanian locations.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2020 – 2022, over 50 percent of Tasmanians reported having a mental illness in their lifetime, and more than 1 in 10 are living with a long-term mental health condition (2021 Australian Census).

Mental health challenges impact a significant portion of the Tasmanian community, and we hope Shorts Day will prompt conversations and check-ins not only on Shorts Day, but as a regular connection point.

RACT Chief Experience Officer Karla Wasinski said RACT was proud to support SPEAK UP! Stay ChatTY as a Shorts Day partner and paid tribute to its dedication to combating mental health stigma.

"We're honoured to partner with an organisation that promotes the importance of discussing mental health issues, seeking help and fostering mutual support," Ms Wasinski said.

“As the state’s largest member organisation, we’re committed to improving the lives of Tasmanians, and through our work with SPEAK UP! Stay ChatTY, we’ve enabled both our members and staff to access tips on improving mental health and encouraging everyone to check-in with those around them.”

Tasmanians are encouraged to sign-up, fundraise and wear shorts (or Shorts Day merchandise) to work, school or other activities – or find their own unique way to “let their shorts talk” and spark mental health conversations.

Mr McPherson said every dollar raised would help SPEAK UP! Stay ChatTY continue its work in promoting positive mental health and preventing suicide through its programs and initiatives. To register for the event, donate, or purchase Shorts Day merchandise, visit the SPEAK UP! Stay ChatTY Shorts Day website.

ENDS

Additional information:

- For northern media opportunities the Stay ChatTY team can make themselves available for in person on either Monday 8 April between 12.30pm – 4pm, Wednesday 10 April 4pm – 5pm or Thursday 11 April 10am – 12pm.

Media enquiries: Laura Verdouw, Timmins Ray Public Relations, 0430 553 318.