



Ph 1800 991 997

Dear Doctors

This is the first local newsletter regarding the branch of the Doctors Health Services working for Tasmanian Doctors.

Last year you attended at least one of the meetings where Dr Tim Dewhurst spoke about services for Doctors Health care that were available or proposed and why they were needed. Tim is the Medical Director of the Victorian Doctors Health Program (VDHP) and the Tasmanian service is operated and governed by the Victorian Service.

VDHP is supported to do this work by some funds from the Drs4DRs (Doctors Health services) which is a subsidiary company of the AMA. Drs4Drs was created to establish a national health program for doctors and students, it is funded by the Medical Board of Australia. VDHP also gets some funding for its Victorian work from the Victorian Department of Health. VDHP (including Tasmania) <http://www.vdhp.org.au/website/home.html>

The governance arrangement of the Drs4Drs allows clear separation of the Doctors Health programs from the Medical Board and AHPRA, which of course addresses some concerns Doctors hold about reporting issues.

### **What has happened since then?**

- Tim has kept in touch with local peak organisations and influencers including UTAS, RACGP, ACRRM the AMA, the THS and of course our Doctors who were previously supplying this service under old arrangements.
- Tasmanian specific fliers, posters and pamphlets have been produced and promulgated.
- Dr Lev Fridgant has stepped down from the role as Tasmanian Nominee on the Expert Advisory Committee to the Drs4Drs Board and now Dr Liz Webber has taken on that role which integrates nicely with her other work.
- The Expert Advisory Committee meets quarterly and discusses issues such as:
  - The clinical governance in Drs Health Services, the need for the services and the expertise that is needed.
  - Issues related to impaired Doctors and return to work, mandatory reporting, and Doctors privacy.
  - Monitoring the development of training modules for Doctors who are interested in caring for their colleagues, so that they feel well equipped for the peculiarities of this situation. (Modules will be released soon)
  - The development of a data base of Doctors interested in being involved in this work and discussion of whether this should be publicly available or not.
  - Liaison with other services working in this field e.g. Beyond Blue. GP Support program,

- There is a conference in Perth in November Creating a Healthy Workplace. This looks very interesting. <https://ruralhealthwest.eventsair.com/2019-adhc>
- VDHP is monitoring of numbers of calls from Tasmania to the VDHP and what types of calls. Unlike some of the other states where the service is heavily used the Tasmanian/Victorian service is not heavily used. We are not yet sure if this is because the culture in Tasmanian Doctors and students is that of having your own GP (as taught in medical school and post graduate training) and so the need for a separate service is minimal; or whether people self-care; or suffer and don't get care; or all the above.
- The Drs4drs website is being upgraded and will include a specific page for Tasmania and the training modules will be housed there. Drs4Drs website <https://www.drs4drs.com.au/>
- Tim comes to Tasmania every few months and is keen to meet and get feedback. We are considering a relaxed catch up to gain further feedback from you in a few weeks. More details later.
- Mean time Liz or Tim can be a local contact for feedback about the service or needs.
- There is a lot of good work being done by others related to Drs Health . Liz is offering to provide a newsletter and act as point where information can be collated. Please Let her know if you are interested in being in the loop.
- Our contact details are

Dr Tim Dewhurst. 1800 991 997 and

Dr Liz Webber 0418528192  
email [liz.webber@ths.tas.gov.au](mailto:liz.webber@ths.tas.gov.au).



Kind regards

Tim and Liz

TDHP

TASMANIAN DOCTORS  
HEALTH PROGRAM

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