



TASMANIAN ABORIGINAL
LEGAL SERVICE

BRIDGEWATER YOUTH HUB

21 December 2023

The Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service, Brighton Council and Australian Red Cross have signed an MOU to create A Youth Hub in Bridgewater.

Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service (TALS) CEO Jake Smith said Hub's objective will be to:

- Have a dedicated space for all 12-25 year-olds in the community.
- Ensure youth are supported away from the justice system by providing much needed wrap around supports in the community.

"The Hub will be for all the youth in the Bridgewater community, but there will also be a focus on Aboriginal youth," Mr Smith said.

"In Bridgewater, the Aboriginal population represents more than 20% of the community - compared to the Tasmanian population of 5%."

Each organisation have nominated particular areas within the MoU.

- Brighton Council - Purpose build a facility
- Tasmanian Aboriginal Legal Service - Support Aboriginal cultural representation for the community and youth diversion from the justice system
- Australian Red Cross – Consult and engage with community

"With a high population of Aboriginal Tasmanian's residing in the Brighton municipality, this youth hub presents an opportunity to create a site not only for all youth, but also for Aboriginal youth," Mr Smith said.

"This is a justice reinvestment initiative. Invest in youth before contact with the justice system and stop them from getting there in the first place. If money is invested here,

to prevent and divert youth away from the justice system, our youth will be less likely to end up in detention or prison.

“Aboriginal youth continue to be overrepresented in the youth justice system and this is the same in the adult justice system, initiatives like this to support youth before contact in the first place is key for the Aboriginal community.”

Brighton Mayor Leigh Gray said this will be a significant and ground-breaking social infrastructure investment in our area to address current and future social needs of young people in our region.

“Council will look at major infrastructure grant opportunities to make this happen and will now commence in earnest identifying a suitable location in the Bridgewater area,” Mayor Gray said.

“This project is about local government collaborating with and investing at a local level to make a significant difference to the health and well-being outcomes and day to day lives of youth in our area.

“This will truly be a place-based solution rather than a ‘cookie cutter’ approach brought in by others. The youth hub will become the canvas where young people create what they need with the support and assistance of relevant services.

“Our vision is that the Hub is to be co-created, planned, services prioritised, and the spaces designed and managed by a steering committee with a representative from all of the main stakeholders including most importantly young members of our community.”

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