



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – MONDAY 15 MAY 2017

TASMANIA’S PREMIER SUPPORTS THE WORK OF SPEAK UP! Stay ChatTy

Tasmanian Premier, the Hon Will Hodgman MP, announced his commitment to fund **SPEAK UP! Stay ChatTy**. Founded by Mitch McPherson, **SPEAK UP! Stay ChatTy**, in partnership with **Relationships Australia Tasmania (RA Tas)**, delivers school programs around the state to raise awareness about mental health, reduce stigma and educate the community that **It’s ok to not be ok**.

Relying heavily on donations previously, Mitch says, **“This funding provides greater opportunity for SPEAK UP! Stay ChatTy and RA Tas to continue breaking down the stigma that is attached to mental health. No child should feel they can’t come forward and speak about feeling down mentally. This funding gives us greater reach to carry this important message to students all across the state”**.

“It has been three years of hard work with this charity to get it where it is today, so it is a great reward that we are thrilled to be announcing today,” Mitch adds.

- For 12 months, **SPEAK UP! Stay ChatTy** will be funded **\$250,000**.
- Mitch McPherson started the charity **SPEAK UP! Stay ChatTy** following the loss of his brother Ty to suicide in 2013.
- Since then, Mitch has **delivered more than 500 presentations**. He is now a leading advocate for mental health awareness in Tasmania.
- The key message of the charity is, **It’s ok to not be ok**. This message encourages people to understand that no matter what people might seem like on the outside, sometimes they are fighting a daily battle on the inside.
- Mitch was recognised for his work with **SPEAK UP! Stay ChatTy** by taking out the **2017 Tasmanian Young Australian of the Year Award**.

“We are grateful for the show of support made by the Premier today,” said RA Tas CEO, Mat Rowell. **This announcement means that SPEAK UP! Stay ChatTy and RA Tas can continue its important work throughout schools and the community to keep the conversation about mental health going.**

“We are also thankful for the strong partnership between RA Tas AND SPEAK UP! Stay ChatTy, and Founder Mitch McPherson’s belief in us to carry this work forward,” continues Mat.

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