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## **COTA Tasmania welcomes Government's commitment to mental health for older people**

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COTA Tasmania has welcomed the Tasmanian Government's continued focus on improving older persons' mental health services, but it is cautiously awaiting further details on the plans for the newly purchased Rosary Gardens site.

Brigid Wilkinson, COTA Tasmania CEO, said COTA welcomed a pathway to replace the ageing Roy Fagan Centre which was found by a 2021 independent review to be 'out of date and inadequate for some of the people who are admitted to the facility'.

As a result of these findings, the Government committed under the Older Persons Mental Health Reform project, to deliver 'a new, purpose-built, 40-bed Older Persons Mental Health Facility at the St Johns Park Health and Wellbeing Precinct'.

"We are now cautiously awaiting further details on the plans for the Rosary Gardens' site, given an apparent policy shift signaled by this week's announcement of the purchase of Rosary Gardens."

COTA also remains concerned for the immediate impact on older Tasmanians and their families.

The closure of Rosary Gardens means up to 80 residents need to find a new home. The sale also effectively removes 94 residential aged care beds from the Hobart market, at a time when vacancies are already hard to secure.

"That loss will be felt across the whole system - by older people, carers, hospitals, and community services," Ms Wilkinson said.

"COTA Tasmania is ready to work constructively with the Government and clinicians to achieve the best outcomes for older Tasmanian and welcomes further briefings around the change in plans for the site including a revised masterplan."

"Older Tasmanians deserve confidence that this decision improves outcomes for the mental health and wellbeing of those receiving care and that the new approach at St John's Park can deliver this," Ms Wilkinson said.

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