

Numerous academic studies indicate that life success, health and emotional wellbeing all have their roots in early childhood.

Yet despite this growing awareness, the number of young people with behavioural problems in the UK has doubled over the last 30 years and emotional problems have increased by 70 per cent.*

Similar Australian data are hard to find. However, there are indications that the incredible speed of technological progress over the past 25 years clashes with our biological inheritance. Recorded increases in learning difficulties suggest the next generation may experience challenges in coping with the pace of modern living, which may lead to increased mental health concerns.

* Published on The TES, UK's leading website for teachers and education professionals.

The Forum will commence at 9.00am on 19 October 2011, with lunch at 12.30pm, and will conclude at 4.30pm.

Location

**Punchbowl Convention Centre
Punchbowl Road, Launceston**

There is no cost to attend the forum.

Richmond Fellowship Tasmania (RFT), as one of Tasmania's leading providers of mental health support services, is convening the forum.

To register your attendance, please contact:

RFT State Office

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**DISCUSSION
FORUM
19 October 2011
The importance
of mental health
to our children**



Resulting from The Richmond Fellowship Asia Pacific International Mental Health Conference (AsPac 2010)



You are invited to attend a forum discussion to encourage dialogue into issues identified at AsPac 2010* regarding necessary changes in today's educational and mental health environments.

The plenary session at AsPac 2010 identified a growing concern that children may not be sufficiently supported through modern education structures to process the acceleration of technology and its infiltration into contemporary culture.

Forum objectives are to facilitate discussion into:

- linkages between education and mental health
- impacts of modern culture on children's abilities to think and behave
- articulation of key issues for immediate focus
- development of proposals for change.

Dr Frank Madill, Tasmanian doctor, retired politician, community worker and author, will facilitate the forum, which will feature lead speakers Nathan Thompson and Athena Vass.

* Richmond Fellowship Asia Pacific International Mental Health Conference, Hobart, November 2010.

Lead speakers

Nathan Thompson



Nathan was an AFL leading goal kicker from 2003 to 2006. In 2004, he admitted to the media that he was suffering from depression. Since then, as an Ambassador for *beyondblue: the national depression initiative*, he

has had an integral role in raising community awareness about the prevalence of the disease. Nathan is also a V/Line Ambassador for Life Training, which involves travelling around Victorian country areas providing life training and raising awareness for issues such as depression, binge drinking and the dangers of illicit drugs to young country footballers and parents. Nathan is married with a young family.

Athena Vass



Athena Vass is the Program Manager Secondary Schools at *beyondblue: the national depression initiative*.

A former Middle School Vice Principal, she works with teachers and adolescent children to build awareness around mental health, and seeks to empower both teachers and children through greater understanding of mental health.

Session 1: Early Childhood learning

Discussion to be led by Dr Nicola Beamish, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, and Lynn Wylie-Watson, Northern Coordinator Early Learning Programs.

Nicola Beamish has an interest in early intervention and community-based support for children, young people and families. She also works with mothers and babies in private practice and in the State Mental Health Service. Lynn Wylie-Watson is dedicated to making opportunities for children and parents to know more about the process of child development and their needs.

Session 2: The present gaps in school

Discussion to be led by Dr Karen Swabey, Teacher and Training Support Coordinator at the University of Tasmania; Tony Gray, Tasmanian State Project Officer MindMatters; and Helen Barratt, Tasmanian Primary Coordinator KidsMatters.

Session 3: Mental health diversion program in the Magistrate's Court

Discussion to be led by Tasmanian Magistrate Reg Marron; Professor Brian McEvoy, Medical Specialist in Drug and Alcohol Services; and Katrina Brooks, Court Psychiatric Liaison Officer.