

Looking forward to another year.

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**Hello Friend,**

Edition 12, 2019

Welcome to our first Brainwaves for 2019.

As I write, Tasmania is in the grip of a heatwave and many ferocious bushfires. Please keep yourself safe and remember to look after each other. If you know of someone with epilepsy, check in with them – dehydration and stress can both trigger seizures. A friendly chat can make such a difference to our health and wellbeing, whether we have epilepsy or not.

Our team are all back at work now and starting to plan for what we hope will be a tremendous 2019. We are excited to already be receiving many requests from the Tasmanian epilepsy community for information, training, resources and other requests.

The Epilepsy Smart Schools programme is being officially launched by our Minister for Education on 6th of March at a school in the north of Tassie. We are also excited that our planning for the launch of a new Epilepsy Tasmania ambassador is almost ready to go – she will be doing some amazing things during this year both here and further abroad. Look out for details beginning mid-February!

We have an update on neurologists at the Launceston General Hospital:

- Dr Matt Lee-Archer started work on 21 January.
- Dr Lauren Giles starts part-time during the second week of February.
- Dr De Souza is credentialing in Hobart and not back in Launceston until June.

We want to give you the information you need so we genuinely appreciate all your feedback and suggestions. Please make contact with us and let us know your suggestions for how we can better support the Tasmanian epilepsy community.

Enjoy this Brainwaves.



**Wendy Groot, CEO Epilepsy Tasmania.**



## **One In 200 Students Have Epilepsy**

### **Epilepsy can have a significant impact on a child's experience at school.**

Obstacles commonly faced by children with epilepsy at school include:

- Embarrassment due to seizures, seizure behaviours or accidents.
- Anxiety, depression and moodiness, including anger and frustration from seizures or medication.
- Not being able to participate in activities, such as sports and camps.
- Missed classes and school days.

Epilepsy can also impact cognition and learning:

- Cognitive overload can cause seizures.
- Seizures can make it difficult to concentrate and remember new information.
- Memory difficulties can also be a side effect of medication.

The **Epilepsy Smart Schools** program has been created to ensure all children and young people living with epilepsy can enjoy a positive schooling experience and achieve their academic potential.

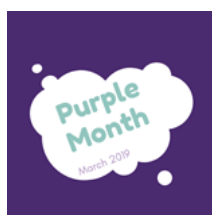
**Benefits to schools in becoming Epilepsy Smart include:**

- A safe and inclusive environment for students living with epilepsy.
- Students are better able to reach their academic and vocational potential.
- Staff have a better understanding of government policy requirements and the expectations of teachers in supporting a student with epilepsy.
- Teacher standards are adhered to in relation to supporting all students in a safe and inclusive manner, and maintaining collaborative relationships with parents.
- Teachers have the opportunity to participate in continuing professional development.
- School have the opportunity for publicity and to play an important part in raising awareness of epilepsy within Tasmania.

A particular strength of this program is its unique combination of training tailored to the individual as well as the whole-of-school approach. Very few other health programs are based on a program with this multi-systems approach and in this way, the program not only seeks to benefit individual children, but also impact their families, and ultimately the community.

**Now is the time of year to ask your school to become Epilepsy Smart.**

**Phone Epilepsy Tasmania on 6344 6881 or visit its [website](#) to find out how your school can become an Epilepsy Smart School this year.**



**March – Your Time To Shine**

Would you like to be involved in **Epilepsy Awareness Month** (Purple Month) this March?

Start planning your awareness-raising or fundraising activity now. Think about your school, workplace, sports group, community activity or something you can do with your family and friends.

**We'll provide you with merchandise, information, brochures and suggestions** for activities. Hop onto to our website [here](#) to register your activity. Or give us a call on 6344 6881 to talk about what you might like to do and how we can support you.



### **Join us on a garden tour of historic Government House**

This is a very special opportunity to enjoy a guided garden tour and delicious morning tea at Tasmania's Government House in Hobart on Wednesday 6th March.

This event is an important fundraiser for us as ALL proceeds are kindly donated to Epilepsy Tasmania for the benefit of Tasmanians affected by epilepsy.

The gardens of Government House are extensive and feature many historical plants as well as a beautiful and highly productive food garden. And the morning tea is a treat not to be missed!

Please help us promote this event with your colleagues and friends. And don't forget to book your own ticket – or get a group together for a discounted price.

We look forward to you joining us! Book through [www.TryBooking.com/ZUFO](http://www.TryBooking.com/ZUFO)

**Volunteers Needed**

Volunteers are at the heart of our organisation and we are always looking for more.

If you can spare some time (even just a few hours) then we are particularly looking for volunteers who can help us throughout March. Purple Month is our largest epilepsy awareness raising and fundraising event with many activities and events that require volunteer help.

Please [email](#) or phone our volunteer coordinator Sheralyn Jackson on 0419 596 489 for more information.

*"To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow."*

Audrey Hepburn



Epilepsy Tasmania is a not-for-profit community organisation improving the quality of life of Tasmanians with epilepsy, and those around them, through education, coordination and support.

It relies upon public donations and funding from the Department of Health and Human Services, Tasmania.

Epilepsy Tasmania

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Website: [www.epilepsytasmania.org.au](http://www.epilepsytasmania.org.au)

Friends of Epilepsy Tasmania enhance its ability to speak for and advocate on behalf of Tasmanians affected by epilepsy.

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