

THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION'S PEER WORKFORCE PROJECT
COMMUNIQUE – STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING – 9 February 2022

The Mental Health Commission's (MHC) Peer Workforce Project (Project) aims to guide the development of a thriving state-wide consumer, family and carer Lived Experience (Peer) Workforce across the mental health (including suicide prevention) and alcohol and other drug sectors. This Project supports strategic directions outlined in the WA State Priorities Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs 2020 – 2024 and the Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Workforce Strategic Framework 2020-2025.

To manage the development and delivery of the Project, a Steering Committee comprising of members representing portfolios across the sectors has been established. The Steering Committee provides the strategic oversight and guidance to the Project. The Steering Committee co-chaired by the Assistant Director System Engagement (MHC) and Margaret Doherty, representing the Family Carer/Community portfolio, met for the first time on 22 July 2021 and has been meeting regularly since then. This communique has been developed to provide all stakeholders with information and outcomes from the 9 February 2022 meeting which was co-chaired by (newly appointed) Cynthia Leal Assistant Director System Engagement, (MHC) and Margaret Doherty.

A discussion group held on 19 January 2022 was attended by 13 stakeholders. The aim of the discussion was to ensure the WA Lived Experience (Peer) Framework will be congruent with the National Lived Experience (Peer) Workforce Development Guidelines (released on 1 December 2020). The discussion group identified what would be relevant for a WA Framework, any gaps and what could be strengthened from a WA mental health and alcohol and other drug context. The rich discussion content will inform the WA Framework.

The Lived Experience Working Group with 11 participants will meet on the 16 February to discuss the core Framework and supplementary resources informed by the data generated during the co-design process.

Some initial mapping of the current peer workforce in Western Australia has been undertaken as part of the Project. However, inconsistencies throughout and between the mental health and alcohol and other drug sectors regarding a common definition of a peer worker has been a major barrier to gathering accurate information. The Steering Committee recommends a more comprehensive research project to map, define and establish a benchmark to inform future development.

The WA Lived Experience (Peer) Framework is expected to be released by June 2022 and will include several supplementary resources.

The next Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for late February 2022. More information about the Project including Terms of Reference documents can be found on the MHC Project page [here](#).

Please feel free to distribute the Communique to your wider networks.

For further information or if you have any queries, please contact Louise Howe 08 6553 0600 or email engagement@mhc.wa.gov.au.