

THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION'S LIVED EXPERIENCE PEER WORKFORCE PROJECT  
COMMUNIQUE – STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING # 15 – 14 February 2023

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The Mental Health Commission's (the Commission) Lived Experience 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 includes the development of the [Western Australian Lived Experience \(Peer\) Workforces Framework](#) (Framework). 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 was established in 2021. The Steering Committee provides the strategic oversight and guidance to the Project. The Steering Committee, co-chaired by Margaret Doherty, representing the Family Carer/Community mental health portfolio and David McMaster, Director System Development, last met on 14 February 2023. This communique has been developed to provide all stakeholders with information and outcomes from that meeting.

The aim of the February meeting was to update the Steering Committee on the Project. This included discussions around the development of a scoping document for the proposed Framework supporting resource (Peer Worker Handbook), progression of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Lived Experience Worker Guide (Guide), Organisational Toolkit and website and proposed changes to the Terms of Reference (ToR) and membership as the Project progresses to the implementation phase.

The Steering Committee re-iterated the importance of the establishment of a Lived Experience Leadership (LEL) group to support the Lived Experience (Peer) Workforces development. Individual members were encouraged to advocate for the LEL within their capacity across the sectors (mental health, suicide Prevention and alcohol and other drugs).

### **Framework Supporting Resources**

#### Organisational Toolkit and Website

The Organisation Toolkit and website are in the final stages of review and design and expected for release in mid March 2023. This resource will provide practical tools, tips and guidance to the sectors.

#### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Lived Experience Worker Guide

Aunty Vicki McKenna and Nathan Meteoro, of the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Lived Experience Centre](#) (ILEC), have been engaged by the Commission for the development of the Guide. The team visited the Commission in early February where they were able to yarn with the Commission's Elders in Residence, Aboriginal Advisory Group, Lived Experience leaders and other key stakeholders such as Wungening and AHCWA about the development of the Guide. It was advised that the ILEC will put together a working group to progress the work. The group will include both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as well as some interstate members with national connections and representation of the LGBTQIA+SB community. At least 50 percent of members will be from WA. Additionally, the ILEC will undertake online co-learning sessions to inform and involve the wider identified stakeholders of the work being undertaken and allow feedback as the Guide is developed.

#### Peer Worker Handbook

Members discussed the aim of the Handbook, suggesting it is focused on supporting the Lived Experience (Peer) workers themselves. The Handbook will outline how designated roles may look in

different settings, services and locations including nuances across different roles such as frontline support, advocacy, committees, leadership roles. It was recommended that the Handbook is also added as a section on the website but also enable a PDF version to remain a simple guide and use the website component to address wider complexities.

### **Proposed changes to Terms of Reference**

Acknowledging the Project is moving towards the implementation phase, the Steering Committee began the review of the ToR, including the Member list. Given the working being undertaken across the sector in the infant, child and adolescent (ICA) space, it was agreed that Membership should include Lived Experience representation from an ICA perspective. Additionally, increased membership from community organisations that work in a clinical setting was highlighted as important as well as consideration of a designated Human Resource representative, connection to the Alternatives to Suicide Approach and increased representation from the alcohol and other drug sector. Other proposed changes included expanding the scope to support the implementation of the Framework. It is expected that the ToR will be presented to the Steering Committee for endorsement at the next meeting.

The next Steering Committee meeting is planned for late March 2023.

More information about the Project, including Terms of Reference documents, can be found on the Commission's Project page [here](#).

Please feel free to distribute this Communique to your wider networks. For further information or if you have any queries, please contact the Lived Experience (Peer) Workforces Development team on 08 6553 0299 or email [LivedExperienceWorkforces@mhc.wa.gov.au](mailto:LivedExperienceWorkforces@mhc.wa.gov.au).