

The Mental Health Commission's (Commission) Lived Experience (Peer) Workforces Project (Project) aims to guide the development of thriving state-wide consumer, family and significant other Lived Experience (Peer) Workforces across the mental health, suicide prevention and alcohol and other drug sectors. This includes the development and implementation of the [Western Australian Lived Experience \(Peer\) Workforces 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 and perspectives across the sectors was established in 2021, with membership reviewed and refreshed prior to the 19 September 2023 meeting to ensure that relevant stakeholders for the next stages of the Project are represented. The Steering Committee provides the strategic oversight and guidance to the Project. The Steering Committee, co-chaired by Margaret Doherty, representing the Family Significant Other/Community mental health, alcohol and other drug and forensic portfolios and Sharnae Zanotti, A/Director System Governance and Stakeholder Engagement, met on 19 September 2023. This communique is to provide all stakeholders with information and outcomes from the meeting.

The aim of the September meeting was to bring together the new Steering Committee; update the Steering Committee on the individual aspects of the Project and to endorse the final version of the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the re-focused Steering Committee; endorsement was received in this session and the new ToR has been published on the Commission's [website](#).

Members were provided with an update on the Lived Experience (Peer) Coordinator roles being implemented across the State via Health Service Providers and proposed some suggestions to improve recruitment practices for this activity. Additionally, outcomes from the Lived Experience (Peer) Coordinator training workshop were presented to the Steering Committee where it was noted that the outcomes will inform work going forward.

The draft 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Lived Experience-led Peer Workforce Guide: A Learning Tool for All Peer Workers and Organisations' (the Guide) has been shared with the Commission for review. The process started with a two-day yarning session with key stakeholders and the project team including the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Lived Experience Centre \(ILEC\)](#) of the Black Dog Institute. The Commission and ILEC teams will be promoting the Guide and the authentic partnership approach taken through the development stage at a presentation at the Rural and Remote Mental Health Conference in November 2023. The Steering Committee received a presentation on the Guide, highly commending this piece of work and acknowledged the partnership which has been developed between the ILEC and the Commission.

Members were informed that eight more Peer Work Positive training sessions have been planned, with a mix of full length and shorter executive sessions on offer. These will be open to the wider mental health, alcohol and other drug and suicide prevention sectors in due course, with dates and times published in the Commission's [Stakeholder Connect](#) newsletter.

Members were informed that 30 Certificate IV in Mental Health Peer Work scholarships intended for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are on offer. The Commission, partnering with Aboriginal Registered Training Organisation Marr Mooditj and Consumers of Mental Health WA, will deliver these federally funded scholarships in the 2024 calendar year. This is in addition to 20 scholarships the Commission are set to deliver through North Metropolitan TAFE and Consumers of Mental Health WA in the 2024 calendar year. This will greatly boost the number of qualified Lived Experience (Peer) workers available for designated roles arising across services and sectors.

More information about the Project can be found on the [Commission's website](#). For further information or if you have any queries, please email the Mental Health Commission:

LivedExperienceWorkforces@mhc.wa.gov.au