

Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs Lived Experience Advisory Group Communiqué

28 May 2026

The Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG) supports the Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs Joint Leadership Group (JLG) by providing advice grounded in lived experience and human rights, reflecting the voices of consumers, family, significant others and community with a lived experience of mental health, and/or alcohol and other drug issues, harms and service use across the service systems.

This Communiqué provides a summary of the key items tabled at the LEAG meeting for the specific purpose of providing advice to the JLG.

National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement

Members were invited to provide advice regarding the development process underway for the next National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement (Agreement).

The LEAG proposed the following points be considered as part of the development process:

- Funding should be aligned to the objectives and intended outcomes of the Agreement. The Agreement should strengthen recognition of culturally and linguistically diverse communities and ensure priority populations are clearly defined, including explicit recognition of trans and gender diverse people.
- The Ways of Working Plan should strengthen its focus on embedding lived experience within governance structures, with strong support for lived experience representation being meaningfully integrated at all levels.
- Provision of psychosocial supports should be prioritised, particularly in the context of increased demand and changes to the National Disability Insurance Scheme.
- Regional and place-based service delivery and supports should be prioritised, acknowledging that telehealth should not be assumed to meet all needs, particularly in rural and remote communities.
- A focus on strengthening transitions across the service system is required to improve continuity of care, including between primary and secondary care and across life stages, including alignment of Commonwealth and State funding and commissioning arrangements to improve system navigation.
- Strong accountability is required to ensure services are delivering outcomes and responding to community need.
- Strengthening and retaining the peer workforce and increasing support for peer-led initiatives and leadership should be a priority within the Agreement.
- The importance of continued support for effective programs through service agreements rather than grants should be acknowledged, and a focus on transparent decommissioning to ensure access continuity for people when services are no longer funded.
- People and workforces should be supported with the skills and resources required to maintain wellbeing and recovery.
- Intersectionality should be a consideration, including for people in justice settings, and ensuring advocacy needs are addressed.
- Approaches should embed co-design and co-production through planning, delivery and implementation and should be adequately resourced.

Lived Experience Inclusion Plan Update

Members received an update on development of Lived Experience Inclusion Plans (LEIPs) across agencies, including governance arrangements, implementation timeframes and system-wide coordination.

A summary of key topics discussed by members, which informs advice to the JLG, included:

- The importance of transparency and shared learning across agencies, including opportunities to share LEIP approaches.

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- Strong governance and oversight arrangements are required to drive genuine lived experience integration and include appropriate lived experience expertise to assess the impact of LEIPs.
- Organisational readiness is a foundational component of LEIPs, and is critical to successful implementation, including recruitment, retention, workforce capability, policy development and training.
- Consistency of expectations across agencies should be balanced with the flexibility to adapt to differing organisational contexts, needs and readiness.
- Existing national guidelines should be applied to support consistent and evidence-based approaches.
- Independent evaluation should be undertaken to assess progress and transformational impact over time.
- Ongoing engagement of lived experience expertise is required to establish a shared understanding to support implementation and long-term culture change.
- Transparency through the publication of LEIPs is important, while recognising agencies may be at different stages of development and implementation.
- Continued collaboration, shared learning and coordinated support across agencies is required as implementation progresses.
- LEIPs represent an early stage of broader system transformation and must continue to evolve over time.

LEAG Performance Review

Members considered the findings of the LEAG Performance Review survey report and provided feedback. Members discussed the importance of out-of-session engagement, feedback loops and timely distribution of meeting materials, along with ensuring that there is diverse representation reflected in membership. The Commission reinforced its appreciation for the advice provided by the LEAG to the JLG.

The next LEAG meeting is scheduled for 27 August 2026