

THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION'S PEER WORKFORCE PROJECT
COMMUNIQUE – STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING – 24 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 Cynthia Leal, Assistant Director, Governance and Stakeholder Engagement, (MHC) and Margaret Doherty, representing the Family Carer/Community mental health portfolio, last met on 24 February 2022. This communique has been developed to provide all stakeholders with information and outcomes from the 24 February 2022 meeting.

Steering Committee members were informed that the Lived Experience Working Group (LEWG) met on 16 February 2022 with 9 participants. The aim of the meeting was to discuss the core content of the WA Lived Experience (Peer) Framework and supplementary resources required, highlighting the Western Australian voice. The LEWG will focus on supporting the creation of a Toolkit for organisations and a handbook for Peer workers to support the implementation of the Core Framework.

Peer Workforce mapping was identified as a key deliverable of the project in order to ensure adequate funding is allocated to the project. Whilst work is underway in this space, it is likely that a recommendation of the Framework will be for further work to be undertaken. A common definition of a peer worker continues to be a major barrier to gathering accurate information.

The Principles of Peer work will be part of the core Framework and identified as the foundation of the Lived Experience (Peer) workforce. Further consultation will take place with stakeholders to ensure all voices are captured (including Regional and Remote and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples). Further focus on alcohol and other drugs and the history of Peer work will also be addressed in the work to come. The Steering Committee continues to investigate Recognition of Prior Learning and other intensive upskilling options for Peer workers currently employed in the industry, to help ensure there is a workforce readily available.

The Steering Committee will be asked to endorse the final draft Framework prior to its submission to the Mental Health Lead Sub-Committee which will provide a clinical perspective. The final draft will then be submitted to the Mental Health Executive Committee and the Community Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Council for endorsement.

The next Steering Committee meeting is scheduled in March 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.