
MENTAL HEALTH AUSTRALIA

ANNUAL REPORT
2022-2023





Mental Health Australia acknowledges Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders past and present.

Mental Health Australia is committed to reconciliation through our work and our Reconciliation Action Plan.

Mental Health Australia

2022-2023

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About Mental Health Australia

Mental Health Australia is the national peak advocacy body representing the Australian mental health sector. Established in 1997 as the first independent peak, Mental Health Australia members include organisations representing consumers, carers, diverse needs groups, clinical service providers, professional bodies, public and private mental health service providers, researchers, and state and territory community mental health peak bodies.

Mental Health Australia promotes mentally healthy communities by educating Australians on mental health issues, and influences mental health reform so that government policies address contemporary mental health issues. Mental Health Australia also conducts research on mental health issues, and carries out regular consultations to represent the best interests of our members, partners and the community. These endeavours in education and policy reform are matched by our commitment to innovative approaches in the provision of mental health care.

Mental Health Australia focusses on the human rights of people with mental ill-health, and their family and carers.

Mentally healthy people,
mentally healthy communities.

From the Chair Matthew Berriman

We are at a critical juncture in our nation's history, where we must confront the glaring inadequacies in our mental health care system. There is no way to sugarcoat it: we have a long way to go to provide the mental health care that people in Australia deserve. This is a silent pandemic, one that must be at the forefront of our national priorities.

My profound thanks go to Dr. Leanne Beagley for her exceptional leadership as CEO of Mental Health Australia during this time. Her unwavering commitment and forward-thinking approach have reshaped the organisation, leaving a legacy that will serve as a continued source of inspiration as she embarked on a new role at the end of 2022.

Our new CEO, Carolyn Nikoloski, takes on the challenge of leading us through these turbulent waters. Joining Mental Health Australia in April 2023, Carolyn brings a wealth of experience in mental health policy develop-



ment, reform, strategy, and service delivery. Her track record in navigating transformations and change is impeccable.

Unfortunately, when it comes to the numbers, change isn't happening quickly enough and we cannot ignore the painful reality that nine people in Australia still take their own life every day. Despite the staggering number of individuals suffering silently, there is a prevailing culture of stigma surrounding mental health. Many people conceal their struggles out of shame or fear of exclusion. It is our responsibility to break down these barriers and encourage open discussions about mental health.

This past year I have engaged in numerous discussions with key ministers, particularly the Minister for Health and Aged Care, the Hon Mark Butler MP. These conversations have given me confidence that the Australian Government's commitment to a brighter future for mental health is genuine and imminent. The 2023 Federal Budget provided the groundwork to enhance primary care, and now it is crucial that we act on mental health reform, a commitment that I believe the government will uphold as a national priority.

Over the last 12 months, Mental Health Australia has adopted a more proactive and strategic approach to our mission of fostering a mentally healthier nation. We are taking a strong stance in leading the sector, and as a result the government has taken notice and begun working closely with us to garner credible information about how to implement practical solutions in mental health reform.

However, reform is not only the responsibility of the government; it is a collective duty of the entire mental health sector.

There is unfinished business in implementing the crucial recommendations from the 2020 Productivity Commission Inquiry, particularly addressing the glaring inequalities in access to mental health services. We will continue to push for increased adoption of early intervention and digital services, as well as funding for psychosocial services to fill identified gaps. Mental health should seamlessly integrate into broader primary care reforms, and we are committed to improving accountability and funding processes through the Primary Health Networks.

Since my appointment as Chair of the Mental Health Australia Board in December 2021, I have advocated for action and outcomes. I have appreciated the honest and direct conversations I have had with the Hon Mark

Butler MP, the Hon Emma McBride MP, and their teams, along with others across the parliament, which have left me confident that we are moving in a positive direction.

I would like to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts by everyone in this sector each day, and the Mental Health Australia team. As Chair, my role is about working with all stakeholders to make a tangible difference in the lives of people with lived experience of mental ill-health. I remain committed to doing whatever it takes.

We have the tools, the commitment, and the willpower to address the mental health crisis. It's time to come together as a sector to prioritise mental health and make a lasting impact on the lives of people in Australia.

With Carolyn at the helm and your continued support, I am confident we will achieve our vision of a mentally healthier Australia.



From the CEO Carolyn Nikoloski

There have been profound changes over the past year that have shaped Mental Health Australia and the broader sector. It has been a transformative journey, and I am honoured to have joined this esteemed organisation in April 2023 as the Chief Executive Officer, building upon a rich legacy.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to former CEO Dr. Leanne Beagley and her predecessors for their exceptional contributions to Mental Health Australia. Their work has laid the foundations for our ongoing efforts. I would also like to express my gratitude to Harry Lovelock, Mental Health Australia's Director of Policy and Research, who served as Acting CEO during the interim period before my appointment.

For over two decades Mental Health Australia has advocated for reform and equal access to mental health supports. Our vision for mentally healthy people and mentally healthy communities is stronger than ever.



We continue to play a pivotal role in shaping Australia's mental health landscape through collaboration with those with lived experience of mental ill-health, carers and family members, our dedicated membership and government stakeholders.

The challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in previous years, combined with relentless natural disasters and the on-going cost-of-living pressures, have contributed to an increase in reported mental ill-health in some population groups. This underscores the urgency of our work in mental health policy and advocacy.

Having devoted a significant portion of my career to mental health, I am delighted to be part of the Mental Health Australia team, working closely with the Mental Health Australia Board, led by Chair Matt Berriman, and continuing the extraordinary work of those who have come before me.

Throughout the 2022-23 financial year, our team has prepared 11 significant submissions to government, covering a wide range of mental health priorities. Our Policy and Research team has been strongly dedicated to advancing policies related to system reform and the social determinants of mental health, focussing on housing, psychosocial disability, the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide, and the NDIS Review.

Our 2022 Parliamentary Advocacy Day was a remarkable success. Over 60 delegate members attended 65 meetings with parliamentarians advocating for mental health reform. We had the privilege of hearing from esteemed leaders in the field including the Assistant Minister for Mental

Health and Suicide Prevention, the Hon Emma McBride MP; the Shadow Assistant Minister for Mental and Suicide Prevention, Mrs. Melissa McIntosh MP; and the Australian Greens Spokesperson on Health, Senator Jordan Steele-John; and representatives from the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care.

In preparation for the 2023 Federal Budget, our Policy and Research team crafted a Pre-Budget Submission outlining sector priorities emphasising the need for investment in lived experience leadership, government leadership and accountability, the development of a community-focussed mental health system, and bolstering the mental health workforce.

Subsequently, we hosted a Members Policy Forum during Budget Week, with 80 member representatives and key speakers, furthering the dialogue on mental health reform.

Our Embrace Multicultural Mental Health Project team has been hard at work collaborating with organisations such as the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia and the

National Ethnic Disability Alliance as part of the Embrace Alliance. We have undertaken a 12-month program to support Primary Health Networks in embedding our Framework into their commissioning practices. Additionally, the Embrace Suicide Prevention Pilot Project, in collaboration with R U OK? and Suicide Prevention Australia, is underway.

My vision for Mental Health Australia is to continue our collaborative work with people with lived experience, their family and carers, our members, and government stakeholders, on shaping mental health reform by putting the community at its centre. I am dedicated to fostering a robust and influential mental health sector that amplifies lived experience voices, promotes innovation, is respected for its broad impact, and most importantly, improves the mental health of people in Australia.

I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity to lead Mental Health Australia through these critical times. Together, we will continue to make strides in improving mental health reform.





Strategic plan 2021-2024

Our mission is to create the best mental health system in the world.

To deliver on our vision for mentally healthy people and mentally healthy communities, our work to June 2024 focusses on:

1

Promote a national voice for those with lived experience of mental illness and for those who love and care for them.

2

Highlight the social determinants for mental ill-health and advocate for lasting changes across the whole ecosystem.

3

Deliver value to our members and the wider mental health ecosystem.

Our work



Policy and Advocacy

Research

Projects

**Lived experience participation
and leadership**

Events

World Mental Health Day campaign

Policy submissions



Mental Health Australia develops policy submissions to influence national mental health reform, and promote mental health as a key priority across the range of government policy decisions. Mental Health Australia thanks the many member organisations, including representatives for people with lived experience and carers, service providers, researchers, professional bodies and state and territory community mental health peaks who contributed to these submissions, to raise a collective voice for the mental health sector and recommend ways forward for government.

National Disability Insurance Scheme Review

May 2023

Our submission responded to five questions from the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Review Co-Chair, Professor Bruce Bonyhady. It called for changes to improve the NDIS for people with psychosocial disability, including improving the access assessment approach, early intervention, availability of psychosocial services outside the NDIS and access to allied health services. Our submission also discussed the pricing of supports, the make-up of plans, responses to episodic needs and supported decision making.

Early Years Strategy Consultation

April 2023

Our submission focussed on the mental health and wellbeing of young children and parents within the Early Years Strategy. Mental Health Australia called for investment and accountability with the implementation of the Strategy, inclusion of measurement of young child and parental mental health and wellbeing outcomes, and lived experience engagement throughout development and implementation of the Strategy.

Australian Bureau of Statistics Consultation on 2026 Census Topics

April 2023

Our submission supported the call for inclusion of questions on sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and sexual orientation in the 2026 Census, to provide more reliable data on the LGBTQIA+ population. This data would support national and regional mental health service planning and delivery, to better meet the needs of the LGBTQIA+ population.



Parliamentary Joint Select Committee on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice Referendum

April 2023

Our submission supported the proposed alteration to the Australian Constitution to include an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice. Mental Health Australia believes that self-determination is crucial to address the significant disparity in mental health and well-being outcomes between First Nations peoples and other Australians. The First Nations Voice was an opportunity for structural reform to empower ongoing self-determination, and Mental Health Australia supported full implementation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

Australian Government Treasury Consultation on Measuring What Matters

January 2023

Our submission called for inclusion of mental health as a key measure of national progress and wellbeing in the new national wellbeing framework.

2023-2024 Pre-Budget Submission

December 2022

This pre-budget submission outlined priorities for Australian Government investment in lived experience leadership, mental health workforce, a community-focussed mental health system (including addressing social determinants of mental health) and Government leadership and accountability for the 2023-24 Federal Budget.

National Disability Insurance Scheme Review joint submission

December 2022

Mental Health Australia partnered with Community Mental Health Australia and the Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia to provide this joint submission to the NDIS Review. The submission outlined three priority issues and related solutions: the lack of a recovery-oriented approach for people with psychosocial disability, inadequate pricing undermining recovery-oriented support work and the lack of psychosocial support services outside the NDIS impacting on scheme sustainability.

Employment White Paper

November 2022

Our submission outlined key actions the Australian Government should take in partnership with the mental health sector, communities and businesses to improve employment opportunities for people with experience of mental ill-health and psychosocial disability, and address urgent mental health workforce shortages.

Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme Inquiry into National Disability Insurance Agency Capability and Culture

November 2022

This joint submission with Community Mental Health Australia and the Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia raised concerns about the lack of psychosocial disability specific skills, knowledge and experience amongst NDIA and partner staff, the lack of assertive outreach, inconsistent assessment outcomes, planning and pricing approaches that do not support recovery focussed service delivery, and the need to expand psychosocial services outside the NDIS. The joint submission called for expedited implementation of the NDIS Psychosocial Disability Recovery-Oriented Framework.

National School Chaplaincy Program

September 2022

This submission made a range of recommendations to improve accessibility of the National School Chaplaincy Program for all children in Australia through creating a more secular approach. It stated that wellbeing support provided through schools should be openly supportive of and safe for members of the LGBTQIA+ community, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and culturally and linguistically diverse community, and recommends implementing a national, comprehensive, secular school wellbeing program.

Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Declaration Draft Implementation Plan

July 2022

This submission commended Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Australia on the development of the Draft Implementation Plan, and highlighted the role of non-government community mental health organisations as key partners in delivering the draft actions. The submission also provides suggestions to further strengthen integration and accountability for delivery of the plan.



Member Policy Forums

The Mental Health Australia Member Policy Forums create an opportunity for the mental health sector to come together twice a year and identify priorities for change to create a better mental health system for all people in Australia.

At the Member Policy Forum on 25 November 2022 there was a focus on mental health reforms and workforce strategies. A facilitated discussion around the lived experience (peer) workforce took place with input from Hayley Solich – Lived Experience educator and advocate; Oskar Beggs-Steventon – Lived Experience Learning and Development Officer, NEAMI National; Rebecca Spies – Research and Evaluation Lead, NEAMI National; and Ashley de Silva, CEO ReachOut.

On 11 May 2023 CEO, Carolyn Nikoloski, hosted her first Member Policy Forum, with 60 members attending in person and 29 joining via Zoom.

As well as dissecting the Federal Budget, members discussed key policy priorities for the sector and emerging issues.

Speakers who shared their expertise included the Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, the Hon Emma McBride MP; the First Assistant Secretary, Mental Health Division, Bronwyn Field and Assistant Secretary, Mental Health Access Branch, Anthea Raven and Director, Mental Health Workforce Implementation Section, Caitlin O'Brien all from the Department of Health and Aged Care; National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum Co-Chairs, Kerry Hawkins and Shannon Calvert; and NDIS Subject Matter Expert, Dr Gerry Naughtin OAM and Deputy Head, NDIS Review Secretariat James MacIsaac.



2022 Parliamentary Advocacy Day

The 2022 Parliamentary Advocacy Day was held on 8 September 2022 at Parliament House in Canberra, with 60 Mental Health Australia member organisations coming together to meet with parliamentarians and advocate for mental health reform.

Attendees heard from the Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, the Hon Emma McBride MP, the Shadow Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, Mrs Melissa McIntosh MP, the Greens Health Spokesperson, Senator Jordan Steele-John and the Department of Health and Aged Care.

Forums, Webinars and Policy Hubs

Mental Health Australia actively engages in fostering dialogue through forums, webinars, and policy hubs, providing a platform for our member organisations to share experiences and perspectives to influence mental health reform. By leveraging these spaces, Mental Health Australia channels collective insights and empowers the sector to advocate for policy changes that prioritise the mental health of people in Australia.

In 2022-2023, Mental Health Australia hosted the following activities:

- A webinar in July 2022 for the mental health sector to meet and engage with Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, the Hon Emma McBride MP
- Two online Members Policy Hubs in September 2022 on employment and mental health
- Two Members Policy Hubs in March – April 2022 on the NDIS Review
- A webinar in March 2023 on the ALIVE National Centre for Mental Health Research Translation Consensus Statement
- A webinar in June 2023 on the NDIS Review
- A webinar in June 2023 on climate change and mental health

Research

During the 2022-2023 financial year, Mental Health Australia worked across three major research projects to address key gaps in mental health data:



Mental Health Australia 2022 Report to the Nation

Mental Health Australia released its inaugural Report to the Nation on World Mental Health Day, 10 October 2022. The Report to the Nation is an independent annual benchmark survey, undertaken in collaboration with Ipsos, to address a key gap in mental health data. This national survey provides regular insight into the mental health and wellbeing of Australians, and will track changes in use and access to services over time.

<https://mhaustralia.org/report/2022-report-nation>



Mapping Mental Health Care

Mental Health Australia worked with the National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling to create interactive online maps comparing rates of mental ill-health and use of mental health services across Australia. This research draws on existing data about use of Medicare-subsidised mental health services, and will be released in October 2023 to inform policy discussions around equitable access to mental health care.

<https://mhaustralia.org/mapping-mental-health-care>



The ALIVE National Centre for Mental Health Research Translation

Mental Health Australia continued to participate in the ALIVE National Centre for Mental Health Research Translation network in 2022-23. As a key highlight, Mental Health Australia facilitated a webinar for members on 20 March 2023 on the ALIVE Consensus Statement outlining priorities for implementation actions.

Embrace Multicultural Mental Health Project

Embrace Multicultural Mental Health (the Embrace Project) provides a national focus on mental health and suicide prevention for people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. The Embrace Project works towards an equitable mental health system which reflects and responds well to the needs of Australia's multicultural population.

Key objectives

1. Increase participation of consumers and carers from CALD backgrounds in mental health services.
2. Improve outcomes for CALD mental health consumers, carers and their families.
3. Increase mental health awareness, knowledge and capacity in CALD communities.
4. Improve cultural responsiveness and diversity of the mental health workforce.

Over the past year, the Embrace Project team has engaged with Alliance partners — the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) and the National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA), the Embrace Lived Experience Group, and the Stakeholder Group to ensure Project activities reflect and respond to the issues affecting the mental health of CALD communities.



Framework for Mental Health in Multicultural Australia

The Framework for Mental Health in Multicultural Australia (the Framework) is a free, nationally available online resource which enables organisations and individual practitioners to evaluate and enhance their cultural responsiveness.

The Framework currently has over 2,000 registered users, an increase of more than 400 registrations during the year.

The Framework is available at: <https://embracementalhealth.org.au>

Online resources

The Embrace Project website is an information hub providing Australian mental health services and multicultural communities access to resources, links to services, translated materials, best practice examples, and information in a culturally accessible format.

Receiving an average of 2,000 visits per month during the year, new resources and events are added to the website regularly. The quarterly Embrace e-newsletter is also sent to over 3,000 subscribers.

Primary Health Networks

From April 2022 - April 2023, the Embrace team engaged with 13 Primary Health Networks (PHNs) through a targeted support process to embed and implement the Framework for Mental Health in Multicultural Australia.

Support included regular meetings, training, facilitated learning workshops, online Community of Practice (CoP) meetings and targeted resources.

Through this process, the participating PHNs have established working groups, and developed and implemented action plans, making progress towards improving their cultural responsiveness.

The Embrace Project will continue to support PHNs and their commissioned services to provide culturally responsive mental health care and respond to the needs of CALD communities.

CALD Community Engagement Project

The Embrace Project launched the CALD Community Engagement Project (CCEP) in 2021. The CCEP strives to increase engagement and close partnerships with CALD communities and support for mental health.

The CALD Community Engagement Project is collaborating with selected CALD communities to identify mental health issues and needs, and co-design culturally responsive solutions and resources.

Over four years, twelve CALD communities will be engaged through commissioned community-based organisations using various tailored mechanisms and engagement strategies.

In 2022, the first round of three communities were selected: the Cantonese and Mandarin speaking community in Sydney, Rohingya community in Melbourne, and CALD youth in Darwin. The launch of the co-designed resources for these communities is expected in late 2023.

In 2023, the second round of three communities were selected: the Pasifika and Māori community in Queensland, Afghan community in Adelaide and African women in Western Australia. Launch of the final two rounds of communities is planned during FY23/24.

An independent evaluation of the CCEP will commence in early FY23/24 and run concurrently, concluding in mid-2025.





Suicide Prevention Pilot Project

In October 2022, the Hon Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health and Aged Care, approved the allocation of existing Embrace Project funding towards a heightened focus on multicultural suicide prevention.

The Embrace Suicide Prevention Pilot (ESPP) Project began in January 2023 running through December 2023.

A collaboration between Mental Health Australia, Suicide Prevention Australia (SPA), and R U OK?, the ESPP seeks to further inform best practice and increase sector and community capacity to prevent suicide in multicultural communities. Specifically, the ESPP is piloting:

1

Expanded use of the Embrace Framework for Multicultural Australia within suicide prevention through organisation wide implementation within R U OK?

2

An approach for effective CALD community engagement and resource co-design with three community groups - Arabic, Hindi and Vietnamese – led by R U OK?

The pilot aims to inform best practice guidance for CALD community engagement and Framework implementation in the context of suicide prevention. R U OK's series of community-led codesign workshops are producing culturally responsive R U OK? resources intended to empower meaningful conversation and connections to prevent suicide within the pilot communities. A multicultural suicide prevention community engagement guidance resource, summarising key pilot learnings and recommendations, will also be published at the pilot's conclusion.

Highlights

Suicide Prevention Pilot Project

1

R U OK?'s partnerships with bilingual CALD co-facilitators from Arabic, Hindi and Vietnamese-speaking communities.

2

A series of stakeholder forums exploring the unique factors impacting suicide prevention for CALD communities.

3

Pilot stakeholder engagement with suicide prevention organisations in implementing the Framework.

4

Collaboration with Suicide Prevention Australia on identifying and co-linking of CALD suicide prevention resources across learning hubs.

5

R U OK? co-design workshop series within each pilot community.

6

\$0.8 million in additional funding announced on the 2023-24 Commonwealth Budget to extend the Embrace Suicide Prevention Pilot Project for an additional year.



Australian Digital Health Agency Project

The Australian Digital Health Agency partnered with Mental Health Australia in 2022-23 to increase understanding and use of My Health Record amongst people with lived experience of mental ill-health, carers, family members and community mental health organisations.

Mental Health Australia partnered with Lived Experience Australia to undertake a survey of over 800 people with lived experience and carers, to better understand people's experiences and perceptions of My Health Record. Mental Health Australia also worked with a lived experience advisory group and designer to develop resources to promote key messages about My Health Record, including upload of advance mental health directives.

During Advance Care Planning week, Mental Health Australia's social media posts promoting these resources were seen over 15,000 times. Nearly 100 people also registered to attend webinars by Mental Health Australia with the Australian Digital Health Agency to promote these resources, with a vast majority of attendees saying their understanding of My Health Record increased a lot from attending the webinar.

Mental Health Australia also discussed the use of My Health Record with community mental health organisations, and provided an outline of uptake, barriers and opportunities to the Australian Digital Health Agency to support ongoing reforms to support use of this tool amongst community health services.

Lived experience participation and leadership

National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum

The National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum (NMHCCF) is a combined national voice for consumers and carers participating in sector development and mental health policy in Australia. The NMHCCF has 28 members of which 14 are mental health consumers and 14 are mental health carers.

The NMHCCF is auspiced by Mental Health Australia.

The NMHCCF met online on 21 October 2022 and face-to-face on 21-22 November 2022, and 16-17 March 2023.

The NMHCCF also has several working groups that meet regularly online to progress the Forum's core business. These are:

1. Member Engagement and Operating Guidelines Working Group
2. Consumer and Carer Leadership Working Group
3. Marketing and Communications Working Group
4. Psychosocial Disability Working Group.

Task-focussed project steering groups have been established beneath these main working group structures. They meet on an as-needed basis and are time limited to the duration of the project.

Mental Health Australia is working closely with the NMHCCF to support and progress priority activities.





Mental Health Reform Activities

The NMHCCF completed the following activities across 2022/2023:

- Preparing submissions on key mental health, suicide prevention and psychosocial disability issues
- Representation on national committees, working groups and at conferences
- Sector engagement
- Launch of new Operating Guidelines
- NMHCCF 20th anniversary celebrations
- Position statements
- Implementation of the NMHCCF workplan.

Submissions

The NMHCCF contributed to the following consultations, reports, issues and policies:

- Submission in response to the inquiry into the capability and culture of the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)
- Submission to the Treasury Employment White Paper consultation
- Submission to the Independent Review of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
- Submission to the National Mental Health Commission on the Development of the National Stigma and Discrimination Reduction Strategy
- Submission to the Proposed Revisions to the Disability Services Act (1986)
- Submission to the NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Framework
- Submission to the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights to the Inquiry into Australia's Human Rights Framework.

The NMHCCF also prepared the following joint submissions with the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO) during the reporting period:

- Submission to Applying the Guiding Principles to Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031 and Involving People with Disability in Evaluations
- Submission to the Independent Review of the National Disability Insurance Scheme
- Submission to the Review of the Commonwealth Disability Services Act
- Submission to the Disability Employment Services Quality Framework.

Consumer and Carer Leadership Projects

The NMHCCF continued to progress four projects in collaboration with the National PHN Mental Health Lived Experience Engagement Network (MHLEEN):

1

Development of a Digital Library of mental health lived experience leadership-related knowledge and initiatives throughout Australia.

2

Co-design of a mental health lived experience Governance Framework and Toolkit to guide organisations and jurisdictions when engaging with people with a lived experience.

3

Development of a scoping paper on lived experience training programs. The paper reviews the training needs, available programs and gaps and makes recommendations.

4

Running Yale University's LET(s) LEAD lived experience leadership program. The first cohort of 15 mental health consumers graduated in October 2022. The second cohort of mental health carers (a world first) is currently undertaking the first phase of the project — 10 weekly online seminars that cover concepts including developing personal vision, transformational change, appreciative inquiry, strategy, and change management. In the second phase of the course, participants will be matched with the mentorship of a community leader nationally or internationally according to a self-chosen piece of work contributing to the lived experience sector. The program for the carer cohort is due for completion in late 2023.

Research Project on Carer Experiences of COVID-19

In 2022-2023, the NMHCCF continued to progress a research project funded by the National Mental Health Commission to develop an evidence base on the experience of the mental health carers of the COVID-19 pandemic and gather data on mental health carer self-care and coping strategies. The NMHCCF engaged Monash University to lead the project and project steering group with a wide range of stakeholders providing project oversight. An Executive Summary was published in October 2022.

Psychosocial Disability

The NMHCCF receives funding from the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO) for the following activities



1

Ongoing engagement, consultation, participation, and representation in Disability Representative Organisation (DRO) meetings, workshops, and forums including Australia's Disability Strategy Implementation, the National Disability Data Asset, the Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Senior Officials Psychosocial Project Group, NDIS Co-design Working Groups, AFDO Forums, and the National Stigma and Discrimination Reduction Strategy.

2

Policy advocacy in the national psychosocial disability space, including five stand-alone submissions, and four joint submissions with AFDO.

3

Facilitating consumer and carer leadership and co-design projects, including six listening workshops with people living with psychosocial disability to explore access and planning issues associated with the NDIS, and a series of consultations with people with lived experience of psychosocial disability and their carers, and family inform the Independent Review of the NDIS.

4

Translating resources on psychosocial disability for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) groups into Plain English, Vietnamese, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Italian, and Arabic.

5

Event planning and marketing of a roundtable to raise the profile of the NMHCCF as the DRO to advocate for lived experience leadership at all levels of decision-making in the psychosocial disability space.

6

Building and maintaining relationships with key stakeholders within the Department of Social Services, National Disability Insurance Agency, the Department of Health and Aged Care, the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Australian Federation of Disability Organisations, the National Mental Health Commission, Mental Health Australia and its members, NMHCCF and National Register networks, and other lived experience organisations.

National Register

The National Register consists of 60 trained representatives working at the national level to provide a strong consumer and carer voice in the mental health sector. Members have opportunities to apply for national level representative positions, attend events and training, and network with peers and the broader mental health sector.

Since July 2022, the consumer and carer selection panel (with representatives from the NMHCCF and National Register Secretariat) has conducted seven selection processes, choosing eight consumer representatives and nine carer representatives for the following new opportunities:

1

Australian Cancer Control – National Cancer Plan (one consumer and one carer)

2

Better Access Evaluation (two consumers and two carers)

3

Mental Health Australia – Members Policy Hub Employment and Mental Health (two consumers and two carers)

4

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare – Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Data Governance Forum (one consumer and one carer)

5

Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care – Emergency Triage Education Kit (one consumer and one carer)

6

University of Sydney – Expert Advisory Panel to co-design, develop and test a mental health recovery App ‘DRIV-R’ (one consumer and one carer)

7

Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care – The Safe Spaces Standards Scoping Study Lived Experience Working Group (one carer)



Annual Issues and Opportunities Workshop

Each year, Mental Health Australia hosts the Annual Issues and Opportunities Workshop for members of the National Register of Mental Health Consumer and Carer Representatives (National Register) and the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum (NMHCCF) and the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Mental Health Consumer and Carer Group from the National Multicultural Mental Health Project (Embrace).

These two-day workshops aim to further develop the representative skills of mental health consumers and carers already participating in national policy initiatives. The workshops are designed to develop representatives' advocacy, policy development and leadership skills. The workshops also provide important networking opportunities for representatives.

The 2023 Annual Issues and Opportunities Workshop was held in Canberra, on Monday 15 and Tuesday 16 May 2023, and was attended by 50 mental health consumer and carer representatives.

The theme chosen for the Annual Workshop was *Working together, leading change. Lived experience leadership, unity, diversity, human rights, and advocacy.*

This provided the framing for a varied program of speakers, thought-provoking discussions, and plenty of opportunities to advance participants' voices in their valuable work representing people with lived/living experience as consumers and carers.

Annual Events

Annual General Meeting and 2022 Grace Groom Memorial Oration

Mental Health Australia's 2022 Annual General Meeting and Grace Groom Memorial Oration were held at the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra on 24 November 2022. Celebrating Mental Health Australia's 25th Anniversary, guests enjoyed videos from Grace Groom Scholarship Alumni and reflections from former CEOs and Chairs on the momentous occasion. 106 people attended the Oration in person with 38 attending via Zoom.

The audience heard a powerful speech from Orator, Mr Noel Pearson, on the crippling impact of political violence perpetrated against First Nations Peoples. Noel spoke passionately about the importance of recognition being fundamental to the self-esteem of First Nations peoples.

The Grace Groom Memorial Oration is one of the key annual mental health addresses for our sector, honouring the late Grace Groom, who was the CEO of the Mental Health Council of Australia from 2002 to 2005.

Mental Health Australia also congratulated the 2022 Grace Groom Scholarship recipient, Victoria Thomas, whose impressive application provided insights into her research on measuring occupational moral injury. The purpose of the Scholarship is to provide financial support to international or domestic postgraduate students enrolled in study and research relating to mental health issues.



World Mental Health Day

Each year, Mental Health Australia receives a triennial grant from the Department of Health and Aged Care to deliver the World Mental Health Day campaign. World Mental Health Day on 10 October is an internationally recognised day for building awareness of mental health issues.

The purpose of the World Mental Health Day campaign is to:

- Raise awareness
- Establish a sense of belonging
- Build connection with community



WORLD
MENTAL
HEALTH
DAY

10 OCT

Look after your
mental health,
Australia

AWARENESS. BELONGING. CONNECTION

Campaign theme

The 2022 World Mental Health Day campaign promoted the key message of 'Look after your mental health, Australia'.

Sign ups

More than 2400 users signed up for Mindful Habits of Mental Health Month in October.

Social media reach

The estimated social media reach of the campaign was 6.9 million.

Promises

949 promises were made and shared on the campaign website's promise wall.

Our People

Mental Health Australia is governed by a Board of up to ten Directors. Our Constitution requires that the Board consist of at least three and up to eight Elected Directors, and up to two Board Appointed Directors.

Mr Matt Berriman

Chair
Board Appointed Director
December 2021 - present

Dr Cathy Andronis

Elected Director
2020 - present

Mr Joe Hooper

Elected Director
2020 - 24 November 2022

Ms Tamara Cavenett

Elected Director
November 2022 - present

Professor Sharon Lawn (Nanai)

Elected Director
2021 - present

Mr Jeremy Coggin

Elected Director
2018 - 24 November 2022

Mr Mark Orr AM

Elected Director
2020 - present

Mr Ashley de Silva

Elected Director
2019 - present

Ms Marie Piu

Elected Director
November 2022 - present

Ms Georgie Harman

Elected Director
2017 - present

Ms Carmel Tebbutt

Elected Director
2018 - 16 June 2023



Staff as of 30 June 2023

Carolyn Nikoloski

Chief Executive Officer

Harry Lovelock

Director Policy and Research

Simon Ash

Director Corporate Services

Nikki Hogan

Director External Relations

Kathryn Sequoia

Governance Advisor
and Company Secretary

Kylie Bartlett

Senior Finance and Corporate
Services Officer

Odette Fuller

Team Support Officer

Danica Browne

Manager
Lived Experience Programs

Wendy Anderson

National Register & NMHCCF
Project & Administration Officer

Ebenezer Swan

National Register & NMHCCF
Policy & Projects Officer

Ruth Das

Embrace Project, Engagement &
Partnerships Lead

Letitia Casagrande

Embrace Project,
Senior Program Manager

Ashumita Badhan

Embrace Project, Senior Project Officer

Crystal Halbmaier

Embrace Project, Senior Project Officer

Amy Byrne

Senior HR Officer

Emma Coughlan

Senior Policy and Projects Officer

Ingrid Hatfield

Senior Policy, and Projects Officer


Nicole Nesbitt

Team Support Officer

Member organisations

as of 30 June 2023

ACT Mental Health Consumer Network
Allied Health Professions Australia
Anxiety Recovery Centre Victoria
Arafmi Ltd
The Australian Society of Rehabilitation Counsellors (ASORC)
Australasian Confederation of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapies (ACPP)
Australian Association for Developmental Disability Medicine
Australian Association of Social Workers
Australian BPD Foundation Ltd
Australian Clinical Psychology Association
Australian College of Mental Health Nurses
Australian Counselling Association Inc
Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation
Australian Psychological Society
Australian Rotary Health
Australian Society for Psychological Medicine
Baty Australia Limited
Being - Mental Health Consumers
Better Health Network
Beyond Blue
Bipolar Australia
Black Dog Institute
Black Swan
Blue Knot Foundation
Brain and Mind Centre
Breakthru Limited
Brisbane North PHN
Butterfly Foundation
Care Connect
Carers ACT
Carers Australia
Catholic Social Services Australia
CatholicCare NT
CatholicCare Victoria
Central Coast Family Support Service Inc
Centre for Mental Health Research (ANU)
Centre for Muslim Wellbeing
CoHealth
Community Mental Health Australia
Connections
Consumers of Mental Health WA (CoMHWa)
Converge International Ltd
Dementia Australia
Dietitians Australia
Eating Disorders Queensland
Emerging Minds
Employee Assistance Professional Association of Australasia



Exercise & Sports Science Australia (ESSA)
FearLess Outreach
Flourish Australia
Gidget Foundation Australia
GROW
Headspace
HelpingMinds
Independent Community Living Australia (ICLA)
Institute of Clinical Psychologists (ICP)
JobCo Employment Services Inc
Junaya Family Development Services
JUNO
LGBTIQ+ Health Australia
Lifeline Australia
Liptember Foundation
Lived Experience Australia
Lutheran Services
Marathon Health
Meaningful Ageing Australia
Mental Health Carers Australia
Mental Health Coalition of SA Inc
Mental Health Community Coalition ACT
Mental Health Coordinating Council
Mental Health Council of Tasmania
Mental Health First Aid Australia
Mental Health Partners
Mental Health Professionals Network
Mental Health Victoria
Mental Illness Education ACT (MIEACT)
Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia
Mentally Healthy WA
Mentis Assist
Micah Projects
Mind Australia
Mind Medicine Australia
Multicap
National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation
National Rural Health Alliance
Neami National
NT Mental Health Coalition
Occupational Therapy Australia
On The Line

One Door Mental Health
Orygen, The National Centre of Excellence in Youth
Ostara Australia Limited
OzHelp Foundation
Parent-Infant Research Institute (PIRI)
Pathways SouthWest Inc
Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australia (PANDA)
PHN Cooperative
Primary & Community Care Services Ltd
Psychosis Australia Trust
Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA)
Queensland Alliance for Mental Health
Queensland Centre for Mental Health Research
R U OK? Foundation
ReachOut Australia
Relationships Australia
Relationships Australia Victoria
Richmond Fellowship of Australia
Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia
Ruah Community Services
Rural & Remote Mental Health
SANE Australia
Sleep Health Foundation
Smiling Mind
Society for Mental Health Research
Speech Pathology Australia
Spiritual Health Association
Stride
SuperFriend
Tandem
TeamHEALTH
The Movember Foundation
The Pharmacy Guild of Australia
The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists
The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
TheMHS Learning Network Inc
Tully Support Centre
Victorian Mental Illness Council VMIAC
WA Association for Mental Health
WayAhead - Mental Health Association NSW
Wellways
Youturn Youth Support



**Mentally healthy people,
mentally healthy communities.**

mhaustralia.org