



2nd July 2024

## **National Mental Health Consumer Alliance to represent people with lived experience of mental health issues.**

**The National Mental Health Consumer Alliance (known as the Alliance) is delighted to have been granted \$3.7 million to advocate for consumers in national mental health policy.**

The Alliance, which was established informally in 2019 and recently incorporated as a national body, is made up of the state and territory mental health consumer peaks across Australia. The Alliance is now consulting with other representative bodies to ensure that their work will be inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; multicultural, refugee and migrant communities; and rural and remote mental health consumers.

The Alliance, with over 135 years' collective experience of consumer leadership and advocacy, represents consumers from across the country through its grassroots membership via the state and territory peak bodies.

Given the government's funding announcement today, the Alliance will now act as a peak federal advocacy body and intends to work with the government to improve policies and practices affecting mental health consumers. For too long decisions have been made about us by psychiatrists, other medical professionals and service providers. This announcement today will change this, ensuring consumers drive decision making when it comes to policy affecting their mental health care.

The group recently published a position paper titled [Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Enduring barriers to mental health care in regional and remote Australia](#), which put forward recommendations aimed at ensuring that people living in regional, rural and remote areas of Australia have access to place-based initiatives that have been co-created by people with lived experience.

The Alliance will take a human rights-based approach to its policy positions and a consumer-first focus. National policies that are of an immediate concern to the Alliance are the proposed changes to the NDIS, where people with a psychosocial disability are most at risk of being denied access, and the reduction in Medicare-subsidised psychologist visits, without there being alternatives put in place.

“The mental health consumer movement in Australia has been waiting for over a decade for this decision, and we are deeply grateful to all the advocates who have worked extremely hard to lay the foundation for a national peak body,” said the Alliance Chairperson, Priscilla Brice.

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*Over 135 years' experience of leadership, representation and advocacy by, for and with, consumers who have a lived experience of mental health issues.*

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“We thank The Hon Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health, and The Hon Emma McBride MP, Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention for appointing the Alliance. We look forward to working with the Ministers and government in ensuring the mental health system is accessible for all mental health consumers, and that our human rights are protected.”

The government has also announced \$3.7 million to Mental Health Carers Australia (MHCA), an established peak organisation which will now be funded to continue their important work advocating for mental health carers across Australia.

The State/Territory Mental Health Consumer Peaks that comprise the Alliance Membership are:

- ACT Mental Health Consumer Network (ACTMHCN)
- BEING: Mental Health Consumers (BEING) - NSW
- Consumers of Mental Health WA (CoMHWA)
- Lived Experience Leadership & Advocacy Network (LELAN) - SA
- Mental Health Lived Experience Peak Queensland (MHLEPQ)
- Mental Health Lived Experience Tasmania (MHLET)
- Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council (VMIAC)

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