

CoMHWA Constitution Changes – October 2024

Member Consultation and Information

Item 1: Review of CoMHWA Values

General Information

CoMHWA's values are our core beliefs. They act as guiding principles and provide us with a clear vision, purpose and direction to define us as an organisation. Values also set the tone for interactions with, and between, our members, staff, Board and other key stakeholders.

As a consumer-led organisation that advocates for social changes that reflect the needs and priorities of those with mental health issues, living our values day-to-day in all the work we do is crucial to our ability to achieve our core purpose.

CoMHWA's Current Values

- Kindness
- Respect
- Inclusivity
- Courage
- Respect

History

'Kindness' and 'Respect' have always been an integral part of CoMHWA's values. Previous versions of our values included 'Acceptance', 'Collaboration' and 'Integrity'.

At the 2019 Special General Meeting, our current values were voted on by members and have been in place for the last 5 years.

Values Reference Group

In the 2023 Staff Culture and Wellbeing survey, comments indicated that some of the values are missed, seen as tokenistic or not reinforced. It was discussed that a Values Reference Group would be formed by staff to reorient the current values and increase the value of engagement for those in consumer-facing roles we have not previously had.

The Values Reference Group:

- Discussed the current values and whether they were fit for purpose
- Discussed how we know that staff are / aren't acting in accordance with our values
- Developed new supporting statements for each value to ensure understanding

The Values Reference Group was chaired by Brian Wooller from the CoMHWa Board, and was comprised of the following staff members:

- Rebecca Banks – Administration Manager
- Charles Foster – Policy and Research Officer: Regional and Remote
- Jules Robinson – Education and Training Coordinator
- Chloe Harris – Independent Advocate
- Larissa Fisher – Peer Pathways Coordinator
- Lucy Haffenden – Peer Pathways Coordinator
- Elaine Ashurst – Life Launchpad Facilitator
- Naomi Campbell – ASPIRE Peer Workforce Development Coordinator

Proposed New Values

The Values Reference Group proposes to change the Constitution to reflect the updated values as:

Kindness	To act and work in a friendly, generous and considerate manner and with concern for others. To be treated, and to treat others, with goodwill and understanding.
Respect	To recognise, value and encourage others for their contributions. To hold a mutual acceptance of the diversity of our lived experiences to empower ourselves and others.
Integrity	To act with honesty and authenticity in the work we do, keeping our commitment to making a positive change. We uphold the fidelity of our values through acting with transparency and accountability in all that we do.
Social Justice	To bring power and position to the voices of consumer, to uphold and fight for our collective human rights. We promote equity through championing inclusivity and diversity in all the work we do.
Connection	We are dedicated to developing ongoing, authentic connections with members, staff and stakeholders, and a commitment to using the ‘power of together’ to help drive change and influence positive outcomes collectively.
Courage	We have the courage to utilise our lived experience to empower consumers in our shared fight for change. The vulnerability and authenticity we bring to our work provides hope for consumers and strength for our advocacy.

The changes will see 'Inclusivity' removed and replaced with 'Connection' and 'Social Justice'. We see these changes as bring us back to some of the core principles of the consumer movement and charging us with a more active human rights focus to our work.

Member Feedback

CoMHWA invites you to have your say on the intended Constitutional changes of the updated Values.

Please share your thoughts on the new Values below **before** 5pm, Friday 27th September 2024:

Kindness	
Respect	
Integrity	
Social Justice	
Connection	
Courage	

Is there anything else that you would like to say about the proposed changes to our Values?

Item 2: General wording updates

The Constitutional changes voted on at the May Special General Meeting were reviewed by CoMHWA Governance Subcommittee in accordance with advice provided by the Department of Mines, Industry, Regulation and Safety, and Hall & Wilcox lawyers.

After the SGM we received further advice from Hall & Wilcox, regarding additional, minor changes:

Clause	Version Approved at SGM	Changes for Approval at AGM
9.1 (A)	<i>A person wishing to become a member must apply...</i> Signed by the person	<i>A person wishing to become a member must apply...</i> Signed by the person
9.1 (B)	in such form as the Board from time to time directs (Application).	in such form and in the manner as the Board from time to time directs (Application).
10.1	The Secretary, on behalf of the Association, must ensure the Association complies with section 53 of the Act by keeping and maintaining an up to date register of the Members of the Association and their postal, residential or electronic address and on the request of a Member of the Association, make the register available for the inspection of the Member and the Member may make a copy of or take an extract from the register.	The Secretary, on behalf of the Association, must ensure the Association complies with section 53 of the Act by keeping and maintaining an up to date register of the Members of the Association and their postal, residential or electronic (including email) address and on the request of a Member of the Association, make the register available for the inspection of the Member and the Member may make a copy of or take an extract from the register. [The Secretary may require the Member, who wishes to take a copy or extract of the register, provide a statutory declaration setting out the purpose for which the copy or extract is required and declare that the purpose is connected with the affairs of the Association.]

15.6	If the composition of the Board is below the maximum threshold set out in rules 15.1 and additional Board members are required to satisfy 15.2 , a casual vacancy may be deemed for each place on the Board that is required may be filled over the Board Member minimum of 7 Board Members (4 Office Bearers plus 3 other Board Members) and up to reach the Board Member maximum of 11 Board Members (4 Office Bearers and 7 other Board Members). The appointment of a new Board Member may be made by the Board in accordance with rule 17.2.	If the composition of the Board is below the maximum threshold set out in rules 15.1, a casual vacancy may be deemed for each place on the Board that is required may be filled over the Board Member minimum of 7 Board Members (4 Office Bearers plus 3 other Board Members) and up to reach the Board Member maximum of 11 Board Members (4 Office Bearers and 7 other Board Members). The appointment of a new Board Member may be made by the Board in accordance with rule 17.2.
16.5	A Board Member's term will be for a period of 3 years, commencing from their election at the relevant Annual General Meeting or Board meeting (as applicable) at which they were appointed.	A Board Member's term will be for a period of 3 years, commencing from their election at the relevant Annual General Meeting at which they were appointed.
17.2	If the office of a Board Member becomes vacant as a result of rule 17.1 or if a vacancy remains on the Board after the application of rule 16.3.	If the office of a Board Member becomes vacant as a result of rule 17.1 or if a vacancy remains on the Board after the application of rule 16.3 or if rule 15.6 applies:
22.8	In this rule – Board Member includes a member of a sub-committee; Board Meeting includes a meeting of a sub-committee.	The Board may, at its discretion, appoint one or more subcommittees to assist the Board with the conduct of the Association's business. In this rule – Board Member includes a member of a sub-committee; Board Meeting includes a meeting of a sub-committee.
25.1(b)	Must convene a Special General Meeting... within 30 days of the Secretary receiving a request to do so by at least 20% of the Members.	Must convene a Special General Meeting... within 30 days of the Secretary receiving a request to do so by at least 5% of the Members.

32.3	If the parties are unable to resolve the dispute at the meeting, or if a party fails to attend that meeting, then the parties must, within 10 days, hold a meeting in the presence of a mediator.	If the parties are unable to resolve the dispute at the meeting, or if a party fails to attend that meeting, then the parties must, within 10 days, hold a meeting in the presence of a mediator (at the cost of the Association).
35.1	The funds of the Association may be derived from entrance fees, annual subscriptions, donations, fund-raising activities, grants, interest, and any other sources approved by the Board.	The funds of the Association may be derived from entrance fees, annual subscriptions, donations, fund-raising activities, grants, interest, service income and any other sources approved by the Board.
35.4	Subject to any restrictions imposed at a General Meeting, the Board may approve expenditure on behalf of the Association.	Subject to any restrictions imposed at a General Meeting, the Board may approve expenditure on behalf of the Association.
36	Nil	The Association does not use a Common Seal [remove this section].

Are there any comments you would like to make about the above intended changes?

What Happens Next?

At the 2024 AGM, our Chairperson will ask those in attendance to vote on the following:

Special Resolution 1: That the CoMHWA Constitution be updated with the proposed new Values.

Special Resolution 2: That the CoMHWA Constitution be updated as per the proposed general wording updates.

Voting is by show of hands to approve, reject, or abstain from the vote.

If you have further questions on CoMHWA’s Values, the Reference Group, or the additional Constitutional changes, please contact Rebecca on 9258 8911 or rbanks@comhwa.org.au