

Scholarship Information Pack

Certificate IV in Mental Health Peer Work Scholarship Program



This scholarship is generously funded by the Mental Health Commission of Western Australia and administered by CoMHWA.

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Scholarship information

How many scholarships are offered?

The Mental Health Commission of Western Australia is generously funding 30 scholarships for 2027.

Where does the money come from?

The Mental Health Commission provides funding to Consumers of Mental Health WA (CoMHWa) for the scholarship program as a part of their work to build the Peer workforce.

How much is the scholarship worth?

The scholarship is worth approximately \$1200. Scholarship recipients do not receive any money. CoMHWa pays the course fees (tuition fees and student resource fees) directly to North Metropolitan TAFE.

Do I have to pay for anything?

Successful scholarship applicants will need to pay for:

- Notepads, pens, etc.
- Student ID card
- Working with Children Check (for work placement)
- Police certificate (for work placement)
- NDIS clearance (for work placement)
- Transport costs to get to and from your work placement

What is CoMHWa's role in the scholarship program?

CoMHWa administers the scholarship funding: we oversee the application and interview process, deliver a 2-day preparation course to scholars prior to the start of TAFE classes, and provide monthly co-reflection sessions with two qualified Peer supervisors. We will also survey participants across the year of study and report outcomes to the Mental Health Commission (WA).

What is North Metropolitan TAFE's role in the scholarship program?

North Metropolitan TAFE are the Registered Training Organisation (RTO) who deliver the Certificate IV Mental Health Peer Work qualification. They receive the scholarship funds from CoMHA and oversee delivery, assessment, work placement and student wellbeing. They employ lecturers, and decide on the time, duration, and location of classes.



Application Process

How does the application process work?

Applications open on **Thursday 17 September** and close on **Sunday 11 October 2026**.

Applications are reviewed by the panel. On **Wednesday 23 October** we will advise all applicants of the first outcome. Outcome 1 is either:

- a. Your application has been shortlisted, and you are invited to the group discussion/interview; **OR**
- b. Your application has not been shortlisted, and your application has been unsuccessful this year. Please note: We do not provide individual feedback on applications.

If your application is shortlisted, you will be invited to a group discussion/interview with a panel at CoMHWA on **Wednesday 11 November**.

If you **do not** attend the group discussion/interview, you will be advised on Thursday 12 November that your application has been unsuccessful this year.

If you **do** attend the group discussion/interview, you will be advised of the second outcome on **Friday 20 November**. Outcome 2 is either:

- a. Your application has not been successful this year and you have not been offered a scholarship.
- b. Your application has been successful, and you have been offered a scholarship for 2027. Yay! You will then need to confirm your acceptance of the scholarship.

What happens if I can't attend the group interview date (Wednesday 11 November) as I have a prior arrangement?

To keep the application process fair, all applicants must be able to attend an in-person group interview on Wednesday 11 November 2026. This ensures everyone goes through the same process at the same time, and they are fairly evaluated by the same group discussion panel. We cannot make any exceptions to this process. If you cannot attend on this date, please apply again next year.

What if I apply and then change my mind?

You can change your mind at any stage of the process. Please email education@comhwa.org.au to request the withdrawal of your application. Withdrawing your application or declining a scholarship does not mean you cannot apply again in the future.



Lived Experience (Peer) Work

What is Lived Experience (Peer) Work?

Lived Experience (Peer) workers purposefully disclose their personal stories of recovery and their experiences accessing mental health services and navigating mental health and related systems to assist others. Lived Experience (Peer) work is guided by peer work values and principles. Lived Experience (Peer) workers either draw upon their own Lived Experience (consumer), or their Lived Experience supporting someone else¹ (carer/family/kin).

Lived Experience (Peer) roles are designated; this means it is a genuine occupational requirement of the role to have a Lived Experience of mental health/social and emotional wellbeing issues and recovery². This is also a requirement of the scholarship.

The Lived Experience (Peer) workforce has expanded from its grassroots origins in mental health and alcohol and other drugs to a range of diverse life experiences. Please note the focus of the national Certificate IV Mental Health Peer Work qualification is mental health and this is the only Peer work national qualification.

How do I know if I have 'Lived Experience'?

There is "big L and big E" Lived Experience and "little l and little e" lived experience.

Little l and little e

We all live through experiences. For example, having a child, being in a car accident, or the loss of a loved one. These are lived experiences because we lived through them. However, while our lived experiences might inform who we are as people, or even our approach to whatever work we undertake, our lived experience of the event is not central to our work or a requirement of our position.

Big L and Big E Lived Experience

This includes the definition of little l and little e lived experience as it relates to mental health. That is, first-hand experience using mental health services, experiencing mental health challenges and navigating recovery (a 'consumer') or first-hand experience supporting someone who is experiencing mental health challenges to use mental health services and navigate recovery (a 'carer').³

As Lived Experience (Peer) workers we take our lived experience and integrate it with:

- a distinct practice framework grounded in the consumer movement
- Lived Experience (Peer) workforce guidelines and values
- human rights
- a commitment to non-coercive approaches
- intentional and skilful use of personal experience
- a collective identity as Peer workers
- reflective practice and Peer supervision⁴

How do I know if I'm ready to undertake a Lived Experience course like this one?

At CoMHWa we like to say that we share from our scars, not our wounds. This means we need to have distance and time (how much distance and how much time is for you to determine) from our experience so we can intentionally disclose in our work to benefit others. The course will ask you to explore and reflect on your own experiences of emotional distress and navigating mental health systems. This means as well as the expectations of classroom learning and assessment you may also experience additional emotional and mental demands as you revisit your lived

¹ [Talking about Lived Experience: language and definitions](#), National Mental Health Commission, accessed September 2026.

² Lived Experience (Peer) roles are designated under the Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA) s.66(s)(c)

³ 'Consumer' and 'Carer' are common labels, and not the only way to describe these roles.

⁴ VIMIAC Position Statement, 2025, [The meaning of 'lived experience'](#), p.2

experiences. You must be in a place in your mental health journey where you have perspective on your experience as well as resources, emotional and mental energy, support networks, and self-care strategies.

It is integral to your success - both in this course and as an aspiring Peer worker - that you are ready as you can be for the demands of a Lived Experience course and career.

How do I know if I'm eligible for a scholarship?

To be eligible for a scholarship you must meet all the following criteria:

- You have a lived experience of personal mental and/or emotional challenges and recovery; OR you have a lived experience of caring for someone with mental and/or emotional distress and supporting them during their recovery⁵
- You meet the attendance requirements of the course
- You want to enter the Peer Workforce
- You have regular access to the internet and a reasonable level of digital skills
- You have stable living circumstances and a suitable place to study
- You are well enough to commit to intense study
- You have well developed self-care strategies and access to support networks
- You are willing to participate in monthly Group Peer Co-reflection sessions
- You are willing to participate in the evaluation of the course and the scholarship program
- You are a member of CoMHWA (free membership – please apply [here](#))

The Certificate IV Mental Health Peer Work course

How much work is involved in a Certificate IV level course?

A Certificate IV has some similarities to first year university units. Graduates frequently report being surprised and sometimes overwhelmed with the amount of assessment work required. They note an increase in assessment workload after week 5 of the semester. The Certificate IV Mental Health Peer Work has 15 units of competency; each unit has 1-2 written assessments and up to 3 role play⁶ assessments. This means over the course of a year, you will complete over 60 assessments! Graduates report that while they are on campus for only 2 days per week, at least half of the time they need an additional 2 extra days per week to complete assessment.

Many people make it through this course, and you can too! As long as you attend classes, have extra time to work on assessments when you need it, submit your assessments on time, and attend role plays as scheduled. It is also very important to have strong supports to ensure your own wellbeing through what can be a stressful – and very rewarding - year.

North Metropolitan TAFE offers support to all students. You can read more about what they offer on their [website](#).

Can I study online?

No, you cannot study online.

When are classes held?

You will attend two days a week (usually Thursday and Friday, to be confirmed for 2027) from 9:00am to 4:00pm for two semesters (approximately 40 weeks) at North Metropolitan TAFE's Leederville campus. The semester dates for 2027 are:

- Semester 1: Monday 1 February – Friday 2 July

⁵ CoMHWA acknowledges the terms “mental and/or emotional challenges” and “recovery” do not resonate with everyone.

⁶ You are not required to perform a role play in front of a class; they are often completed in front of one or two assessors.

- Semester 2: Monday 19 July – Friday 10 December

If you are unable to attend on the selected days from 9:00am-4:00pm, please do not apply for the scholarship. It is not possible to start late or leave early on a regular basis.

Can I enrol in the course without applying for a scholarship?

No. Currently all places in the course at North Metropolitan TAFE are reserved for scholarship recipients.

Do I need to be comfortable using a computer?

Yes. North Metropolitan TAFE uses an online Learning Management System called Canvas and you will be required to access learning materials and write and submit assessments through this online system. Students who are not comfortable using computers will find this a barrier to their studies.

If you still wish to apply for the scholarship, we recommend you spend time between now and the start of semester in 2027 improving your digital skills (e.g. typing, using Microsoft 365 programs, navigating the internet). You can find out more about the online systems North Metropolitan TAFE students need to use [here](#).

Can I still apply for the scholarship if I've already completed a Certificate IV in Community Services, AOD, Youth Work, or Mental Health (or any other Cert IV)?

Yes! If you have completed any of the units in the Certificate IV Mental Health in Peer Work in previous study, you do not need to complete them again. **Please note:** you cannot accelerate your study; regardless of how many units you have completed previously, the course is still timetabled over two semesters (40 weeks).

What if I don't pass a unit?

This scholarship offer is for 2027 only, and the funds do not extend to paying for repeat attempts at units unless there are very specific circumstances. If you do not pass a unit, you will need to re-enrol in the unit with a training provider of your choice at your own expense. Please also keep in mind the qualification is expected to change after 2027, and the units you require for the CHC43515 version may no longer be offered by training providers after this date. More on this below.

What units will I be studying?

The following 15 units comprise the Certificate IV Mental Health in Peer Work:

CHCDIV001 - Work with diverse people

This unit assists people to develop the skills and knowledge required to work respectfully with people from diverse social and cultural groups and situations, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

CHCMHS007 - Work effectively in trauma informed care*

This unit equips people to work from a trauma informed care perspective and develop a sound knowledge of trauma-informed approaches integral to Peer work.

CHCMHS008 - Promote and facilitate self-advocacy

This unit includes the requirement to encourage, support and promote self-advocacy when working with people with mental health issues.

CHCMHS011 - Assess and promote social, emotional and physical wellbeing

This unit covers how to collaboratively deliver wellbeing support while reflecting recovery-oriented practice and responding to physical, social, emotional, cultural/spiritual needs.

CHCPWK001 - Apply peer work practices in the mental health sector

This unit covers the historical, social, political and economic contexts of mental health services and mental health consumer and carer movements, including impacts of mental health systems on consumers and carers.

CHCPWK002 - Contribute to the continuous improvement of mental health services

This unit teaches how to evaluate a mental health service by conducting a consultation process that maximises consumer and carer participation in all aspects of service review, evaluation, and improvement.

CHCPWK003 - Apply lived experience in mental health peer work

This unit informs people how to work according to the values, ethics, and philosophies of mental health Peer work using their own Lived Experience.

HLTWHS001 - Participate in workplace health and safety

This unit focuses on work health and safety risks, processes, plans and legislation relevant to Peer work.

CHCCCS003 - Increase safety of individuals at risk of suicide*

This unit teaches the principles and practices of suicide intervention, how to assess people at risk and create a safety plan, and how to utilise on-going supports to increase a person's safety.

CHCCCS017 - Provide loss and grief support*

This unit covers the spectrum of loss situations, and the potential impacts at the individual, family and community level of grief, bereavement, and trauma.

CHCLEG001 - Work legally and ethically

This unit covers the legal and ethical considerations for those working in community services. It focuses on how state and federal legislation links to organisational policy to ensure the safety of both workers and consumers.

CHCMHS002 - Establish self-directed recovery relationships

This unit describes the skills and knowledge required to promote the principles of recovery orientated practice and teaches how to establish and confirm self-directed recovery relationships with people with mental health challenges.

CHCMHS005 - Provide services to people with co-existing mental health and alcohol and other drug issues*

This unit addresses the similarities and differences between the values, philosophies and service delivery models of the AOD and mental health sectors.

HLTWHS006 - Manage personal stressors in the work environment

This unit covers sources of stress and how they manifest in a work environment.

HLTAID011 - Provide first aid

The units marked with an asterisk* include potentially difficult in-class discussions that may be emotionally demanding. Please consider the impact these units will have on your wellbeing and ensure you have self-care strategies and support in place.

Can I study different units?

No. The units are selected by North Metropolitan TAFE and meet the requirements of CHC43515 Certificate IV Mental Health Peer Work national training package.

Training package change

The CHC43515 Certificate IV in Mental Health Peer Work (aka 'the training package') is currently under review. **This means the qualification and the units of competency required to achieve the qualification will likely change after 2027.** If you do not complete in 2027 and the qualification is no longer available in 2028, you will have to undertake an entirely new qualification as most of the units of competency will change. This occurs every 7-10 years with all national training

packages and it is important to be aware when the change is coming so you can ensure all study requirements are met before the end of the transition period between the one qualification and the next.

The CHC43515 qualification is still valid after the change; once you have completed a Vocational Education and Training national qualification, you do not have to repeat or renew it.

Is there a work placement?

A work placement of 80 hours is required to complete the qualification. This takes place in the final term of your study. North Metropolitan TAFE oversee work placement and can answer all your questions.

I don't think the scholarship is for me...what are my other options?

We understand – it is a big commitment! There are many other ways to enter the Peer workforce outside of studying the Certificate IV Mental Health in Peer Work. CoMHWa offer a free 6 day (with a 40 hour work placement) ASPIRE course. ASPIRE stands for **A**dvancing **S**uccessful **P**eer **I**nclusion and **R**eadiness for **E**mployment and covers the foundations of Peer work, interpersonal skills required for Peer work, exploring your culture and identity, and how to look after yourself as a Peer worker. You can apply for this course [here](#).

If you are keen to undertake consumer or carer representative work, you can find information about those opportunities in our fortnightly newsletter which is sent to all CoMHWa members.

We also have regular consumer training sessions. Keep an eye on our newsletter for further details.

I have more questions about units, studying at TAFE and the learning supports TAFE offers!

Please contact North Metropolitan TAFE Certificate IV Mental Health in Peer Work Course Coordinator and Lecturer Phoebe Wilson phoebe.wilson@nmtafe.wa.edu.au who will be happy to answer your questions.

I have more questions about the scholarship and the application process!

Please contact the Education and Training team education@comhwa.org.au who will be able to answer your questions.



Ready to apply?

Please complete the online application [here](#).

All the best and thank you for your interest!