



**Lived
Experience**
AUSTRALIA

CAPABILITY STATEMENT



Company Details

Company Name	Lived Experience Australia Limited
Previously known as	Private Mental Health Consumer Carer Network (Australia) Limited
ABN/ACN	44 613 210 889 / 613 210 889
Year Established	2002
Legal Structure	Australian Public Company Limited by Guarantee
Registered Office	Felixstow, South Australia
Postal Address	PO Box 12, Oaklands Park SA 5046
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Primary Contact	Ms Sharon Lawn
Title	Executive Director
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COMPANY MISSION

Engage, empower, enable choice in mental health.

COMPANY VISION

To promote effective consumer and carer advocacy as the driving force behind all changes in mental health services.

Our core business is to advise and advocate for systemic change, empowerment of consumers in their own care, promoting engagement and inclusion of consumers and carers within system design, planning and evaluation and importantly, advocating for consumer choice and family and carer inclusion.

INTRODUCTION

For over 20 years, Lived Experience Australia (LEA) has been advocating on behalf of all those with a lived experience of mental ill-health, their carers, and family members. LEA is a national systemic advocacy, research, and capacity building organisation. It is also the recognised national body for private sector consumers and carers.

LEA is an integral part of key policy and decision-making processes, providing a strong representative voice for mental health consumers, families, and carers. LEA facilitates the sharing of lived experience of mental ill-health, addresses common issues, and encourages help-seeking.

LEA feels a deep sense of responsibility for providing direction, and decision-making with lived experience expertise, and supporting government and the mental health sector more broadly to reform. We believe LEA has a role promoting a culture of engagement with consumers and carers in an active and meaningful way. We understand the need for destigmatising mental ill-health and base our work on our own experiences and those of others who share their stories with us.

LEA brings the voices of both consumers and carers together while recognising and appreciating the diverse views and different challenges the two groups may face, regardless of whether their experience is of public, private or non-government mental health services.

LEA is a conduit for people with lived experience to have their voice heard and make a difference in mental health in Australia.

OUR TEAM

All board members and staff each have their own lived experience of mental ill-health as either a consumer, carer, or both. Because of this, LEA is an informed, authentic, lived experience organisation that is trusted by consumers and carers to understand and advocate for their unique needs and perspectives.

Chair & Executive Officer: Prof Sharon Lawn

Deputy Chair & Director for Tasmania: Mr Darren Jiggins

Secretary & Director for Queensland: Ms Norm Wotherspoon

Director for New South Wales: Ms Simone Allan

Director for Victoria: Ms Helene Langley

Director for Western Australia: Ms Lorraine Powell

Director for South Australia: Mr Aaron Fornarino

Patron: Professor Allan Fels AO

Clinical Advisor: Dr Bill Pring, Psychiatrist, Victoria

Founder & Strategic Advisor: Ms Janne McMahon, OAM

Manager of Admin, Communications & Projects: Ms Christine Kaine

Marketing and Communications Officer: Ms Heather Smith

Senior Collaborations Coordinator: Ms De Backman-Hoyle

Training Officer: Ms Emily Unity

LEA has direct connections to both consumers and carers, providing one combined voice for those most affected by policies developed in relation to mental health services.

Importantly, we are actively growing our database of community members who have a lived experience, who contribute to our research, training, submissions, and policy development. We are able to draw on these experiences promptly and efficiently in order to conduct research and provide supporting evidence for our work.

COLLABORATIONS

GOVERNMENT

- Australian Government Department of Health
- National Disability Insurance Agency
- Australian Government Department of Social Services
- Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare
- National Mental Health Commission
- South Australian Government
- South Australian Chief Psychiatrist
- South Australian Government Mental Health Commission
- Queensland Mental Health Commission

NON-GOVERNMENT

- University of South Australia
- University of Victoria
- Flinders University
- LaTrobe University
- RMIT
- Newcastle University
- Australian Institute of Health Innovation
- Brain and Mind Centre
- Australian Private Hospitals Association
- Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists
- Australian Psychological Society
- The Productivity Commission
- Mind Australia
- Mental Health Australia
- Mental Health Carers Australia
- HelpingMinds

CAPABILITY & CAPACITY

ADVOCACY

LEA has a 'Representative Panel' comprising skilled and experienced consumer and carer advocates. Members from this panel are available to participate in key advisory groups or on committees regarding consumer and carer inclusion. LEA holds the respect of Government and has been invited to appear before ten federal parliamentary inquiries and made over a hundred formal submissions to Government. In 2021 alone, LEA provided submissions including for the Draft Suicide Prevention Bill, the Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS Independent Assessments, the Select Committee on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, the National Preventative Health Strategy, the National Mental Health Workforce Strategy Consultation, the NDIS Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee, and the Privacy Act (amongst others).

RESEARCH

LEA conducts research to determine the views and needs of those with lived experience as a consumer or carer of someone experiencing mental ill-health. This is one of the most powerful and valuable assets LEA offers. Lived experience research, conducted by, with, and for, people with lived experience. In partnership with universities and other institutions, we also contribute to broader research. We have previously partnered with LaTrobe University, RMIT, Newcastle University, Flinders University, University of NSW, Brain and Mind Centre and the Australian Institute of Health Innovation. Publications from this research are made available through the LEA website.

COLLABORATION

LEA works closely with key government and non-government organisations, consumer and carer peaks, professional colleges, universities, and mental health service providers to support our advocacy, translational research and capacity building. We have a Senior Collaborations Coordinator focused on further developing collaboration and funding opportunities.

CAPACITY BUILDING

We encourage best practice in consumer and carer inclusion. Our online learning site learn.livedexperienceaustralia.com.au supports consumers, carers, peer workers and health professionals. As with all LEA activities and services, our capacity building programs are designed, created, led, and facilitated by people with lived experience of mental ill-health.

PROJECT SHOWCASE

Borderline Personality Disorder Research Project

Two national surveys were conducted in 2011 and again in 2017 around the experiences of consumers with the diagnosis of BPD and the experiences of carers supporting someone with the diagnosis of BPD. These were a first nationally and importantly, internationally. The 2015 consumer experiences of BPD published report has been cited in 77 different publications by mental health researchers internationally and the experiences of carers published report has been cited in 50 papers.

Towards Professionalism: A feasibility study into a member based organisation for the peer workforce in Australia

Results of the project identify what peer workers want from a national organisation, governance, models, and financial or in-kind support available. Additionally, the report provided information on resources targeting employers and workplaces and future work the National Mental Health Commission could undertake. A full report was completed, including a Literature Review and Tip Sheets for Peer Workers, available through the LEA website.

Lived Experience Perspectives of Psychology Services

This study was undertaken with consumers who have accessed psychology services, and carers of people who have accessed them. It was completed online in November 2021, with 517 responses from across Australia. The research aimed to understand psychological service needs of mental health consumers and carers and provide a collective voice to government and service providers to inform service and policy design.

Missing Middle Research Report: Why people fall through the gaps or do not receive the mental health care they need

LEA conducted a national research project consulting with consumers and carers to identify why people disengage or fall through the gaps and miss out on needed mental health services. This detailed survey enabled us to have a better understanding of the 'missing middle' and what that means for people, beyond just a term. How consumers', families' and carers' lives are affected has been captured in this ground-breaking national survey, a first of its kind in Australia.

Telehealth Psychiatry

In February 2021, Lived Experience Australia offered a survey to consumers, families, and carers across Australia to provide feedback on their experiences of accessing telehealth psychiatry services. In June 2021 we conducted individual interviews and focus groups with selected respondents from the survey to explore in more depth their experiences of telehealth psychiatry services.

A Review of Mental Health and Physical Health in Australia

This research was undertaken as a collaboration between LEA and Equally Well Australia to understand the level of support and focus on the physical health needs of people living with mental ill-health from the health and mental health professionals they accessed. The report produced from this research presents a national collective voice of consumers' and carers' experiences.

Report into the Potential Service Model for Adult Mental Health Centres

In discussions with the Department of Health, LEA conducted a short-term survey (14 days duration) across Australia to provide a targeted response from the consumer and carer perspective into the consultation for the 8 Adult Mental Health Centres (AMHCs). The survey results were provided in a detailed report to the Department of Health to have a clear understanding of consumer and carer perspectives into these proposed facilities.

All research reports can be found at www.livedexperienceaustralia.com.au/research



WWW.LIVEDEXPERIENCEAUSTRALIA.COM.AU