

Commitment

to partnering with people
with lived-living experience
in Queensland



Queensland
Mental Health
Commission



Queensland
**Mental Health
Commission**

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Feedback

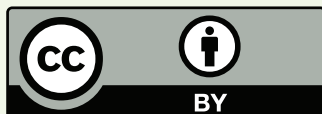
We value the views of our readers and invite
your feedback on this report.

Please contact the Queensland Mental Health
Commission on **1300 855 945** or via email at
info@qmhc.qld.gov.au.

Translation



The Queensland Government is committed to
providing accessible services to Queenslanders
from all culturally and linguistically diverse
backgrounds. If you require an interpreter,
please contact us on **1300 855 945** and
we will arrange one for you.



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In essence, you are free to copy, communicate and
adapt this report as long as you attribute the work
to the Queensland Mental Health Commission.

Acknowledgement of First Nations people

We respectfully acknowledge First Nations people in
Queensland as the Traditional Owners and Custodians
of the lands, waters and seas. We acknowledge those
of the past, who have imparted their wisdom and whose
strength has nurtured this land. We acknowledge Elders
for their leadership and ongoing efforts to protect and
promote First Nations people and cultures.

We recognise that it is our collective effort and responsibility
as individuals, communities and governments to ensure
equity, recognition and advancement of First Nations
Queenslanders across all aspects of society and everyday
life. We walk together in our shared journey of Reconciliation.

Recognition of lived-living experience

We recognise the individual and collective contribution of
Queenslanders with lived-living experience of mental health
challenges, alcohol and other drug use, and people, groups
and communities impacted by suicidal distress or suicide.
We recognise families, kin, unpaid carers and other unpaid
supporters who play a fundamental role in supporting
people with lived-living experience. We also recognise
the lived experience of people bereaved by suicide.

Each person's journey is unique and collectively provides
a valuable contribution to reforming the mental health,
alcohol and other drugs and suicide prevention and related
systems in Queensland. Your voices and experiences are
the core of our work. We recognise and value your expertise.

The Commission's role

The Queensland Mental Health Commission (the Commission) is an independent statutory body established under the [Queensland Mental Health Commission Act 2013](#) and accountable to the Minister for Health. We do not investigate individual healthcare complaints, plan or fund services, or provide direct services.

Our primary role is to lead and drive ongoing reform toward a more integrated, evidence-based, and recovery-orientated mental health, alcohol and other drug, and suicide prevention service system. As a key driver in system reform, we work across sectors, including health, community, education, child safety, employment, police, corrections, economy and justice.

Partnering with people with lived-living experience is central to reform. The insights and experiences of people with lived-living experience are embedded within key Queensland strategies such as:

- [Shifting minds: The Queensland Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs, and Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan 2023–2028](#)

- [Achieving balance: The Queensland Alcohol and Other Drugs Plan 2022–2027](#)
- [Every Life: The Queensland Suicide Prevention Strategy 2019–2029 Phase One](#) and [Phase Two](#)
- [Queensland Trauma Strategy 2024–2029](#).

This *Commitment to partnering with people with lived-living experience in Queensland* formalises our intention to stretch ourselves to create more opportunities and prioritise working in partnership with people with lived-living experience. Our commitment ensures people with lived-living experience are valued and central to our system reform work.

Language is important

We recognise the importance of language and note that there is no consensus on the language used to define collective lived-living experience. We define 'lived-living experience' as personal experience/s of mental health challenges, and/or alcohol and other drug use, and/or suicide. This includes family, kin, unpaid carers and other unpaid supporters of people experiencing mental health challenges, and/or alcohol and other drug use, and/or suicide. This also includes people who are bereaved by suicide.

Lived-living experience may be viewed as a continuum of experiences that people may have at different times in their lives. The use of the hyphen signals the movement or changing nature of our experiences along this continuum. We thank lived-living experience leaders in Queensland working in the alcohol and other drugs sector for this approach.

Lived-living expertise is developed through advanced understanding and integration of the personal and collective experience in order to benefit all, uphold human rights and contribute to system transformation. Contemporary convention is to use capitalisation when referring to the professional discipline of the Lived-Living Experience workforce.

Our commitment

to people with lived-living experience

The Commission values people with lived-living experience and knows that true system reform emerges when grounded by the insight, the contribution and solutions of people who have had, or are having direct experiences with services and systems.

Our commitment formally captures how we involve and partner with people with lived-living experience in our system transformation efforts. This includes people in designated Lived-Living Experience roles, as well as Lived-Living Experience leaders in communities, non-government organisations, peak bodies and government agencies.

Our commitment articulates the values we hold and how we will put them into action when partnering with people with lived-living experience.

Through our commitment, we aim to:

- **Move in a direction** where our organisation more deeply understands what is needed to enable us to partner with people with lived-living experience.
- **Influence policies, services and systems** to reflect the rights, needs and preferences of people with lived-living experience.
- **Create essential shifts** that foster partnerships, and where possible, enable people with lived-living experience to co-lead and drive the reform agenda.

We intend to enhance our ways of working with people with lived-living experience, striving to build partnerships grounded in trust, vulnerability, shared power and a collective determination to achieve systemic change.

While opportunities may vary, we commit to extending ourselves to partner in ways that are fit for purpose, consistent, and tailored to the unique context, purpose and parameters of each reform initiative. In other words, we will do our utmost within our unique constraints and limitations to ensure lived-living experience insights and contributions lead the way in system reform.

Our values

We welcome lived-living experience involvement, expertise and leadership

We are courageous

We do what we say

We are transparent about the way we partner

We stand alongside people with compassion, listen deeply and respond with care

We uphold people's rights

Our values in action

We partner with people with diverse and intersectional identities and lived-living experience

We address barriers to partnering

We share and shift power towards people with lived-living experience

We take a trauma-informed approach

We learn, grow, and benefit each other

Our values

We welcome lived-living experience involvement, expertise and leadership

We welcome individual and collective experiences, recognising the unique value people bring by being who they are, that is equally valued alongside any role, title or position. We understand that diverse lived-living experience involvement, expertise and leadership is vital to informing and enriching our system reform effort.

We acknowledge, recognise and honour lived-living experiences in contexts where it is present and absent. We amplify the contribution of past, present and future lived-living experience partnerships that have contributed and continue to contribute to system reform.

We are courageous

We are steadfast in our allyship with people with lived-living experience. We courageously and curiously challenge our current ways of involving and partnering with people with lived-living experience. We explore partnership approaches that may feel new, different or uncomfortable.

We do what we say

We work with integrity. Where our actions are not meeting expectations, we invite people with lived-living experience to let us know, hold us accountable and reflect with us on how we can do better.

We are transparent about the way we partner

We are open and clear about what we are doing, why we are doing it and how we are doing it.

We stand alongside people with compassion, listen deeply and respond with care

We approach people with compassion. We listen deeply, acknowledge and validate people's lived-living experiences, and sensitively explore how their strength and resilience can be harnessed for transformative system change. In every partnership, we prioritise wellbeing and foster environments where people feel safe (enough) and supported.

We uphold people's rights

We uphold people's right to be central in system reform.

Our values in action

We partner with people with diverse and intersectional identities and lived-living experiences

In our system reform work, we will actively seek out and partner with people with lived-living experience who are most impacted, including those with layered experiences of exclusion, oppression and marginalisation. We will strive to intentionally partner with people and groups who are often overlooked, unheard or invisible in the system.

We will do this by:

Ensuring high levels of representativeness in reform activities.

We will make deliberate effort to provide opportunities for people with diverse and intersectional identities and diverse lived-living experiences across the whole of Queensland to partner with us.

Embracing everyone for who they are.

We invite people to bring their whole selves to our system reform work and acknowledge our approach to partnerships may vary depending on who we are partnering with, recognising that what works for one person, group or community may not be appropriate for another.

Developing partnership approaches with First Nations people and communities.

We recognise that specific and tailored approaches for partnering with First Nations people and communities need to be developed collaboratively. We are committed to learning from First Nations people and communities to understand and honour their ways of being, knowing and doing, and the approaches that work best for them.

Being culturally inclusive, safe and responsive.

We will work with culturally and linguistically diverse community leaders to partner in ways that work best for them.



We address barriers to partnering

We meet people ‘where they are’ and in ways they want to be met, reaching diverse people, groups and communities across Queensland. We will work to provide equitable opportunities for people to partner with us.

We will do this by:

Identifying and addressing barriers to involvement.

We will work to identify and respond to barriers that limit people’s ability to partner with us.

Collaborating with regional, rural and remote communities.

We will work with regional, rural and remote communities to determine equitable partnership approaches.

Being flexible in our partnership approaches.

We will adapt our partnership approaches to meet our partners’ needs wherever possible and will work together to determine mutually preferred approaches.

Our values in action

We share and shift power towards people with lived-living experience

We acknowledge that power imbalances exist between people with lived-living experience and government agencies such as the Commission that impact the way people partner with us. We will actively strive to share and shift power where possible.

We will do this by:

Promoting opportunities.

We will provide opportunities to partner with us in system reform activities.

Supporting shared decision-making.

We enable our partners to inform decision-making in our system reform work.

Sharing information and knowledge.

We will give people with lived-living experience all the relevant information to support them to partner with us.

Recognising when system reform activities should be lived-living experience-led.

We understand there are times, spaces and places where people with lived-living experience should be supported and resourced where possible, to take the lead.

Reducing the impact of power dynamics in partnerships.

We recognise that people may not feel safe enough where power imbalances are not recognised or addressed. We will identify and acknowledge the level of decision-making authority and influence our partners have in system reform activities. We will also share our own limitations in decision-making as a statutory body.

We take a **trauma-informed approach**

Trauma informed approaches encourage a shift from ‘what is wrong with you’ to ‘what do you need to feel safe?’. Trauma informed approaches emphasise understanding the impact of past and present experiences on a person’s physiological, psychological and psychosocial responses to current circumstances (*The Queensland Trauma Strategy 2024–2029*).

We will do this by:

Co-creating safe (enough) spaces.

We will work with our partners to create the necessary conditions and spaces that will enable them to feel safe (enough) to work with us.

Appropriately framing experiences.

We commit to appropriately and sensitively framing our partners experiences to maintain the integrity and authenticity of their lived-living experiences and avoid perpetuating stereotypes and stigma.

Providing access to supports.

We provide access to appropriate supports for people partnering with us.

We learn, grow and benefit **each other**

We ground our partnerships in mutuality, where people with lived-living experience and Commission team members can learn, grow and benefit from each other’s worldviews, perspectives and expertise.

We will do this by:

Respecting and valuing difference.

We will strive to provide safe (enough) spaces to hear different perspectives for deeper understanding.

Championing new ideas and approaches.

We will pursue and promote new ideas and approaches to system reform.

Holding reflective spaces.

We will provide opportunities to reflect with our partners. This can be before, during and after system reform activity, to ensure our partnership approaches are strengthening our relationships and that our processes are mutually beneficial. This enables us to change our partnership approach if needed.

Maintaining the integrity of our commitment

This Commitment to partnering with people with lived-living experience is a commitment beyond written words—it is an ongoing journey that will evolve alongside people with lived-living experience. This is a long-term endeavour prioritising relationships that will take time to build and that are dedicated to partnerships that drive meaningful change and have real impact.

Your insights are critical to our growth in this area. As a valued partner, we invite you to hold us accountable to this Commitment. We want to hear from you about what worked, where we can improve, and how we can mutually uphold our commitment to each other. Together, we can strengthen our approach and deepen the impact of our collective work.

You can contact us about this Commitment in the following ways:



Send an e-mail
info@qmhc.qld.gov.au



Speak with us by phone
1300 855 945

Our partners in this work

Lived-living experience advisors

We recognise with gratitude the many people with lived-living experience, families, kin, unpaid carers and unpaid supporters who have contributed to the development of this Commitment. Your courage and generosity in sharing your expertise, insights and recommendations have been invaluable. Thank you for your commitment to working with us as we strengthen our partnership with the lived-living experience community to inform and enrich system reform.

Lived-Living Experience peak bodies

The Commission gratefully acknowledges the guidance from the following representative peak organisations:

- Arafmi Ltd (mental health carers)
 - Mental Health Lived Experience Peak Queensland (MHLEPQ)
 - QuIVAA
 - Queensland Lived Experience Workforce Network (QLEWN)
 - Roses in the Ocean
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LELAN

We thank LELAN for their partnership and guidance to help us develop this important commitment to our lived-living experience community. LELAN's purpose is to amplify the voice, influence and leadership of people with lived experience to drive systemic change.



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