



Communique

Mental Health Lived Experience Peak Queensland (MHLEPQ) Member Meeting 21st June 2023

A member meeting was held on 21st June 2023. This was the second official member meeting of the MHLEPQ held at our offices at Shop 4, 67 Astor Terrace, Spring Hill. Members also attended by Teams. The meeting was attended by 14 members, nine attending in person and five by Teams. It was noted that due to an error the correct Teams connection details had not been forwarded to the members attending by Teams and this meant a number of members did not manage to connect.

The members heard reports on MHLEPQ activities since last member meeting. The most significant work of the MHLEPQ had been:

- Completing a draft discussion paper on coercive practices, ready for consultation with our members.
- Commencing a project on the psychosocial hazards faced by peer workers.
- Collaborating with other state and territory peaks formalising the national alliance of Consumer peaks.
- Advocating for the abolition of the locked wards directive.
- Engaging with the Mental Health Alcohol and Other Drugs Branch on a number of projects around the “Better Care Together” reforms.

MHLEPQ currently have 154 members which is an increase of 36 members from last member meeting.

Members had a broad and free flowing discussion around the MHLEPQ its work and future focus. Members recognised that the MHLEPQ is still in its formation stages and that it is essential that they set the direction based on their experiences and priorities. The discussion included:

- **Resource Page** – The MHLEPQ website should include a resource page.
- **Chat Groups** – We should create a “group chat” platform allowing members to network and communicate directly with each other.
- **Regional Engagement** – The MHLEPQ needs to be visible in its regional activities. It was reported that:
 - **Toowoomba Meeting** – The first regional meeting of the MHLEPQ will be on Tuesday 25th July in Toowoomba.
 - **Regional Board Meeting** – The MHLEPQ Board will have one regional Board meeting in the 2023–24 financial year. The Board is seeking suggestions from members regarding the most appropriate place for that.
- **Social Determinants and Issues** – Mental Health system consumers also live in a social context. Members reiterated the importance of the Peak representing the broader issues faced by them, their families and their communities.
- **Meaningful Engagement** – The meeting supported the plans to develop an engagement framework for people with lived experience in Queensland. It was suggested that the Peak should set a standard for engagement for a “stamp of co-design”.
- **Legal Rights** – Current complaint processes were discussed for mental health consumers. The need for individuals making complaints to the Qld Human Rights Commission was highlighted as problematic for those who are marginalised and disadvantaged.
- **Restrictive Practices in Remote Areas** – Members raised the specific issue of mental health patients in remote areas being sedated and at times intubated for air transfers. These practices do not serve a therapeutic purpose and are therefore a form of chemical restraint during transport.
- **Restrictive and Coercive Practices** – The current work by MHLEPQ on use of coercive practices was discussed with approval as a high priority. The draft coercive practices document will soon be available to our full membership for feedback and comment.

Several members described how they saw the MHLEPQ as having the potential of becoming more than an advocacy and policy organisation, by becoming a “movement” and a “tribe” we can belong to. The membership discussed different ways of working together as an organisation and the type of engagements the MHLEPQ could utilise:

- **Working and Project Groups** – people suggested that member consultation needed to go beyond the Lived Experience Advisory Groups, to include member groups with a common experience or interest who can combine and use the MHLEPQ status to develop and implement Grant ideas.
- **Member Facilitator** – The MHLEPQ should seek to create member facilitators who lead and support activity groups, leaving the leadership in the hands of members rather than relying completely on staff.
- **Member Connection Events** – Members may also get together on issues that are not strictly about advocacy and policy development. The “Walk For Awareness” event at the start of Mental Health Week is one example, but it could include anything from a BBQ to parents’ groups and crafts.
- **Member Forum / Chat** – Creating an open and user-friendly chat platform where members can discuss issues of all types and create activities relevant to them.
- **Development of activism** – The MHLEPQ must support members to develop policy and advocacy skills. This is both in terms of representing Lived Experience voices in consultations and co-design but also to be heard outside formalised, systems created consultation processes. These skills include:
 - Safe Story Sharing
 - Peer mentoring in advocacy
 - How to work from a policy platform perspective
 - Public Speaking and Media Training
 - Effective Advocacy

Members discussed the issues they felt most passionate about. These issues were many and varied, including: topics relating to Migrant, CALD, and LGBTQIA+ communities; , gaps between community and inpatient care; dealing with negligence in hospital / ED care; system policy, accountability and transparency; intersection between poverty and mental health; issues concerning autism diagnosis and disadvantages for low functioning consumers; better access to psychological services; advocacy in general; clinician well-being; undervalued diagnoses in the system; legal issues; and Ryan’s rules applied to mental health care.

The next meeting: Wednesday 20 September 2023, MHLEPQ Office – Shop 4/67 Astor Terrace, Spring Hill or by Teams.