

DRAFT Position Statement: Establishment of a New National Consumer Peak

The Federal Government has announced funding for establishment of two national lived experience peaks. One peak for carers and one for consumers.

The Mental Health Lived Experience Peak (MHLEPQ) is member of the National Mental Health Consumer Alliance (NMHCA). The NMHCA is an alliance of seven State and Territory Based Mental Health Consumer peaks: VMIAC (Victoria), Being (NSW), CoMHWA (WA), LELAN (SA), Flourish (Tas), ACT MHCN (ACT) and the MHLEPQ. Combined the alliance represents close to 8,000 members in Australia.

The MHLEPQ welcomes the commitment to establish two peaks. We also support the appointment of TACSI as the agency responsible for leading the co-design process for the two new peaks.

It is important that the co-design is independent and genuine for the two peaks. Given the different stages of development and experiences between consumers and carers this could and should lead to different models for the peaks based on the needs of each group.

We note that every state in Australia and the ACT is represented in the NMHCA and that each of these members have their own membership and engagement processes with consumers locally. We support the funding and recognition of a consumer peak in the Northern Territory to ensure national coverage.

We note that the proposed funding for the new National Consumer peak is equal to the funding provided by the Queensland Government to the MHLEPQ alone. We are concerned that the establishment of a National Peak in isolation from the Alliance members could lead to duplication and even division within the consumer movement.

From a consumer-centred perspective we are one and the same person when we access State delivered or commonwealth funded services and it makes very little sense to separate advocacy between State and Commonwealth.

We support the NMHCA's approach to develop a federated model across relevant consumer organisations building and extending existing resources and strengthening a united consumer voice across Australia.