



**The Hon. Greg Hunt MP**  
Minister for Health and Aged Care

**The Hon. David Coleman MP**  
Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister for  
Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

## **JOINT MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Empowering employers to embed Lived Experience in their mental health and suicide prevention workforce**

The Morrison Government is embedding the role of lived experience within the mental health system and suicide prevention system, with the launch today of Australia's first national guidelines for a lived experience workforce.

The National Mental Health Commission has released the National Lived Experience (Peer) Workforce Development Guidelines, which contains the principles, values and roles of the lived experience workforce, together with detailed steps for employers to help them plan and embed lived experience into their core business.

Led by the Peer Workforce Steering Committee, the guidelines are the result of an extensive consultation and co-design process with almost 800 stakeholders. Participants include people with personal or direct lived experience (consumers), families and carers, designated Lived Experience workers, government employees, mental health commissions, managers and employers, and non-designated colleagues.

Minister for Health and Aged Care, Greg Hunt, said the Morrison Government is committed to expanding, strengthening, upskilling and supporting the Lived Experience mental health workforce.

“A thriving Lived Experience workforce is a vital component of a compassionate, person-centred and recovery-focused mental health and suicide prevention system,” Minister Hunt said.

“By drawing on their life-changing experiences of mental or emotional distress, service use and their journey of recovery, Lived Experience workers are able to offer support and hope to those who need it the most.”

Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, David Coleman, said Lived Experience is central to our reform plan and is a vital part of the mental health workforce.

“These guidelines will have an enduring, positive impact on how we work with people who experience mental ill-health,” Assistant Minister Coleman said.

“I want to thank everyone involved in their development, including the hundreds of people with lived experience who were part of the co-design process. Not only will these guidelines strengthen understanding and collaboration across the mental health and suicide prevention sector and beyond, they will contribute to more effective services and, most importantly, better outcomes for Australians.”

National Mental Health Commission Advisory Board Chair, Lucy Brogden AM, said the guidelines would not have been possible without the many hundreds of people who contributed their time and expertise to help inform, shape and refine them.

“Nor would they have been possible without the pioneers in the consumer and carer movement who paved the way over many decades for the possibilities that exist today,” Ms Brogden said.

“We dedicate this work to all people with a lived experience of mental ill-health, as well as their families and significant others. We stand with them in solidarity, and in the hope all Australians can live a contributing life, with meaning and purpose.”

Through the 2021-22 Budget, the Morrison Government is investing a record \$2.3 billion in the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan to deliver landmark reform in mental health support and treatment for Australians in need.

The Plan recognises that the mental health workforce, including the Lived Experience workforce, is a critical component of Australia’s mental health system.

More than \$3 million is being invested to grow and support the Live Experience workforce through 390 scholarships and opportunities for professional collaboration. The Government will also fund a scoping study to investigate options to improve consumer and carer engagement in the mental health sector.

The additional investments will take the annual federal health expenditure on mental health and suicide prevention to a historic record of \$6.5 billion this year alone.

The National Lived Experience (Peer) Workforce Development Guidelines are available on the Commission’s website: [www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au)

The National Mental Health Commission will now work with the Steering Committee to co-design a series of targeted employer resources, to support employers as they begin to implement the Lived Experience workforce in their organisations.

Anyone experiencing distress can seek immediate advice and support through Lifeline (13 11 14), Beyond Blue (1300 22 4636), or the Government’s digital mental health gateway, Head to Health ([www.headtohealth.gov.au](http://www.headtohealth.gov.au)). Young Australians needing support can access free services through Kids Helpline (1800 55 1800), their local headspace or online through eheadspace (<https://headspace.org.au/eheadspace/>).

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