

2022



Lived Experience
A U S T R A L I A

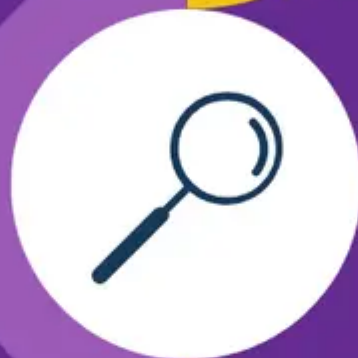
ANNUAL REPORT

Key Activities

1 July 2021 - 30 June 2022

ADVOCACY

- Lived experience input into 59 working groups
- 37 advocacy submissions
- 1 parliamentary inquiry appearance
- 11 State & Territory Advisory Forums held across Australia



RESEARCH PROJECTS

- 4 independent research projects
- 9 University partnership research projects

CAPACITY BUILDING

- 1,152 lived experience participants accessed training
- 371 clinicians accessed training
- 640 online courses completed
- 2,500 webinar views



COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIPS

- 22 major collaborations
- 45 Organisational partnerships



PROMOTION & NETWORKS

- 9 Conference Presentations
- 3 Conference Sponsorships
- 2,272 social media following
- 2,137 friends/subscribers



Lived Experience
A U S T R A L I A

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Welcome from the Chair & Executive Director



Sharon Lawn

I want to thank our dedicated Board, staff, and friends for their strong support, and to acknowledge the huge effort, passion and commitment everyone has given over the past year. I want to personally thank everyone for supporting and making me feel so welcome in the role of leading Lived Experience Australia this past year. I look forward to our future.

I'm particularly proud and privileged to share this Annual Report with you as it reflects the commitment and hard work of the many individuals who are part of Lived Experience Australia (LEA). It also reflects my first year since moving into the role as LEA Chair and Executive Director in August 2021.

This last year has been a very good year for LEA, despite the many changes and challenges we have all faced. The financial year to June 2022 has proven to be an incredibly dynamic time for mental health across Australia, with many significant reform agendas at both state and national levels. These have seen us expand our activities, deepen our existing collaborations and partnerships, and forge new ones. We have focused on what we do best in the areas of advocacy, capacity building,

lived experience research and partnerships. Our research projects in particular, have elevated the voice of lived experience to advocate for improved physical health and mental health care, and greater respect for and inclusion of consumers' and carers' expertise and experiences.

We are pleased to continue our partnership with the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatry (RANZCP), the Australian Psychological Society (APS), the Australian Private Hospitals Association (APHA), and Healthscope, and to build new partnerships with Equally Well, AMHOCN and others who share a commitment to strengthening the mental health workforce to provide quality mental health services.



This financial year has seen LEA representatives positioned on 59 key decision-making committees and working groups. Notably, this has included being part of the work of the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC) in its review of national standards in mental health care, and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) as it strives to deliver quality support to the community.

LEA has also provided 37 submissions to inform the mental health reform agenda, both at national and state levels. This has included lived experience input to the Victorian, Western Australian, South Australian and Queensland mental health reform agendas, and advocacy surrounding telehealth, privacy, restrictive practice, and many other important concerns for consumers and carers.

We were privileged to appear before the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

Lived Experience Australia's small team of dedicated and skilled people makes a significant impact in mental health advocacy. Our Board, staff team and lived experience representative pool bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise through their lived and living experience as consumers, carers, or both. Our goal is to ensure the voice of lived experience is central in transforming mental health services through reform processes, policy, service planning, delivery, and evaluation. Through our research projects, every voice of lived experience that we gather and promote is evidence, and this evidence is central to our advocacy.

Lived Experience Australia

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 peak for private sector consumers and carers. 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. 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.

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, with extensive existing networks in all states and territories.

We provide support to government in bringing lived experience perspectives that are essential to drive change at the national level. We champion the government in achieving national key deliverables and outcomes like the 5th National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan, through our lived experience led research, submissions, and providing lived experience representatives.

All LEA board members and staff have a lived or living experience of mental ill-health as consumers, carers or both.

Our four pillars of focus

Lived Experience Australia is committed to amplifying the voices of lived experience of consumers, their carers and families, through engagement and participation. This is an essential approach that gives respect to people's human rights and represents genuine partnerships to deliver the best outcomes at individual, service, organisation, and systemic level. LEA provides four key pillars of focus for our work:

1



Advocacy

Our representations and submissions enable lived experience voices to be heard by decision makers

2



Research

We collect lived experience voices to strengthen our advocacy and learn what is important for individuals

3



Capacity Building

Our learning programs build capacity and capabilities of consumers, carers, clinicians, and organisations

4



Partnerships

We work with other organisations to strengthen lived experience voices and capacity. We come together to increase our impact

Our work is founded on ensuring lived and living experiences are heard and used as the foundation for mental health reform.

1. Advocacy

VIEW ALL



SUBMISSIONS



11 State Advisory Forums held across Australia



59 Working Groups



37 Advocacy Submissions



1 Parliamentary Inquiry

While the short-term impact of our advocacy submissions are often unknown, here are a few examples of the impact our advocacy has had this year.

National Cancer Strategy

Our submission to the National Cancer Strategy has been central in informing their consultations and framework to include mental health as a priority population.

Psychology Workforce

Our shared advocacy with the Australian Clinical Psychologists Association (ACPA) regarding the Psychology Workforce resulted in almost all recommendations put forward being recognised in the national budget.

Telehealth Psychiatry

Our Telehealth submission contributed to the successful advocacy of the RANZCP in having key item numbers re-instated pertaining to psychiatric care.

IAR for Mental Healthcare

Our submission to the Initial Assessment and Referral (IAR) for Mental Healthcare consultation was highly commended for its detail and utility in revising this framework, we received the following feedback "I have briefly read the response and am blown away. My sincerest thanks for the level of specificity and detail in the LEA submission".

Veteran Royal Commission

Our submission to the Veteran Royal Commission was highly praised by the Commissioners, as was the evidence/research with families that underpinned it. Because of the Families Guide that LEA helped develop, Emergency Services Health and the Tasmanian Police Association are now adapting the Guide for distribution to all police families across Victoria and Tasmania.

Aging & Adult Safeguarding

Immediately following submission Aging and Adult Safeguarding (Restrictive Practices) Amendment Bill – SA (Nov 21), our Chair and ED was asked to contribute to a more detailed discussion to inform the next steps for the bill, by the SA Parliamentary Representative and Minister responsible.

Key areas of advocacy this year included



We provided lived experience input and representation for

- Department of Health
- Department of Social Services
- Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care
- National Mental Health Commission
- Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists
- Mental Health Australia
- Private Hospitals Association
- HealthScope
- National Disability Insurance Agency
- Australian Self Care Alliance
- Equally Well
- Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia
- SANE
- Mental Health Lived Experience Engagement Network
- ALIVE
- and many more

2. Research

Lived Experience Australia is committed to building evidence based, transformational lived experience research. All our research projects are designed, analysed and reported by consumers and carers with lived or living experience of mental ill-health. LEA aims to ensure that mental health reform is driven by lived experience voices and we are trusted to authentically represent the personal experiences shared with us by consumers, families, and carers through our research programs. This year we completed four research projects exploring consumers' and carers' experiences of psychology services, physical and mental health care, use of the NOCC Outcome Measures and carers' experiences of South Australian mental health services.

In addition to our own research projects, we have also partnered with universities on nine projects including:

- RMIT University, Borderline Personality as Social Phenomenon
- Newcastle University, Physical health and mental health, contributing family and lived experience input
- Flinders University, Borderline Personality Disorder and Suicidality
- Flinders University, Supporting your veteran or emergency services first responder in help-seeking for mental health concerns
- University of Melbourne, ALIVE
- Central Adelaide Local Health Network, Life Skills Profile Measure Study

Our research is designed and undertaken by, for and with lived experience and promoted as evidence to drive change in policy, practice, and reform nationally

- Mitchell Institute and Equally Well, Consumer and Carer Expert Working Group 'Being Equally Well'
- Mitchell Institute and University of Victoria, Self-Care for Health: A national policy Blueprint (18-month collaboration to develop the Blueprint and Policy Briefs)
- Monash University, 2021 Turner Institute Consumer and Community Involvement Awards. Developing a tool to assess and/or support personal recovery

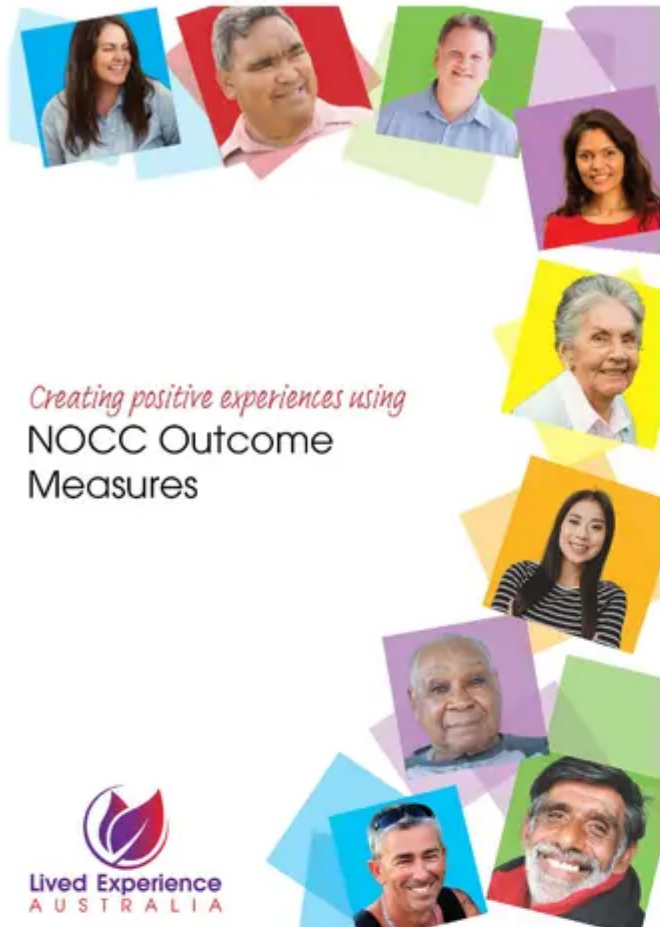
VIEW ALL



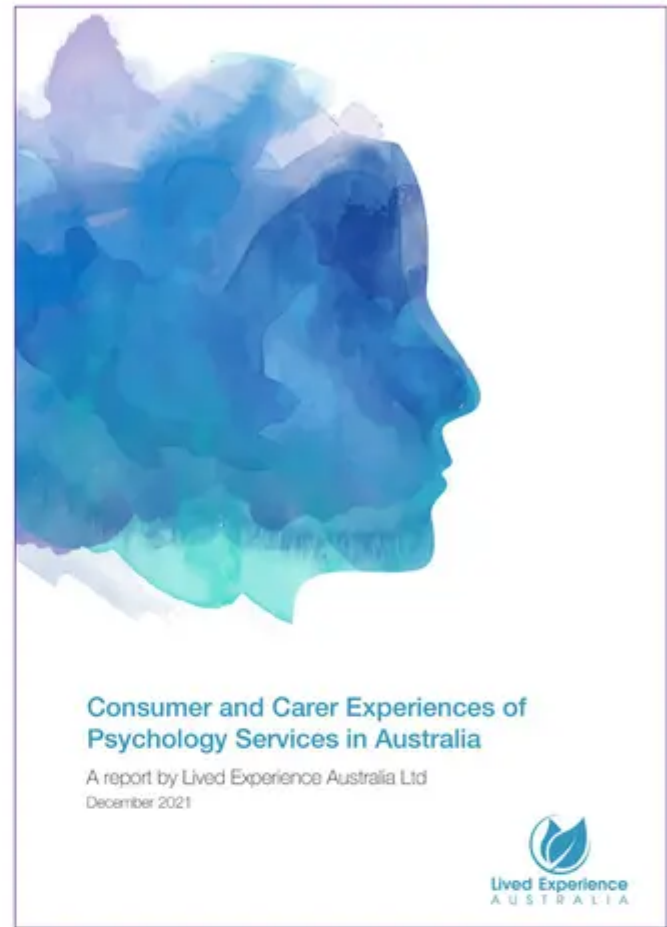
RESEARCH

“A colleague just shared with me a link to your report ‘Creating positive experiences using NOCC Outcome measures’. This is a really informative piece of work”

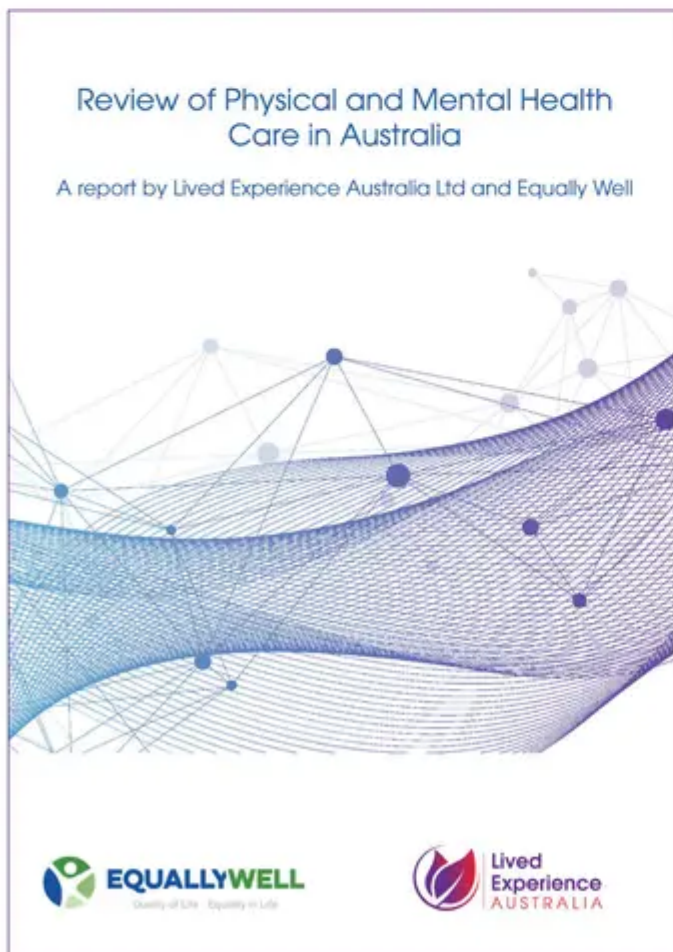
Melissa Bond, SA Commission on Excellence and Innovation in Health



www.livedexperienceaustralia.com.au/nocc-report



www.livedexperienceaustralia.com.au/psychology-report



www.livedexperienceaustralia.com.au/physical-health-research



www.livedexperienceaustralia.com.au/research

3. Capacity Building

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.

We provide capacity building training to support clinicians, organisations, advocates, consumers and carers through advertised sessions and customised in-service options.

Our capacity building program includes:

- Workshops
- Webinars
- eLearning modules
- Communities of Practice
- Mentoring
- Consultancy services
- Downloadable resources
- Sponsorships for Cert IV Mental Health Peer Work (note this program has now finished)

This year we launched our new online learning site where consumers, carers, peer workers and clinicians can access eLearning modules at times that are most suitable for them.

Lived Experience Participants

92% developed their advocacy skills

96% felt more confident to advocate

94% felt better able to manage emotional triggers

88% felt more confident in public speaking



Cert IV Mental Health Peer Work

Sponsorships provided with 13 graduating this year
+ 11 new sponsorships granted



1,523

consumers, carers, peer workers & clinicians accessing training



2,500

webinar views with 1,100 unique viewers



36

online learning modules created covering 15 courses



445

new online learning user accounts created



56

Communities of Practice participants over 5 programs

What clinical staff say about our programs:

"[I enjoyed] the level of detail which the speaker provided about the more nuanced ways to consider and engage CALD communities. It was just excellent, and I learned quite a few new things, tips and strategies that I didn't know before."

"I gained an insight of some continuous improvement I can implement in my project work when talking to organisations who utilise our Reps to make sure they are trauma informed."

"[I learned] The absolute need for trauma informed, trauma preventative and trauma healing support to be embedded into workplaces, community and society."

What consumers and carers say about our programs:

"The information presented was leading edge and powerful and supported by discussion in the chat"

"Engaging and informative. It stimulated me to look further to increase my skills"

"[I learned] How to better advocate in mental health settings. How to look after myself and others while undertaking advocacy work. The importance of identifying my personal values and how they influence my advocacy"

What peer workers say about our programs:

"It was great to hear discussion about some of the issues, and to know that there are steps being done to professionalise and better equip peer workers"

"Expanded my knowledge of the peer worker role"

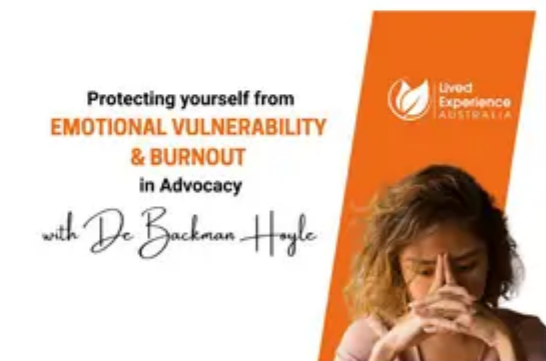
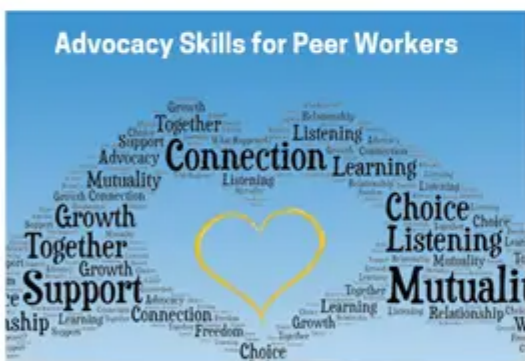
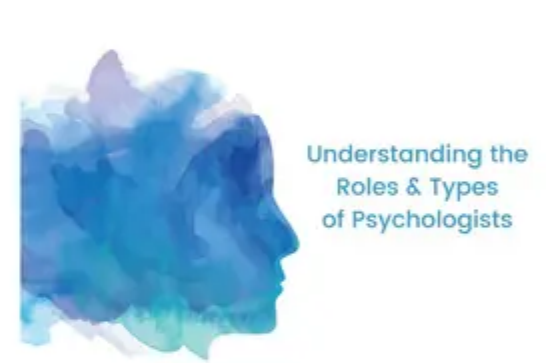
"Met some amazing and inspiring like-minded people. Picked up new skills. Gained a lot of confidence"

"Thank you for this opportunity to take part. It is exciting to feel part of a larger undertaking re peer work nationally"

Online Learning

In September 2021 we launched our new online learning site learn.livedexperienceaustralia.com.au

We now have 36 learning modules over 15 courses suitable for consumers, carers, peer workers, and clinicians covering a broad range of topics to support capacity building. In just 9 months, we had 445 individuals create an online learning account and over 640 courses completed demonstrating the value of our online learning for the mental health sector. Here are some of the courses currently available:



Customised Learning

In addition to our online learning, we have also provided a range of customised, in-service learning options for organisations this year.



Trauma Informed Engagement
of Lived Experience
Representatives
for Clinicians



For Lived Experience Representatives:

- Advocacy Foundation Program 2 x 2 hour series
- Boundaries in Lived Experience Work 2 x 2 hour series
- Using Personal Stories to Influence 2 hour session
- Communities of Practice Program 6 x 2 hour series

For Clinicians, Staff and Organisations:

- Trauma-informed engagement of Lived Experience Representatives 2.5 hour session
- Establishing & improving lived experience committees 2.5 hour session
- Best practice in consumer and carer inclusion 2 x 2 hour series

View our [learning brochure](#) to find out more about the learning we can offer your organisation

4. Partnerships

Lived Experience Australia works closely with many organisations to enhance and extend our advocacy impact. Together we are making a difference for mental health consumers, families, and carers in Australia.

Lived Experience Australia has partnered and collaborated with over 45 national and state based organisations this year, focusing on transforming mental health services in Australia.

While we cannot list all our partners and collaborators, here are some examples of our partnerships this year:

- We supported the **Australian Government Department of Health's** review of the Head to Health website through convening several consumer and carer focus groups
- **Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatry** have been close partners over the year through combined advocacy efforts on key areas such as the need for continued access to telehealth psychiatry
- We joined the **National Psychosocial Support Advocacy Alliance** led by the **Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia** along with 34 other leading mental health organisations to address the gap in psychosocial supports to ensure people can access the services they need to support their recovery
- The **Australian Psychological Society** and the **Australian Clinical Psychology Association** partnered with us to advocate for investment in expanding the psychology workforce
- We completed a joint research project with **Equally Well** to gather feedback on consumer and carer experiences of accessing mental health services and the level of enquiry and support for their physical health care needs
- We worked with **AMHOCN** in undertaking a research project seeking consumers' positive experiences on the use of outcome measures (i.e. the National Outcomes and Casemix Collection), the outcomes of which will be used by AMHOCN to support development of training and best practice methods for mental health professionals
- We were granted associate membership of **LGBTIQ+ Australia**
- Our partnership with **SANE Australia** continued through the SANE Online Forums

“Team LEA - Thank you so much for your continuing ‘can-do’ attitude, we are blessed to be able to partner with you as we try to increase our social impact.”

Vinita Godinho, General Manager Policy & Advocacy
Australian Psychological Society

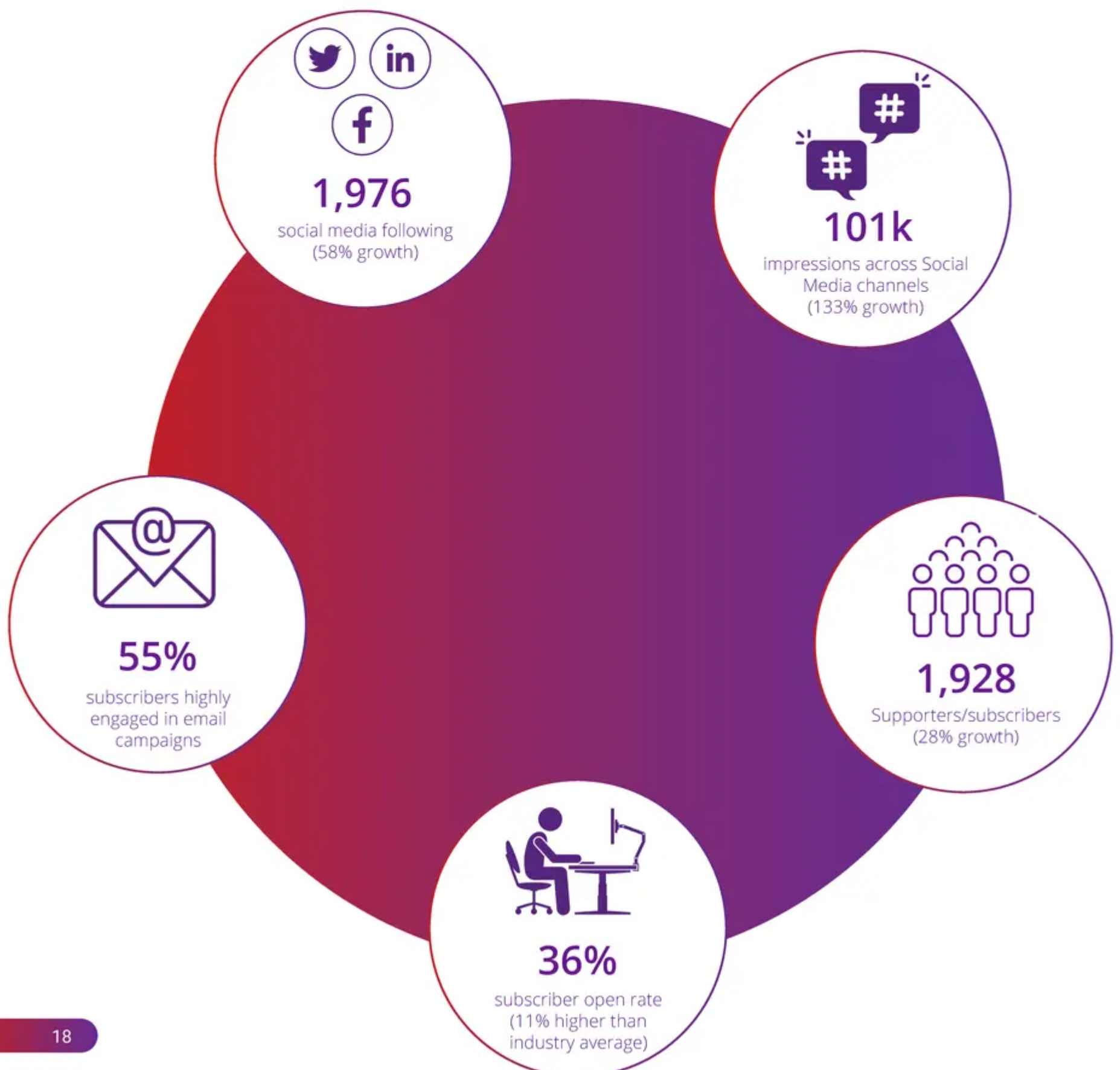
Thank you to all our partners and collaborators,
with particular thanks to the following
organisations for their ongoing support of Lived
Experience Australia:

SANE We're people like you.



Our connections

Lived Experience Australia has an extensive reach throughout the lived experience community in Australia. We have 1,900 subscribers/supporters who have lived or living experience of mental ill-health as a consumer, carer, family member, or are peer workers, clinicians or other supporters, with some being a combination of these. Our social media following of 1,976 individuals comes from three key platforms, LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. All LEA supporters are an important connection we have with the lived experience community. We have high engagement rates when sharing opportunities for advocacy input, capacity building programs or contributing to lived experience research. LEA also contributes to the greater mental health research space by connecting other organisations to our lived experience community. We thank each individual who has contributed to LEA's advocacy and research through sharing their experiences with us and for the trust they have in LEA to authentically represent their needs and interests.





Financial Snapshot

In line with our requirements as a registered charity, Lived Experience Australia (LEA) is audited each year, and for the 2022 financial year the audit was conducted by HLB Mann Judd (SA) Pty Ltd.

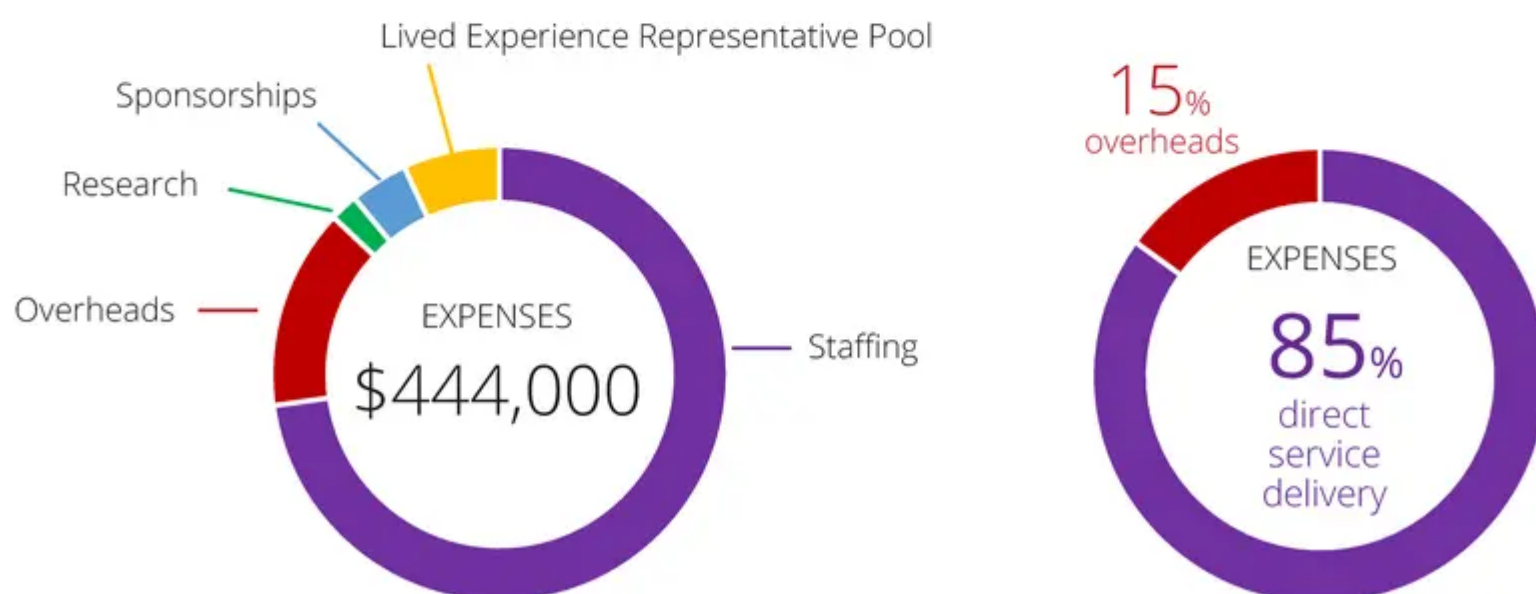
LEA became a company limited by guarantee in 2016 and is a registered health promotion charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) and with the Australian Business Register (ABR). As a registered charity LEA is regulated, ensuring we continue to meet our ongoing requirements and obligations.

Our core funding is received from the Australian Government Department of Health with annual contributions also received from our key supporters including the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, the Australian Psychological Society, the Australian Private Hospitals Association and Healthscope. We also receive funds from our capacity building program, project management and donations.

This year our expenditure included an investment in the expansion of our staff team to support our increasing operations. We welcomed Emily Unity as training officer, De Backman Hoyle as senior collaborations coordinator and Janne McMahon moved into the role of strategic advisor. We also invested in our operational infrastructure with the development of a new Learning Management System to manage our online training and a transition to Sharepoint as our information management system and platform for team collaboration. We are supported by technology donations from Connecting Up which enables us to secure software at heavily reduced rates.

All our staff work from virtual offices located across Australia so that we can focus our expenditure on direct service delivery with limited overhead costs.

Overview of expenditure 2021-2022:



Our people



Sharon Lawn
Chair, Executive Director
State & Territory Advisory Forum
Coordinator (SA)



Darren Jiggins
Deputy Chair, Board Director
State & Territory Advisory Forum
Coordinator (TAS)



Helene Langley
Board Director,
State & Territory Advisory Forum
Coordinator (VIC)



Lorraine Powell
Board Director
State & Territory Advisory Forum
Coordinator (WA)



Judy Bentley
Board Director
State & Territory Advisory Forum
Coordinator (ACT)



Aaron Fornarino
Board Director



Simone Allan
Board Director
State & Territory Advisory Forum
Coordinator (NSW)



Evan Bichara
Multicultural Advisor



Bill Pring
Clinical Advisor (Psychiatrist)

We would like to acknowledge and thank our all of our Board Directors for the commitment and support of Lived Experience Australia over the past year.

In June 2022 Norm Wotherspoon, Board Director and QLD State & Territory Advisory Forum Coordinator resigned after many years of service to Lived Experience Australia. We thank him for his many contributions to LEA during this time.



Christine Kaine
Operations Manager



Heather Smith
Marketing & Communications Officer



De Backman Hoyle
Senior Collaboration Coordinator



Emily Unity
Training Officer & Facilitator



Janne McMahon
Founder & Strategic Advisor [retired]

In addition to our Board Directors, staff and advisors, Lived Experience Australia has a preferred representative pool who are engaged for their diverse lived and living experiences to advocate for improved mental health systems and to support mental health reform that is based on the needs and aspirations of consumers, families and carers across Australia.

Lived Experience Leadership Award

TheMHS 2021

As a small, 100% consumer and carer staffed and governed non-profit organisation, Lived Experience Australia has a significant impact on the mental health sector. Our organisation receives limited funding, and our achievements would not be possible without the many voluntary hours that our staff, coordinators, and directors put into their work. We are a small organisation that works to create significant impact in mental health.

In October 2021, Lived Experience Australia was publicly recognised for this impact in the Lived Experience Leadership Category at The Mental Health Services Awards for 'Making a Difference with and for Consumers and Carers'.

While we are grateful for this recognition, we are acutely aware of those who share their lived experience with us. We would not be able to undertake the strength and volume of advocacy that we do without them being willing to do this. We thank everyone who participates in our research, take our surveys, and share their experiences with us through State Advisory Forums and training programs.



Bringing these experiences together means we have significant evidence to inform policy decisions all levels of government. We are also able to provide lived experience input to mental health services and organisations, supporting them to engage and partner with consumers and carers in a person-centred, recovery-oriented, and trauma-informed approach.

Of course, Lived Experience Australia is thrilled to have received this prestigious award, and the recognition of the work we do for our community. Knowing that we can have this kind of impact is inspiration to continue to advocate for and with those with lived experience.

“Mental health consumers and carers are – and for 20 years have been – at the core of our work. They are why we do what we do.”

Janne McMahon, OAM
Founder of Lived Experience Australia



Lived Experience

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