

Would you like to improve the way legal services assist people at the Mental Health Tribunal?

Victoria Legal Aid, together with the Mental Health Legal Centre and Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, are running a project to increase and improve legal services at the Mental Health Tribunal.

The project will be using co-design. Co-design means people with lived experience are part of designing services so that they better meet the needs of people who use them.

We will be working with lawyers, people who have been placed on treatment orders, carers, clinicians, the Tribunal and other stakeholders to design the process. This means people with lived experience of mental health issues and compulsory treatment orders will help design new ways that legal services can assist them.

Why are we doing this co-design project?

In 2021, the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System delivered its final report.

- The Royal Commission found that lawyers help support people to exercise their rights at the Mental Health Tribunal.
- The Royal Commission made a recommendation for Victoria to increase access to legal advice and representation at the Mental Health Tribunal.

Who is in the co-design group?

This project will set up a 'co-design group'. The co-design group will be a group of at least 15 people including:

- People with lived experience of mental health issues
- Carers/supporters
- Legal services
- Aboriginal community-controlled organisations
- Advocacy and rights organisations
- Mental Health Services
- Mental Health Tribunal
- Department of Health

What will happen in the co-design group?

The co-design group will look at ways legal services can assist people subject to compulsory treatment and increase legal representation at the Mental Health Tribunal.

For example:

- How can lawyers help more people at Mental Health Tribunal?
- How can legal services improve the work they do at the Mental Health Tribunal?

Co-design Workshops

- The co-design group will meet between **April** and **June 2023** (see suggested dates below)
- There will be 5 workshops. However, an extra online workshop may be scheduled if needed.
- Each workshop will run for **3 hours** (with breaks included)
- The workshops will be **online**. However, we hope the group can meet **in-person** for at least one workshop. This will be decided by the group in Workshop 1.

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|----------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Workshop dates | First co-design Workshop | 20 th April 2023 |
| | Second co-design Workshop | 4 th May 2023 |
| | Third co-design Workshop | 11 th May 2023 |
| | Fourth co-design Workshop | 25 th May 2023 |
| | Last co-Design Workshop | 1 st June 2023 |

How will the project make sure the views and experiences of people with lived experience are listened to?

1. The workshops will be run by a facilitator with lived experience of mental health issues.
2. Everyone in the group will have equal opportunity to speak and share thoughts.
3. The lived experience perspective of compulsory treatment orders and the mental health tribunal will be highly valued.

Will I be paid?

Yes.

The project's payment rate is **\$50** per hour (this includes workshop time plus extra 30 mins per workshop for pre-reading)

Payment will be into your bank account. If you do not have a bank account or there is a reason why you do not want payment via bank transfer, please let us know.

Will this affect access to future legal advice or representation?

No.

Being part of this project will not affect you getting legal advice or representation from a legal service in the future.

How will my information be handled by VLA?

All your personal information collected during this project will be handled according to the law under the *Privacy and Data Protection 2014* (Vic) and the *Legal Aid 1978* (Vic). This means that we will:

- only collect the information necessary for this project.
- only use or disclose information that you have agreed to and for the reasons you agreed to it.
- keep your information secure.
- ensure that you can participate in this project anonymously if you wish.

How do I let you know I'm interested?

Please contact Annie Hooper (pronouns: she/her). Annie works at Victoria Legal Aid as the Project Coordinator. Annie works every weekday but Tuesday.

You can call Annie on **03 9269 0225** or you can send a short email to Annie.Hooper@vla.vic.gov.au.