



## Media release

Tuesday 5 December 2023 / For immediate release

### **Coalition of community peaks, mental health and alcohol and drug organisations call on Victorian Government to implement key Royal Commission Recommendation**

VMIAC and SHARC are leading a group of fifteen community sector peaks, mental health and AOD organisations calling on the Victorian Government to commit to a timeline and plan to establish a Consumer Leadership Agency, Recommendation 29 from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.

The Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System recommended that a Consumer Leadership Agency be established to ensure that the voices and expertise of Victorians with lived experience of mental illness are at the heart of the new system. It was designated as a short-term priority that would underpin other reforms.

The Victorian Government did commit to establishing the Consumer Leadership Agency initially, but more than two and a half years later there is no clear plan or timeline for when this will happen.

The letter reads:

*"As leaders of Victoria's community mental health and advocacy sector, we are seeking confirmation that the Victorian Government remains committed to establishing the Consumer Leadership Agency, as outlined in Recommendation 29 of the Mental Health Royal Commission."*

*"We are seeking a clear timeline for when it will commence operation, noting the centrality of this reform to the Royal Commission's vision for a Victorian mental health system with consumer leadership at its heart."*

*"We urge the Victorian Government to allocate funding for the immediate establishment of the Consumer Leadership Agency. This is a priority issue for our sector."*

Signatories include the Victorian Council of Social Service, Mental Health Victoria, the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, SHARC, Tandem, Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association, Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, Women's Mental Health Alliance, Foundation House, Mind, Wellways, Centre for Mental Health Learning, Flourish Australia and Neami National.

VMIAC CEO, Craig Wallace, said *"There is growing concern in the community and amongst mental health services that further delay on this critical recommendation will undermine ongoing Victorian Government reforms."*

*"The Consumer Leadership Agency was designed to be the backbone for lived experience in mental health services and an incubator for the next generation of lived experience leaders. It is the missing piece of the puzzle in Victorian mental health reform."*

*"These fifteen groups represent peak bodies and frontline services across the mental health and alcohol and drugs system. We have signed on to this joint letter because we are concerned that the strong commitments to consumer-led reform made at the time of the Royal Commission might have faltered over the last year."*

SHARC CEO, Clare Davies, said *"Lived and living experience must be at the heart of Victoria's new mental health system or we will keep hearing the same tragic stories that the Royal Commission heard for years to come."*

**Read the full letter here: [Joint letter re: Royal Commission Recommendation 29 - Consumer Leadership Agency](#)**