



29 February 2024

## **Rec 29 Mental Health Royal Commission**

As the third anniversary of the final report of the Mental Health Royal Commission's final report draws near (2 March 2024), we seek to draw your attention to a critical recommendation that is overdue in its implementation.

Recommendation 29 called for the establishment of a non-government agency led by people with lived experience of mental illness or psychological distress. Intended to be at the heart of systems transformation, it has a distinctive remit to drive systems change by inspiring new and different consumer-led approaches to wellbeing and recovery; developing the consumer-led sector; nurturing and connecting consumer leaders; and partnering to lift the bar on lived experience involvement.

For consumers, it will be a place of pride, belonging and hope. A safe and respectful home for bringing our ideas for better mental health and wellbeing support to life and where we can be supported to lead real change.

Victoria's mental health system was not built on foundations of lived experience leadership. The Royal Commission envisaged the consumer-led agency would be a pillar in the foundations of the *new* system and provided for it to be set *up by the end of 2022*. It intended for lived-experienced innovation and leadership to be part of the fabric of future services.

Rather than being sidelined while other foundational components of the mental health system are being built, this core infrastructure for consumer-lived experience needs to be present and active in shaping change.

Late last year 15 of Victoria's most influential community sector organisations [wrote to the Victorian Premier Jacinta Allan, Victorian Treasurer Tim Pallas and Victorian Minister for Mental Health Ingrid Stitt](#) seeking a clear timeline for the establishment of the Consumer Leadership Agency and warning its continued absence poses a real risk to reform directions. Some voices from our community about the importance of Recommendation 29 are overpage.

We seek your support in contacting the Premier and Treasurer about the need for action on this Royal Commission recommendation. Your support will be critical to ensuring the missing piece at the heart of Victoria's mental health system reform is established in the 2024 Victorian Budget.

Yours sincerely

**Vrinda Edan**  
A/CEO, Vic Mental Illness Awareness Council

**Clare Davies**  
CEO, Self Help Addiction Resource Centre

**Consumer lived 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.**

**It is essential to holistically implement the Royal Commission recommendations and understand what it means to keep consumers at the centre.**

**It will enable consumers to feel seen, understood, valued and connected. It will foster empathy and hope for recovery, making us feel less alone and isolated.**

**A beacon for hope that guides systems change.**

**We must be central to reform to the mental health system/s to create meaningful, sustainable change that protects human rights.**

**Lived experience is power and knowledge for the future.**

**We need a place of our own where we are safe and where we can connect with each other.**

**Consumer voices need uplifting to reduce stigma and make services more responsive to our needs.**

**It's time  
for Rec 29**

