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# sharc

**Self Help Addiction Resource Centre**



# **Strategic Plan 2024 - 2027**

This report was developed by the community, leaders and members of SHARC (Self Help Addiction Resource Centre).

**SHARC**

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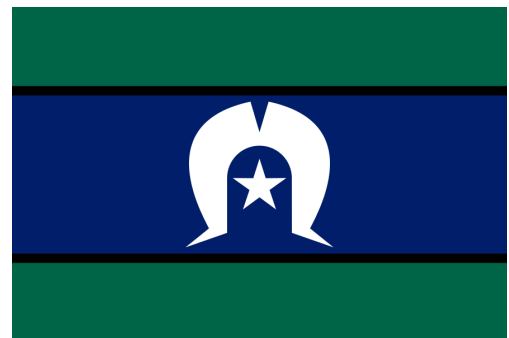
# Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first peoples and Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and waterways on which we live. We honour and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

We recognise all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their ongoing strength and resilience despite the past and present impacts of colonisation and dispossession. We acknowledge the important role that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people play as leaders in their communities and across Victoria.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples represent the world's oldest living culture. We celebrate and respect this continuing culture and strive to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as they draw on the strength of their community, families, and culture to build a bright future.

We particularly acknowledge the lived and living experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in their personal and collective journeys. This includes the inequitable treatment that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have received, and continue to receive, by health and related services and a valuing of their perspectives on social and emotional well-being.





# Recognition of Lived and Living Experience

We recognise the lived and living experience (LLE) of people seeking to use their expertise to build and maintain services for the community.

You inspire us to promote and support the voices of everyone who accesses or needs to access AOD and MHWB services, as well as the voices of their families, carers, and supporters.

# Foreword

## A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD AND CEO

SHARC, as an organisation, is growing and ever-changing. As we continue to navigate the changing environment in the years to come, this strategic plan will ensure that we continue to support our community through the expansion of our LLE-led services, influence public opinion and play a key role in sector reforms. These priorities will be underpinned through our commitment to financial and workforce sustainability.

Our strategic plan reflects the voices and LLE of consumers, family members, staff, volunteers and directors of the Board. We have incorporated the honest and bold feedback from all our stakeholders in defining our priorities and objectives for the years ahead. While we anticipate growth in our core services, our culture, as captured in our core values, will remain – this is what makes SHARC unique.

We look forward to working with you to implement our strategic plan.



# Vision & Purpose

## OUR VISION

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Lived expertise is at the heart of inclusive communities and services, where people proudly share their experience and support each other in a society free of stigma and discrimination.

## OUR PURPOSE

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We transform lives, services and society through our community's lived and living experience of alcohol and other drugs, gambling and related harms.



# Our Values



## LIVED EXPERTISE

We embrace the richness of each person's experience and recognise people and communities as the experts in their own lives.

## INCLUSION

We are welcoming and empathetic.



## COMMUNITY

We sustain our community for the progression of all, building a sense of belonging through genuine relationships.

## LEADERSHIP

We lead by example.

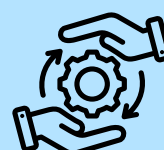


## ACTION

We work together, taking action to address power imbalances as we fight for equity.

## TRANSFORMATION

We are innovative and resourceful, constantly learning and evolving as we respond to community needs and create lasting positive change.



# Lived Expertise

## DEFINITION

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Lived expertise is the knowledge, wisdom and frameworks we intentionally apply in our work, arising from reflection on our direct lived and living experience of:

- The impacts of alcohol or drug use, gambling and related issues on ourselves and/or our loved ones
- Society's responses to these issues, including our experiences of surviving stigma, discrimination and extreme marginalisation
- The effects of services and strategies that governments and other organisations put in place to address these issues
- For some of us, the process of changing our relationship to these issues.



# Setting

## HISTORY

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SHARC's journey began in the 1980s with the founding of the Understanding and Support (US) Society and the Self Help and Substance Use Project (SHASU). Both organisations were driven by the principles of mutual self-help.

In 1995, the US Society and SHASU united to form SHARC. Over the following 28 years, SHARC's work has expanded in many directions. We have always kept our central focus on being experts by experience and our approach of self-help and mutual support.

## OUR WORK

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SHARC's programs and services operate locally, across Victoria, and increasingly nationally. Our work's positive impacts are visible in the lives of individual people and families as well as in changes in sectors, systems, and policy.

Each year, we assist over 9000 individuals and families impacted by alcohol and other drugs, gambling and related harms, helping them to help themselves. Our LLE-led services offer telephone and online support, education programs, counselling, peer support groups, residential recovery and more.

We support the growth and sustainability of the LLE workforce through training, supervision and support. And we advocate, educate, and provide an important platform for the consumer voice in the alcohol and other drugs sector through the Association of Participating Service Users (APSU).



## OUR CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

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The past five years have been a time of major change for SHARC as well as for the broader world. We have lived through a pandemic and experienced the impacts of this on community well-being and cohesion. Cost of living and housing pressures are being felt widely, but especially by disadvantaged communities. Racism, stigma and discrimination continue to affect the lives of many of us and become more visible in response to societal events. The political will and resources available to address disadvantage remain too low.

On the positive side, Victoria's Mental Health Royal Commission was a watershed moment for the mental health sector and beyond. The Royal Commission enabled SHARC to share our expertise and to see LLE elevated, respected, and celebrated. The recommendations create many opportunities for LLE to lead across all aspects of service planning, delivery, and evaluation.

We are in the midst of an important period of transformation. We are committed to working in partnership with others to see LLE better recognised by governments and embedded effectively across sectors and systems.

As an organisation, SHARC has grown and developed significantly since our last Strategic Plan was created in 2018. Key changes for our organisation over these five years have included:

- Increase in our budget, from revenue of \$2.5M in 2017-18 to \$7M in 23-24
- Growth in our workforce, from 21 FTE in 2017-18 to 35 FTE in 23-24
- As with many other organisations, the number of active volunteers has decreased during COVID, however, we are actively recruiting to address the situation
- An internal restructuring to strengthen management capacity and improve our approach to corporate services
- Inclusion of new areas of activity such as Three Sides of a Coin, the growth of our workforce development programs through Peer Projects, and more
- Greater emphasis on program evaluation and consumer-informed research
- Stepping up to take leadership of Oxford Houses Australia and the Australian Hub of Intentional Peer Support and to provide an auspice for many LLE-led initiatives.

## OUR STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

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SHARC has many strengths. Our community, including those who access our services, are courageous and resilient. Our volunteers, staff and Board members are dedicated, enthusiastic and collaborative. Our people are the heart of our organisation and what makes everything else possible. Our culture of acceptance, care and trust creates genuine belonging. Our services are highly valued and sought after. We are well-regarded, innovative, and a vocal advocate for change. This plan continues to highlight and build on these core strengths.

We also face challenges. We are under-resourced, both financially and in staff capacity, for the scope of work we wish to take on. Our public profile is limited and there is scope to strengthen our community recognition. We need to continue enhancing our governance processes and corporate systems and to improve connections across our different program areas. Our plan has a focus on strengthening and sustaining these foundations.





## THE PATH AHEAD

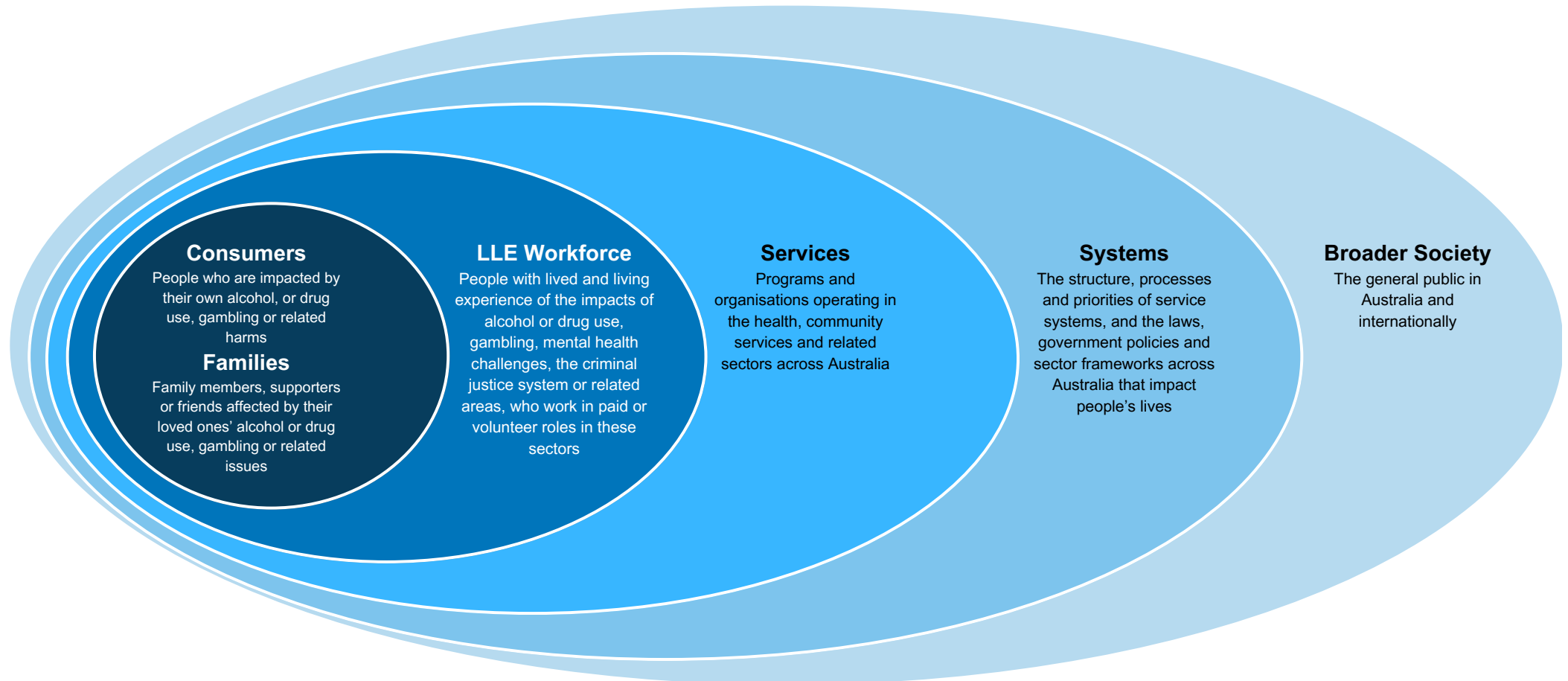
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This strategic plan has been developed in collaboration with SHARC's board members, staff, and volunteers, as well as with input from consumers, family members, and external stakeholders. The plan positions us to meet the new challenges and opportunities that are all around us. It sets out a blueprint for continuing to increase our impact while we sustain our community and the shared values that define us.

SHARC's work is as vital now as ever. We are well placed to continue to expand our LLE-led services, influence public opinion, and play a key role in sector reforms. LLE has always been the heart of SHARC and what makes us unique. We will stay true to this in the next phase of our development.



# Impact Areas



## Our intended impacts:

Consumers and families are safe, healthy and well supported, are part of inclusive peer communities and have a voice, agency and opportunities to create change.

The lived and living experience workforce is thriving, valued and well supported, with increased access to professional learning, a range of professional pathways and a strong capacity to support others and lead change.

Services value lived and living experience equally with clinical qualifications, and embed lived expertise within program design, evaluation and improvement, leading to services that are safe, accessible, empowering and better suited to meet people's needs.

Service systems, policies and laws are shaped by lived and living experience and provide compassionate restorative responses, not punishment and discrimination. Social drivers of disadvantage are addressed, and cost savings occur from reduced crisis / tertiary responses.

Societal attitudes change from stigma to empathy, and behaviours change from discrimination to support, as the public comes to understand alcohol or drug use, gambling and related issues are health matters mediated by society, not individual failings.

# Strategic Priorities 2024 - 2027

## STRENGTHENING OUR FOUNDATIONS

We will strengthen our governance, corporate systems, financial sustainability, community recognition and internal connections, to support us as we deliver and expand our work.

## SUSTAINING OUR COMMUNITY

We will further develop our workforce and continue to engage and co-create our work with our broader community, ensuring we are focused on their priorities.

## EXPANDING LLE-LED SERVICES

We will deliver, enhance and expand our LLE-led services for people impacted by alcohol and other drugs, gambling and related harms, strengthening self-help and mutual support.

# Strategic Priorities 2024 - 2027

## EMBEDDING LIVED EXPERTISE

We will lead sector change, building knowledge, skills, and capacity to embed lived expertise voices and roles across the alcohol and other drugs sector, mental health, justice and beyond.

## CHANGING SYSTEMS AND SOCIETY

We will continue to develop our innovative models, and support consumer- and family-led initiatives to transform systems, policy and social attitudes.

# Objectives

## 01. STRENGTHENING OUR FOUNDATIONS

We will strengthen our governance, corporate systems, financial sustainability, community recognition and internal connections to support us as we deliver and expand our work.

OBJECTIVES
1.1. Increase financial sustainability, including accessing core funding
1.2. Strengthen governance, reporting, and corporate systems
1.3. Improve our community recognition, profile and marketing capacity
1.4. Strengthen connections and pathways across our organisation for staff, consumers and families

## 02. SUSTAINING OUR COMMUNITY

We will further develop our workforce and continue to engage and co-create our work with our broader community, ensuring we are focused on their priorities.

OBJECTIVES
2.1. Adjust SHARC's workforce structure to sustainably and effectively deliver our work
2.2. Increase the capability and wellbeing of our staff and volunteers through improved workforce development and support
2.3. Strengthen our work with people from diverse communities
2.4. Deepen engagement with our broader community of families and consumers

### 03. EXPANDING LLE-LED SERVICES

We will deliver, enhance and expand our LLE-led services for people impacted by alcohol and other drugs, gambling and related harms, strengthening self-help and mutual support.

OBJECTIVES
3.1. Deliver high quality LLE-led services for consumers and families
3.2. Scale up selected programs in Victoria and interstate, to better respond to community need while maintaining SHARC's approach and values
3.3. Develop partnerships to help consumers and families access services and resources
3.4. Strengthen education, employment and training pathways for consumers and families

### 04. EMBEDDING LIVED EXPERTISE

We will lead sector change, building knowledge, skills, and capacity to embed lived expertise voices and roles across the alcohol and other drugs sector, mental health, justice and beyond.

OBJECTIVES
4.1. Expand our LLE workforce programs to continue building workforce and sector capability
4.2. Support effective implementation of sector reforms to strengthen the role of LLE in mental health
4.3. Achieve improved working conditions, professional pathways and support structures for LLE workforces
4.4. Continue to develop the next generation of LLE leaders

## 05. CHANGING SYSTEMS AND SOCIETY

We will continue to develop our innovative models, and support consumer- and family-led initiatives to transform systems, policy and social attitudes.

OBJECTIVES
5.1. Establish APSU as the peak body for consumers in the alcohol and other drugs sector
5.2. Influence public opinion and sector policy to reduce stigma and improve services and systems
5.3. Further develop and promote our LLE framework and models
5.4. Evaluate our work and demonstrate our impact



