Supporting Organisational Lived Experience (SOLE)

Pilot project for supporting Lived and Living Experience Workforces

Information for applicants

# Background

The Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health System recommended a lived experience organisational readiness and workforce training program be delivered across all area mental health services and identified non-government organisations.

We understand that organisations are at different stages and have different challenges with establishing and embedding their Lived and Living Experience Workforce (LLEW). We want to ensure services have consistent ways to assess where they are at and the guidance and support to increase their capability and progress.

Phase 2 reform priorities are to grow strong, safe, and supported workforces, and support a culture that embraces lived experience.

The Department of Health (DH) has collaborated with lived experience experts and organisations to identify and commission supports for LLEWs and the organisations that employ them. This has led to a DH partnership with SHARC, Dr Louise Byrne, and lived experience experts, to deliver the SOLE project.

# About SOLE

SOLE is one of two initiatives that make up Lived and Living Experience at Heart (LLEAH), an organisational support program for Victoria’s mental health and alcohol and other drug (AOD) sectors.

The purpose of SOLE is to pilot a LLEW organisational development process. This includes guided assessment, action planning and implementation with access to one-off grants to support implementation of plans.

The objectives of SOLE are to:

1. Adapt assessment tools from the [National Lived Experience (Peer) Workforce Development Guidelines](https://protect.checkpoint.com/v2/r04/___https%3A//www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/publications/national-lived-experience-peer-workforce-development-guidelines___.Y3A0YTpzaGFyYzpjOm86ZDE3MDZjMTJiYjhkYmM2OWFmMTk0ZTBlNjBjZTE1YjM6NzpmMzk1OjM2NzVhMGI5OWU1MjQ5YTYxMzU3MmVjZGI4MzIyMTAwODgxOTAxNmNjYjczOTNmZGQ5ODBjYzFkYzMxY2QxMTc6cDpUOk4) to produce a guided assessment tool for the Victorian context (completed).
2. Test and, if needed, refine the guided assessment tool with two mental health organisations in Victoria (underway).
3. Pilot an organisational development process of assessment, action planning and implementation.
4. Deliver a program of one-off grants to support organisations with implementation of their actions plans. Grants of up to $100k will be available to each participating organisation.

The SOLE pilot is being run alongside another LLEAH project – the Victorian Lived and Living Experience Workforce Learning Collaborative (the Learning Collaborative), which supports alcohol and other drug and harm reduction organisations, as well as mental health agencies, to embed LLEWs through an organisational development process of co-learning and implementation. The Learning Collaborative is being delivered by SHARC in partnership with DH, Dr Louise Bryne, and Yale University, US.

If you would like to learn more about the LLEAH program or apply for the other initiative, the Learning Collaborative, please visit [https://www.sharc.org.au/lleah/](https://protect.checkpoint.com/v2/r04/___https%3A//www.sharc.org.au/lleah/___.Y3A0YTpzaGFyYzpjOm86ZDE3MDZjMTJiYjhkYmM2OWFmMTk0ZTBlNjBjZTE1YjM6NzpiYzdmOjQ4OGUzYThhMDU3M2VjMzA4OTkwYzljNWZkZjc2OTE5ZjBlYWIzYWUxZGQyNjk5OGFlN2IxYTMxOTY0MzE0OTc6cDpUOk4) for more information.

# Key information

1. The SOLE pilot project is funded by Victoria’s Department of Health and delivered in partnership with SHARC and LLEW development expert Dr Louise Byrne.
2. There are no fees for the selected organisations to participate in the pilot project.
3. Indirect costs include making key staff available to take part, as well as costs associated with having consumers/family members available to participate. The pilot starts in November 2025 and finishes by June 2026.
4. Participating organisations will be supported by a team of LLE experts to undertake a LLEW review, where a final report of tailored recommendations will be provided to support their next steps.
5. The project’s LLEW review includes:
	1. Collating and sharing a LLEW snapshot (see application form in [Appendix 1](#_Appendix_1._Application) for details).
	2. Competing an assessment tool to identify progress in key areas in relation to LLEW development, as follows:
		1. Leadership
		2. Meaningful co-production
		3. Lived experience literacy and ongoing learning
		4. Organisational commitment
		5. Uniqueness and fidelity
		6. Fidelity and role clarity
		7. Professional development
		8. Training
		9. Employment conditions
		10. Human resources/policy
		11. Career pathways and retention
		12. Workplace cultural change
		13. Diversity and inclusion
		14. Cultural capacity and building trust with communities
6. Participating in a discovery session to understand strengths, key issues and opportunities.
7. The SOLE team will prepare a report with recommendations on areas for improvement based on the review and conduct a sense-making session to support project planning.
8. The SOLE team will be available for guidance throughout the pilot and support the developing review ideas once projects are complete or at a review point.
9. One-off grants are available to 5 organisations participating in the testing (n =1) and pilot (n = 4) phases of the project. The grants will support agencies to implement recommendations made following the LLEW review and will be subject to project plan approval.
10. The grants are intended to:
	1. Address one or more key recommendations that arise through the SOLE assessment process as identified in the final report, aimed at advancing organisational maturity with embedding and supporting LLEW.
	2. Fund activity in the 2025–26 financial year, with each activity to be completed or reach a substantial point of review no later than May 2026.
	3. Support evaluation of your organisation’s journey in this pilot project for whole of sector sharing and learning through a centralised knowledge bank.
	4. Exclude business as usual and ongoing work/roles.

# Eligibility

Victorian Department of Health-funded mental health services/organisations with LLEW employees are eligible to apply.

Organisations working primarily in the AOD sector are not eligible for this pilot project as the assessment tool has not yet been tailored for AOD services. It is envisaged these services will be eligible for future projects or programs informed by this pilot.

# Organisational commitment

Organisations participating in the pilot project need to be able to commit to:

1. A set schedule of dates for key activities.
2. Having CEO/executive management sponsorship (authoriser of the EOI application) or, if your organisation has a separate mental health division or similar, sponsorship at the divisional or equivalent level.
3. Selecting a project key contact to be the lead liaison for the initiative and coordinate activities. This person should have adequate release time from regular duties to fulfill the responsibilities of the initiative and the power/authority to implement change.
4. Coordinating teams of participants to engage in assessment and review activities from the following workforce cohorts:
	1. designated LLEW (e.g. consumer and family/carer peer workers);
	2. designated LLEW leaders (either direct or non-direct service roles);
	3. service providers who work alongside the LLEW (e.g. clinical and allied health leaders);
	4. senior organisational leaders (e.g. CEO/COO, directors, executive management and senior management, including HR).
5. Selecting a representative from each workforce cohort to attend sessions with SOLE technical experts. These representatives should have direct experience within their respective cohort.
6. Selecting a team of consumer and family/carer participants with experience of using services at your organisation to participate in a workshop to gain service user perspectives, including reimbursing these participants for their engagement with the project.
7. Ensuring participation from all cohorts across all organisational levels to support timely completion of the final report (a lack of buy-in may result in delays and impact the ability to acquit allocated funds).

# How to apply

1. Applications open on Monday 6th October 2025.
2. Complete the application form in [Appendix 1](#_Appendix_1._Application).
3. Applications must be supported by the organisation’s CEO or equivalent level of authority.
4. Applications must be submitted electronically to LLEAH@sharc.org.au by 5pm on Friday 31st October 2025.

# Selection process

Participating organisations will be selected by members of the SOLE project team across SHARC and the department.

Organisations will be selected based on their responses in the application form.

The panel will be looking to select a mix of clinical, community, regional and metropolitan organisations.

# Queries

If you have questions about the application process, please contact the SOLE project team: LLEAH@sharc.org.au

# Appendix 1. Application form

Complete all sections, adding more lines to the tables as required.

**Please attach a copy of your organisational chart showing designated LLEW roles to this application and any available documents that reference your LLEW (e.g. strategic plan).**

Email application to LLEAH@sharc.org.au by 5pm on Friday 31st October 2025.

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| **Identifying Information**   |
| **Name of organisation**   |    |
| **Address of organisation**   |    |

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| **Project Key Contact**   |
| Provide the details of an individual who will be the project key contact for this project on behalf of your organisation if this application is successful, noting requirements of the position holder as described in point 3 under [Organisational Commitment](#_Organisational_commitment ).  |
| **Name**   |    |
| **Position/title**   |    |
| **E-mail address**   |    |
| **Phone number**   |    |

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| **Executive Sponsor**   |
| Please provide details of your organisation’s Executive Sponsor for this work as described in point 2 under [Organisational Commitment.](#_Organisational_commitment )  |
| **Name**   |    |
| **Position/title**   |    |
| **E-mail address**   |    |
| **Phone number**   |    |

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| **Criteria 1: Organisational overview**   |
| Provide a brief overview of your organisation, including years in operation, strategic mission/vision, organisational structure, range of services, number of staff, and number of individuals served annually. If your organisation has a separate mental health division or similar, describe that rather than the whole organisation.  |
| **Details:**            |

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| **Criteria 2a: Current lived and living experience workforce status**   |
| Describe current Lived and living experience roles within your organisation (role types, functions and FTE etc.). If your organisation has a separate mental health division or similar, describe that rather than the whole organisation.  |
| **Details:**             |
| **LLEW Overview**  |
| **Program**  | **LLEW Discipline**  | **Key functions**  | **FTE**  |   |
| E.g. Post Discharge Support Team (inpatient services)  | Peer worker  | Support after discharge  | 7.0  |   |
|   |   |   |   |   |
|   |   |   |   |   |
| **LLEW Governance**  |
| **Mechanism**  | **Description**  |
| E.g. LLE Director  | Dedicated Discipline lead responsible for:  |
| E.g. LLE Advisory Group  | Executive Committee (Terms of reference attached)  |

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| **Criteria 2b: Establishment and integration of designated LLEW roles**  |
| Describe activity undertaken to date to support the establishment and integration of designated LLEW roles in your organisation.  This may include codesign of a LLEW Strategy, training for executives on integrating LLE expertise into governance and opinations, initiatives designed to support integration of discipline perspectives into practice e.g. – interdisciplinary supervision, collaborative reflective practice, targeted workforce training on the value of LLEW.  |
| **Details:**             |

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| **Criteria 3: Organisational understanding**  |
| Please describe the organisational understanding of the Lived and Living Experience Workforce and the value it can bring to all aspects of your organisation. Describe your service/organisation’s vision for the LLEW and the goals associated with the value proposition of an integrated LLEW. This should include the intended outcomes for service users, and the organisation/service.   |
| **Details:**             |

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| **Criteria 4: Organisational readiness/capacity**  |
| Describe the readiness or capacity of your service/organisation to participate and benefit from this initiative. Identify any potential barriers to effective participation or successful implementation. Please refer to the points under [Organisational Commitment.](#_Organisational_commitment )  |
| **Details:**             |

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| **Criteria 5: Alignment with other initiatives / organisational priorities**  |
| Identify any LLEW initiatives in your service/organisation which would take place concurrently with the SOLE pilot and an assessment of how these would complement or compete with this project, and plans for management of any potential conflict, e.g. development of LLEW workforce Strategy.  |
| **Details:**             |

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| **Criteria 6: Benefit of participation**   |
| Reflecting on your response to Criteria 3 – what do you consider the benefit of participation in this initiative in terms of meeting your service / organisations objectives for LLEW?   |
| **Details:**             |

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| **Other relevant information**   |
| Is this a cross-service collaboration?    ​☐​ YES   ​☐​   NO If so, please nominate partner organisation:  |
| Please provide any other information you think may be relevant for the panel assessing this application.   |
| **Details:**             |