

## MEDIA RELEASE

# Growing a Lived Experience workforce

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Gippsland Primary Health Network has made a commitment to grow the Lived Experience workforce in the region and is one of only five Australian Primary Health Networks to have a dedicated Lived Experience role on staff.

A person with Lived Experience has firsthand or personal knowledge of mental distress or ill-health, substance abuse or suicide. These workers draw on their personal journeys as individuals or as carers to inform their work.

Professional Lived Experience roles fall across a range of areas including peer work, system advocacy, consultancy, learning and development, and academia.

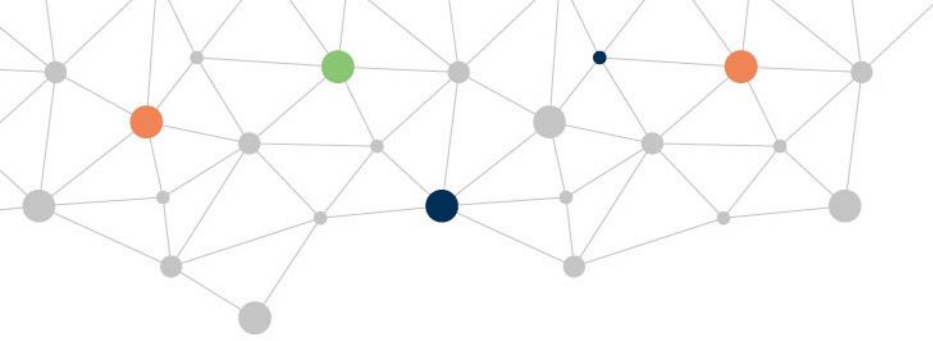
Project Officer Mental Health Reform - Lived Experience, Jess Edwards, is delivering a pilot program aimed at embedding Lived Experience into Gippsland PHN's work, processes and systems.

Gippsland PHN Chief Executive Officer, Amanda Proposch said in line with the National Agreement and Victorian bilateral schedule, the organisation was committed to this initiative.

"We are working collaboratively with our regional partners to grow the Gippsland primary care workforce and this includes the Lived Experience workforce," Ms Proposch said. "The Gippsland PHN Lived Experience workforce will ensure we are in step with the Victorian and national collaboration on approaches to Lived Experience and support local initiatives to achieve them."

In 2018, the Australian Department of Health and Aged Care commissioned Brisbane North PHN to chair and project manage the National PHN Mental Health Lived Experience Engagement Network (MHLEEN). The purpose of the network is to share approaches to co-design and embedding Lived Experience engagement and perspectives in PHN work and the development of the peer workforce.

In 2022, the Victorian and Australian Governments signed a bilateral agreement to help improve mental health and suicide prevention support and services for Victorians over the following five years.



This agreement points to PHNs having a role in developing Lived Experience workforce and in line with its recommendations, Gippsland PHN is committed to embedding the views of those with a lived experience, their families and carers in its work.

Late last year, Jess Edwards and a colleague, addressed a National PHN Mental Health Lived Experience Engagement Network workshop in Brisbane, presenting Gippsland PHN case studies of best practice for organisational readiness.

They also participated in discussions on how the current system, reforms, priorities and recommendations are moving towards embedding authentic Lived Experience engagement and workforce development within PHNs across Australia.

Ms Proposch said the Gippsland PHN Lived Experience workforce ensures the organisation is in step with state and national collaborations on approaches to Lived Experience to support initiatives locally.

“While the first part of this pilot program is about embedding Lived Experience into our work, the next phase will see us support our commissioned services to embed it in their workforce,” she said.

“Our work in Lived Experience is recognition that program design, service design and outcomes are better when we have the input from those with lived experience,” Ms Proposch said.

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