

Victorian Collaborative Centre  
for Mental Health and Wellbeing

# Annual Report 2022-23





### About this report

This annual report outlines progress in establishing the Collaborative Centre since its commencement on 1 September 2022.

The report can be found on our website:  
[www.vic.gov.au/victorian-collaborative-centre](http://www.vic.gov.au/victorian-collaborative-centre)

### Language used in this report

As the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System said: "Language is powerful, and words have differing meanings for different people. There is no single set of definitions used to describe how people experience their mental health."

This report uses the words and language of the Royal Commission.  
The glossary table from the Royal Commission's final report can be found [here](#).

### Acknowledgement

The Collaborative Centre acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the land and acknowledges and pays respect to their Elders, past and present.

We are grateful for the expertise and generosity of people with lived and living experiences, including as families, carers and supporters, which guides the Collaborative Centre's work.

The Collaborative Centre celebrates, values and welcomes people of all backgrounds, genders, sexualities, cultures, religions, ages, bodies and abilities.

# Letter to the Minister from Chair of the Board

Monday 20 November 2023

The Hon. Ingrid Stitt MP  
Minister for Mental Health

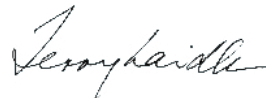
50 Lonsdale Street  
Melbourne, Victoria, 3000

Dear Minister,

I am pleased to present the Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing's annual report for 2022-23 in accordance with section 3.7 of our 2022-23 Statement of Priorities. This requires the Collaborative Centre to report on activities during the 2022-23 financial year.

I would like to record my appreciation of the Collaborative Centre's staff for their commitment to establishing the organisation.

Yours sincerely



**Terry Laidler**

Chairperson

Victorian Collaborative Centre  
for Mental Health and Wellbeing



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# Who We Are

## Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing

### Our purpose

The Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing (the Collaborative Centre) will drive ground-breaking change to Victoria's mental health and wellbeing system, so that people receive mental health and wellbeing support when, where and how they may want it.

We're committed to doing things differently to effect real change. We:

- champion lived and living experience leadership
- develop mental health services that are safe, effective, timely and compassionate
- put the evidence of lived experience at the centre of all our work
- partner and collaborate with individuals, services and organisations with diverse experiences to create better care, treatment and support
- are unapologetically ambitious: we challenge assumptions, ask bold questions and set an innovative research agenda for impact
- connect the evidence of lived experience, service provision and research to make care more person-centred and compassionate and people's outcomes more effective and evidence informed
- commit to transparency in all we do: we communicate openly, invite feedback, listen and respond
- support continuous learning to do better - again and again
- advocate for policy change to transform mental health care through inclusive research and real-world evidence
- deliver locally, collaborate widely and inspire globally.

### Our functions

Our functions are set out in the Mental Health and Wellbeing Act 2022 (Vic) (the Act). They are to:

- lead exemplary practice for partnership, leadership and participation with people with lived and living experiences and their families, carers and supporters
- lead, conduct or collaborate on inclusive research into new treatments and models of care and support
- collaborate to deliver best-practice multidisciplinary treatment, care and support to adults and older adults
- translate existing research and the evidence of lived experience into better treatment, care and support
- gather and share evidence about what makes treatment, care and support more effective
- set the agenda for new interdisciplinary research that has real-world impact
- coordinate and strengthen statewide services, including collaborating to deliver a new statewide trauma service
- drive statewide change to create an adaptive and more integrated mental health and wellbeing system
- support the development of a highly skilled and diverse multi-disciplinary workforce
- promote a system-wide culture of collaboration, inquiry, innovation and learning
- advocate for policy change to transform mental health care.



# Our Principles



We champion lived experience leadership, partnership and participation



We uphold the principles in the Mental Health and Wellbeing Act 2022 and embed human rights and social justice into everything we do



We build trusted relationships and partnerships with individuals, services and organisations with diverse experiences to create better care, treatment and support



We are transparent



We are unapologetically ambitious: we challenge assumptions and ask bold questions

## Mental health and wellbeing principles

These are the mental health and wellbeing principles we uphold under section 4 of the Act.

**The rights, dignity and autonomy of a person living with mental illness or psychological distress is to be promoted and protected and the person is to be supported to exercise those rights.**

A person living with mental illness or psychological distress is to be provided with access to a diverse mix of care and support services. This is to be determined, as much as possible, by the needs and preferences of the person living with mental illness or psychological distress.

Mental health and wellbeing services are to be provided to a person living with mental illness or psychological distress with the least possible restriction of their rights, dignity and autonomy with the aim of promoting their recovery and full participation in community life.

Supported decision making practices are to be promoted. Persons receiving mental health and wellbeing services are to be supported to make decisions and to be involved in decisions about their assessment, treatment and recovery including when they are receiving compulsory treatment.

Families, carers and supporters (including children) of a person receiving mental health and wellbeing services are to be supported in their role in decisions about the person's assessment, treatment and recovery.

The medical and other health needs of people living with mental illness or psychological distress are to be identified and responded to, including any medical or health needs that are related to the use of alcohol or other drugs.

A person receiving mental health and wellbeing services has the right to take reasonable risks in order to achieve personal growth, self-esteem and overall quality of life.

The health, wellbeing and autonomy of children and young people receiving mental health and wellbeing services are to be promoted and supported.

The diverse needs and experiences of a person receiving mental health and wellbeing services are to be actively considered noting that such diversity may be due to a variety of attributes.

People receiving mental health and wellbeing services may have specific safety needs or concerns based on their gender.

Mental health and wellbeing services are to be culturally safe and responsive to people of all racial, ethnic, faith-based and cultural backgrounds.

The needs, wellbeing and safety of children, young people and other dependents of people receiving mental health and wellbeing services are to be protected.





# From the Chair and Deputy Chair

This is the first annual report of the Collaborative Centre. We commenced operations on 1 September 2022 with 10 board members, an establishment team and legislation which set out our statutory functions. Together, we began laying the foundations for our role in implementing the vision of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System. This is for a transformed system that will support the mental health and wellbeing of Victorians for generations to come.

Establishing a new Board and organisation with an ambitious agenda from the Victorian Government has been an exciting and demanding task. We are encouraged by the level of welcome, interest and engagement from so many people in the Victorian mental health community. We thank you for your support.

Our first priority was to put lived and living experience at the centre of everything we do. Establishing our Lived Experiences Advisory Panel was a significant step. LEAP provides strategic advice to the board and its members have lived and living experience of mental ill health, psychological distress and substance use or addiction, including consumers, carers, and family members. We are deeply appreciative of the lived expertise, knowledge and commitment the members of LEAP bring to the Collaborative Centre and to their role.

The board together with LEAP and the team developed the Collaborative Centre's purpose. We then began the process of selecting our mental health service and academic partners as required by the Act who will provide exemplary care, treatment and support and conduct interdisciplinary research. The Minister for Mental Health approved the selection of the University of Melbourne and RMH Inner West Mental Health as our lead partners. In turn, they are supported by a network of eighteen metropolitan and regional health services and research institutions.

Partnerships and collaboration are central to the work we do. As well as our lead partners, we will work with others including researchers, community mental health services and peak groups. We already have developed partnerships with the Victorian Mental Illness and Awareness Council, Tandem Carers, the Victorian Aboriginal Controlled Community Health Organisation and the Victorian Multicultural Commission.

The second half of 2023 will see three significant initiatives that will further progress our establishment:

Appointment of two inaugural Co-Chief Executive Officers as specified in the Act to provide executive leadership. One of the co-CEOs will have worked or be working in academia or in clinical practice. The other co-CEO will be someone who has lived experience of mental ill health or psychological distress.


Development of our first three-year strategic plan which sets out our strategic directions and priorities.

The Collaborative Centre will move into its own accommodation which will give us a visible and recognisable presence.

Standing up a new organisation is no easy feat. We acknowledge the support and encouragement of the former Minister for Mental Health, Gabrielle Williams and the Deputy Secretary, Mental Health and Wellbeing Division and her staff for their guidance and assistance. Our appreciation and thanks to our Acting Chief Executive Officers, Rebecca Power and Eleanor Williams, and the establishment team for their commitment and contribution in bringing the Collaborative Centre to life.

**Terry Laidler**

Chair



**Maria Katsonis**

Deputy Chair





# Board Member Profiles



**Terry Laidler**  
Chair

Terry Laidler has extensive experience as a psychologist working in private forensic practice, mainly in family law, child protection and criminal jurisdictions, and is former Chair of the Victorian Mental Health Reform Council. He has also held a position as an academic specialist in the Global & Cultural Mental Health program in School of Population Health at the University of Melbourne and has taught forensic behavioural studies at Monash University Swinburne University. Terry is keen to ensure that collaboration among consumers, carers and professionals is at the very heart of the Board's work.



**Maria Katsonis**  
Deputy Chair

Maria Katsonis is a Public Policy Fellow at the University of Melbourne where she teaches public policy and management at a postgraduate level. She was previously a senior executive in the Victorian public service for 20 years. Maria has been using her lived experience of mental illness as a consumer advocate for 13 years with Beyond Blue, Mental Health Australia and the National Mental Health Commission. She has a Master of Public Administration from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and was named an Australian Financial Review Woman of Influence for her leadership in diversity and inclusion. Maria is a second-generation Greek-Australian and identifies as gay. She lives with a chronic mental illness and leads an active and purposeful life.



**Professor Lisa Brophy**  
Board member

Lisa Brophy is a Professor and Discipline Lead in Social Work and Social Policy at La Trobe University, and also an honorary principal research fellow in the Centre for Mental Health at the University of Melbourne. She is a qualified social worker with more than 35 years' experience working in the mental health and university sectors in Victoria. Her research focus is on people experiencing mental illness and psychosocial disability and their recovery, social inclusion and human rights. She has published more than 80 peer-reviewed journal articles as well as book chapters and multiple reports for government and non-government funders.



**Gill Callister**  
Board member

Gill Callister is proud to lead Mind Australia as CEO. She is known for her person-centred reform in social policy, her advocacy for gender equality and women's leadership, and her dedication to providing a voice to those often overlooked or excluded from mainstream services. Gill has a wealth of health, education and social services experience. She began her career as a social worker and dedicated two decades to shaping reform in public policy and services in mental health, child protection and education. Past roles include Secretary - Victorian Department of Human Services, Secretary - Victorian Department of Education and Training, and Associate Dean - Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG) where she led programs in ethics, integrity and leadership. Gill received the Public Service Medal - Victoria in 2019 for outstanding public service, leadership and innovation in policy development and service delivery.



**Sheree Lowe**  
Board member

Sheree Lowe is a descendant of the Djab Wurrung and Gunditjmara people living on Waddawurrung country in regional Victoria. Growing up Aboriginal, her family and community has shaped her life and identity as a proud Aboriginal woman living in a world of diverse life experiences. Like many, her identity and experiences have been, and continue to be, impacted by the legacy of colonisation. She has spent her personal and professional life living, supporting, and advocating for Aboriginal people to be seen and heard across a range of different injustices including justice, education, health and wellbeing. Sheree has experience working in the community, government and private sector. Sheree is an Executive Director at the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) and leads the Balit Durn Durn Centre (The Centre for Excellence in Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing).



# Board Member Profiles



**Professor Steve Moylan**

Board member

Steve Moylan is Clinical Director of the Mental Health, Drugs and Alcohol Services at Barwon Health and Professor and Research Fellow in the School of Medicine at Deakin University. He is qualified in both general adult and old age psychiatry. He holds a Master of Business Administration, Master of Public Health from Harvard University and a Doctor of Philosophy in mental health epidemiology. Steve is the Chair of Lifeline Direct and was formerly Chair and Director of On The Line Australia.

Steve has strong interests in health leadership and governance, mental health systems, clinical care including general and psychiatry of old age, and translational research psychiatry. Steve's personal experience of personal trauma related to the Bali Bombings has driven a passion for helping others. He has deep admiration and respect for the contribution consumers, carers and clinicians play in delivering mental health care, and understands that bringing together these differing experiences, perspectives and expertise will lead to a mental health care system focused on what really matters. He resides in Geelong with his young family and loves living and working in regional Victoria.



**Gerard Naughtin**

Deputy Chair

Gerry Naughtin has worked in management and governance roles in human services for many years, in the mental health, disability and aged care sectors. He was a member of the Expert Advisory Panel to the Victorian Royal Commission on Mental Health and until recently, chaired the National Mental Health Sector Reference Group for the National Disability Insurance Agency. Gerry is a qualified social worker and has a Doctorate of Philosophy from Melbourne University. He previously held an Associate Professor position at LaTrobe University.

Gerry has a strong commitment to the development of lived experience in mental health and disability services. He co-authored a chapter in the book *Peer Work in Australia* with his friend and colleague Janet Meagher. He holds a professional qualification in social work and completed his doctorate in social work in 2008.



**Phong Nguyen OAM**

Board member

Phong Thaddeus Nguyen OAM is a passionate and dedicated advocate for peace, harmony, social justice, human rights, social reform and multiculturalism in Victoria and Australia. Phong arrived in Australia as a refugee from Vietnam in 1979. He joined and became the first Australian trained Vietnamese Jesuit in Australia. After graduating from the University of Melbourne (where he obtained a BA, a Post Graduate Diploma and an MA in Applied Linguistics), Phong worked in social welfare, becoming the director of a multi-ethnic welfare agency for more than 16 years. He was appointed to many government board and advisory positions due to his strong stance on, and knowledge of, multiculturalism and social justice issues. With 30 years' experience working in welfare services and more than 35 years of volunteering in the community, Phong brings extensive knowledge of board governance, multicultural communities, health and social services.



**Fionn Skiotis**

Board member

Fionn Skiotis is currently the CEO of VALID – the Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability. He has been involved all his life in movements and initiatives for justice, equality and change. He has worked over 35 years in the not for profit sector, both in Australia and overseas, including in advocacy, community development, human rights, housing and mental health. Fionn was the Executive Director of International Social Service in Australia, has been a director of Community Housing Ltd since 2001 and served as Chair from 2013-22. He was a Community Member of the Mental Health Tribunal (and predecessor) in Victoria for three terms. He holds a Master of Social Science degree and is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



**Amelia Walters**

Board member

Amelia Walters is a mental health advocate, peer worker, and lived experience researcher. Amelia advocates for lived experience leadership, promoting partnerships in service reform, and addressing structural issues within the mental health and wellbeing system. She is also passionate about lived experience-led research and research for innovative service delivery and creating accessible and equitable services. Amelia was a 2022 fellow with the Yale University Lived Experience Transformational Leadership Academy and is currently undertaking a Juris Doctor at the University of Melbourne, hoping to assist law reform and promote the human rights of people engaging with the mental health and wellbeing system.

# Lived Experiences Advisory Panel

## About the LEAP

The Lived Experiences Advisory Panel (LEAP) was formed in February 2023 after expressions of interest were sought from people with lived and living experience of Victoria's mental health system. Sixty-four applications were received and ten members were selected. Collectively, the LEAP represents mental health consumers, family members, carers, and supporters.

## From the LEAP

We are delighted to form the Collaborative Centre's first LEAP, which is tasked with ensuring that the expertise of people with lived and living experience is incorporated in the transformation of Victoria's mental health and wellbeing system.

By establishing the LEAP as one of its first priorities, the board showed a willingness to partner with people of diverse backgrounds and a range of lived and living experiences to achieve the shared vision of best practice in care, treatment and support.

Since our inaugural meeting in February 2023, we have achieved several significant milestones. These include establishing a foundational way of working framework for the LEAP, co-writing the Interim Purpose Statement



and co-developing the Collaborative Centre's Lived Experience Framework and Research Strategy which are currently under development. LEAP members are contributing to the development of the Collaborative Centre's identity and consistently offering critical lived expertise to guide the transformation of our mental health system.

Alongside these contributions,

perhaps the most important element that the LEAP has created is a culture of collaboration, empathy, and inclusivity.

We have nurtured an environment where respecting and embedding lived and living expertise is not the exception, but the rule. We are hopeful that the way in which we continue to prioritise the relational over the individualistic, human rights over systems rights,

and humility over self-importance, demonstrates the possibilities of flourishing lived experience leadership within a mental health system that dares to do 'do things differently'.

As we reflect on our journey, it is evident that it is not just what we do that is important, but our commitment to creating a culture through which we can do it together.



# LEAP Member Profiles

## Caroline Lambert

Chair

Caroline Lambert is a lived and living experience innovator and leader. Caroline primarily identifies as a supporter of someone who thinks and feels deeply, but her work is heavily informed by her other intersectional identities and experiences. Currently working at Tandem Carers as the Director of Family & Carer Research, and RMIT University as a lecturer, Caroline has a background in lived experience advocacy, research, education, and social work. Caroline pays close attention to those elements which contribute to positive cultural and paradigmatic change, and believes that accountability, creativity, compassion, and collaboration are all excellent levers for positive system transformation.

## Emily Unity

Deputy Chair

Emily Unity is an award-winning mental health advocate, software engineer, and creative designer. They currently hold roles as a Board Director, consultant, project manager, facilitator, and ambassador. Emily is informed by their intersectional lived and living experiences. This includes mental ill-health, disability, LGBTQIA+, multiculturalism, neurodivergence, homelessness, family violence, and more.

## Georgia Barrand

Georgia Barrand is a dedicated mental health advocate and peer worker based in Regional Victoria. With a background in policy and with lived experience of mental health, she is committed to bridge gaps and amplify consumer and carer voices. Her aim is to strengthen Lived Experience participation across the sector, to contribute to greater regional mental health reform.



## Robyn Callaghan

I have found that being a service user of mental health services has profoundly affected my life trajectory and perspective, especially around the experience of stigma and discrimination and the restrictions on my human rights. These things along with the experience of episodic psychosis as well as mental and emotional distress have driven my commitment to making a difference with other consumers and carers and our allies to the mental health sector.

I strongly support change to the culture of care and systems and processes which are supposed to support individual and social wellbeing. I am an older person who identifies as queer and a strong advocate for service users as partners to achieve reform.

## Sam Hayward

Sam is a Mental Health Professional, NFP Board Director and Advisor and Lived Experience Advocate deeply committed to achieving better mental health and well-being outcomes for the community. Sam brings an executive strategy, engagement and product / service delivery portfolio focusing on innovation and evaluation from an extensive career as a wealth management and technology leader. Sam is informed through carer lived experience and work with at-risk and less-advantaged populations, primarily through community engagement, advocacy and youth programs.



# LEAP Member Profiles

## Jaqueline Kirkman

Dr Jacqueline Kirkman (PhD) has a clinical background as an optometrist but in more recent years her main roles have involved conducting research into optometric workforce maldistributions and health service improvement. However, her life's path was abruptly altered following the birth of her son in 2019 when she experienced postnatal psychosis. Jac has subsequently experienced a number of episodes of psychosis and had multiple inpatient public admissions both involuntary and voluntary. Since these experiences, she has become passionate about mental health service reform. She has spoken publicly about her experience to raise awareness, reduce stigma and improve health services. She currently uses her knowledge as a service user in a project management role at Barwon Health. Jac is also a proud Lived Experience Ambassador for Lifeline.

## Rohini Krishnapillai

Rohini Krishnapillai participates in LEAP from a carer perspective, and her experience as a carer, has strengthened her resolve to ensure that consumers and carers lead system and cultural change to Victoria's mental health system.

## Lyanne Morel

As a single mother with a bone to pick with the service systems that failed her, Lyanne weaponises her triumphs of adversity, equipped with fiery motivation to create change. With an abrupt end to her career as a devoted picture framer as the catalyst, Lyanne utilises her lived experience of mental illness, substance use, family violence and incarceration to fight for systemic change. Although working in AOD as a Lived Experience Advocate, Lyanne's intersectional lens drives her to advocate for more individualised responses to marginalised women in the legal system, voicing the need to keep families united to prevent further perpetuation of intergenerational trauma. This interest led to presenting a bill on youth justice reform in Victorian Youth Parliament. At her core, she is passionate about systemic reform in the hopes to see a better world.



## Puneet Sansanwal

Puneet is a Lived Experience Researcher currently employed at Centre for Mental Health Nursing as a Consumer Academic. Puneet gained experience as a consumer peer support worker and a consumer consultant within Victoria's public mental health system developing relationships with fellow community members with lived and living experience of mental health distress. He has interests in contributing through systemic and policy level by advocating for consumer rights in the decisions related consumer care. Puneet advocates for positive changes in the mental health system through having Lived Experience embedded into every part of the consumers' journey. He is a recent graduate from Victoria University gaining a Masters degree in research exploring workplace stress and staff wellbeing. Puneet is committed to advocate for reduced workplace stress across all sectors and for work culture that is supportive of positive mental health in workplaces.

## Benn Veenker

Benn Veenker is a passionate recovery advocate and is consistently engaging in breaking down the stigma associated with substance use and mental health. Benn has been sharing his lived experience over the past 10+ years with the goal to shorten the time it takes for individuals to seek help for their substance use and/or mental health. Currently Benn is employed at Turning Point – Addiction, Treatment, Research – as the Manager for Lived Experience Workforce and Advocacy and prior to this, has held various roles within the AOD/MH sectors. Benn is also a devoted father and family man who loves to run to support his recovery and maintain positive mental health.



# Establishment

## Getting started

The Collaborative Centre began by recruiting an establishment team including several designated lived experience roles at multiple levels. Hitting the ground running in an ever-changing environment would not have been possible without building a strong team culture. The team worked hard on building a collaborative and inclusive culture, regularly reviewing the Team Charter throughout the year and living up to its principles. 'Starting as we mean to go on' is important as is modelling a respectful and healthy workplace.

We began a developmental evaluation with a lived experience evaluator to track progress, challenges and achievements during this establishment phase. Work also commenced with the Health Infrastructure Division to identify an interim accommodation, with the aim of moving into a short- to medium-term site in 2023-24. Work is continuing to identify long-term site options.

The Collaborative Centre's mission, objectives, principles, functions, and key outputs are outlined in the centre's 2022-23 Statement of Priorities as agreed by the Acting Minister for Mental Health and the Collaborative Centre board in October 2022.

## Our identity

Developing an interim visual identity was the first step in developing the public face of the Collaborative Centre. Work then began on a recognisable brand and digital presence for the longer term together with a communication strategy to build understanding of the Collaborative Centre's role in Victoria's mental health system. In conjunction with our engagement strategy, this work has laid the foundation for the Collaborative Centre to connect across the mental health sector.

## Research strategy

The vision of the Royal Commission is for a modern and sustainable mental health system that adapts and responds to Victorians' needs into the future. An adaptive system is one that can identify and test new ideas, gather evidence about what works, and translate this into effective treatment, care and support. It uses evidence about what works to continually improve professional practice, service design and system policy.

We are developing our first research strategy by bringing together people from multiple disciplines and experiences including people with lived and living experience, mental health service providers, academics, policy makers and people from diverse communities. This will strengthen the foundations for an adaptive mental health and wellbeing system through translational research into the treatment, care and support for adults and older people. The strategy will align with the research priorities identified by the Royal Commission.

## System change forum

In April 2023, we held a forum to start a conversation with the mental health sector about system change and the Collaborative Centre's role. The forum was attended by over 120 stakeholders including consumers and carers; peak bodies representing the mental health, alcohol and other drugs sector; mental health service providers; researchers and research institutions; the lived experience and other mental health workforce; professional associations; and the Victorian government.

It was an interactive forum and participants were asked two questions:

1. How can the Collaborative Centre have the most impact in changing the mental health system?
2. You have an opportunity to present to the Collaborative Centre board on three immediate priorities following the forum. What do you recommend?

Over 360 responses were received to both questions through an online platform. A number of consistent themes emerged. In changing the mental health system, participants saw the Collaborative Centre as having the most impact in changing the mental health system through:

- innovation and research
- connection and bringing together diverse perspectives
- a focus on structure, systems and people
- stewardship and advocacy.

Priorities for the Collaborative Centre Board also reflected these themes.

# Quotes from the forum

"Facilitate impact by bringing people together from all parts of the system in safe, inclusive, trusting environments to solve complex problems."

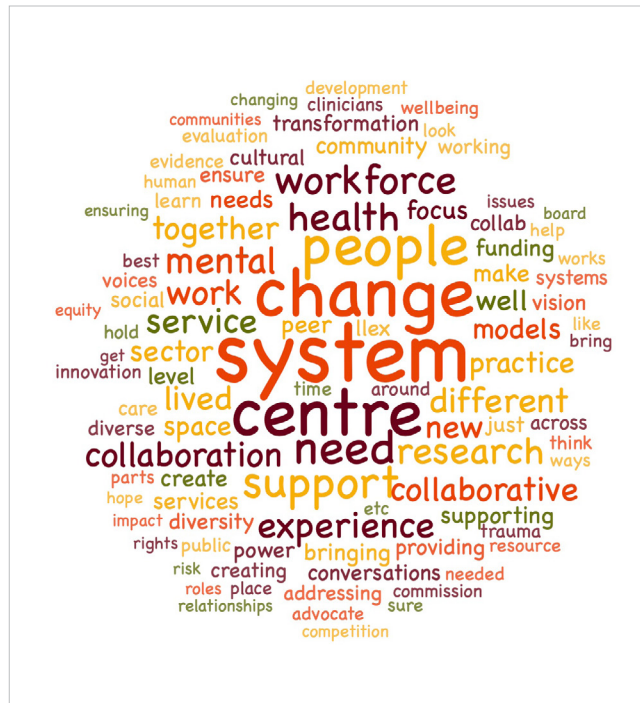
**Forum participant**

"The Collaborative Centre can be bold in researching, piloting and evaluating emerging practices and using its role to influence policy and cultural change."

**Forum participant**

"Amplifying diverse voices. Being a conduit and a platform for diverse perspectives – learned, lived and living."

**Forum participant**





# Governance and Organisational Structure

## Governance

The Collaborative Centre has a governing board which is accountable to the Minister for Mental Health. In accordance with the Act, the functions of the board are to:

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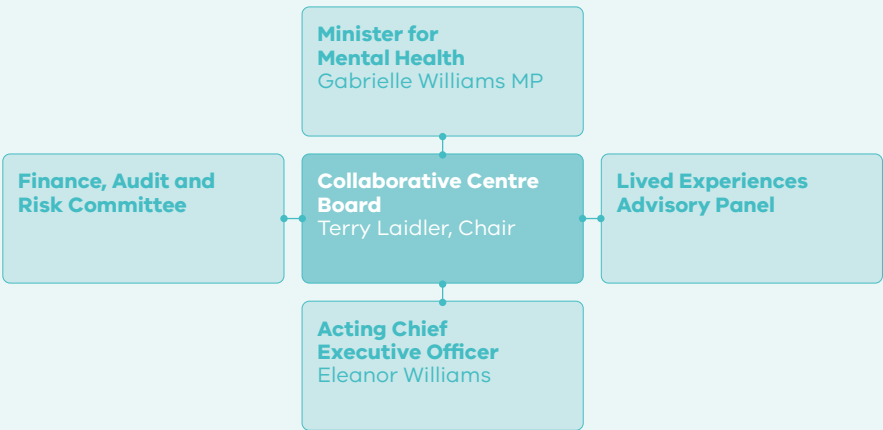
  - determine the strategic direction and priorities of the Centre.
  - establish a governance framework for the Centre and to monitor the Centre’s compliance with that governance framework.
  - prepare strategic plans and statements of priorities for the Centre
  - advise the Minister and the Secretary of any significant decisions of the Board and any issues of public concern or risk that affect or may affect the Centre
  - monitor the performance of the Centre and the Directors
- determine, in consultation with the Secretary, priorities for research in the field of mental health and wellbeing
  - establish committees to assist or advise the Board in performing any of its functions
  - determine standards and indicators to assess each Director’s performance of their duties.

The term Director as above refers to the role of co-Chief Executive Officer.

As a new entity, the board developed a governance framework. This included a board charter and a suite of policies that:

  - established the Collaborative Centre’s integrity framework.
  - were a requirement under s81 of the Public Administration Act 2021 (Vic).

## Organisational Structure



## Finance, audit and risk committee

The board established a Finance, Audit and Risk Committee to assist the board to fulfil its responsibilities in line with the requirements of the Standing Directions under the Financial Management Act 1994 (Vic).

The Committee is governed by a charter. Its main responsibilities are overseeing the effectiveness of the:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| • risk management framework                                      | • compliance with relevant laws and policies                            |
| • financial management, performance and sustainability           | • internal and external audit scope, outcomes, actions, and performance |
| • systems for internal control and management of financial risks | • integrity management.   |

The committee consisted of the following members as at 30 June 2023:

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| • Suzie Thoraval (Chair), independent member | • Lisa Brophy, board member    |
| • Lesley Ber, independent member             | • Steve Moylan, board member   |
| • Roger Chao, independent member             | • Gerry Naughtin, board member |

# People

## Employment and conduct principles

The Collaborative Centre is committed to applying merit and equity principles when appointing staff. Our selection processes ensure applicants are assessed fairly and equitably against the criteria required to perform the role without discrimination,

In accordance with Section 8 of the Public Administration Act, the Collaborative Centre has established employment processes that ensure:

In accordance with the Act, the functions of the board are to:

- employment decisions are based on merit
- equal employment opportunity is provided
- human rights as set out in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities are upheld
- employees have a reasonable avenue of redress against unfair or unreasonable treatment.



## Learning and development

The establishment team engaged in Intentional Peer Support (IPS) workshops. IPS principles help guide how to create relationships within the team and others that embody power sharing and support working with different perspectives. IPS has been used successfully by peer workers and others in mental health settings across the globe. Through a series of workshops, the team is building an understanding of the four key objectives of Intentional Peer Support – connection, worldview, mutuality and moving towards.

Staff attended 'Acknowledge This' training, to gain a deeper understanding of the purpose and value of an Acknowledgement of Country. Other training included:

- Aboriginal cultural safety
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities
- health, safety and wellbeing
- integrity

- privacy awareness
- Victorian public sector code of conduct
- workplace diversity, equity and inclusion

The team also attended seminars and conferences across Australia to share knowledge and learn about new ideas and approaches. These included:

- ALIVE National Centre's Annual Symposium
- 2023 International Mental Health Conference
- Third International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference
- The Mental Health Services Conference
- National Suicide Prevention Conference



# Finance

The financial operations of the Collaborative Centre are consolidated into those of the department. They are audited as part of the departments accounts by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office. A financial report is therefore not provided in this annual report.

The Collaborative Centre's financial compliance attestation for this financial year is contained within the Financial Management Compliance Attestation Statement provided by the Secretary of the Department of Health in its Annual Report.

# **Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing**

**Victorian Collaborative Centre  
for Mental Health and Wellbeing**

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Melbourne, Victoria 3000

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**Or visit:**

[www.vic.gov.au/victorian-collaborative-centre](http://www.vic.gov.au/victorian-collaborative-centre)