

Media Release

The Hon James Merlino MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education
Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers



Friday, 5 November 2021

SUPPORTING VICTORIANS WITH LIVED MENTAL HEALTH EXPERIENCE

The Andrews Labor Government is supporting Victorians who have been through Victoria's mental health system, with new funding to expand the state's peak lived experience advocacy organisation.

The Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System called for people with lived experience of mental illness or psychological distress to be at the centre of system reform – and the Labor Government is delivering just that.

An additional \$6.2 million over four years will support the vital work of the Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council (VMIAC), adding to the Government's existing support for its important advocacy work and ensuring the voices of those who have interacted with the mental health system are heard as the reform begins.

Putting people with lived experience at the centre of Victoria's mental health and wellbeing system will ensure services are accessible and meet the needs of those who use them.

This funding will help VMIAC develop policy, undertake research and build leadership across the consumer sector to integrate their voices across a broad range of initiatives.

The Labor Government also supports VMIAC to manage a consumer participation register – helping to engage with consumers in the community and providing the support and pathways people with lived experience need to be involved in the reform.

VMIAC has a leading voice at the reform table as co-chair of the Department of Health's Lived Experience Advisory Group, and representation on the Expert Advisory Group for the new Mental Health and Wellbeing Act.

During the pandemic, VMIAC has also been supported to establish its Check-In program which offers connection and support for people with lived experience impacted by the pandemic and who would benefit from a peer-based response.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Mental Health James Merlino

"We're rebuilding our mental health system from the ground up and need the unique insight of people who have used our services to make sure we get this reform right."

"This extra support for VMIAC will give those with lived experience of mental health a louder voice in shaping Victoria's new mental health system."