

# sharc

**Self Help Addiction Resource Centre**



peer  
PROJECTS

A PROGRAM OF SHARC

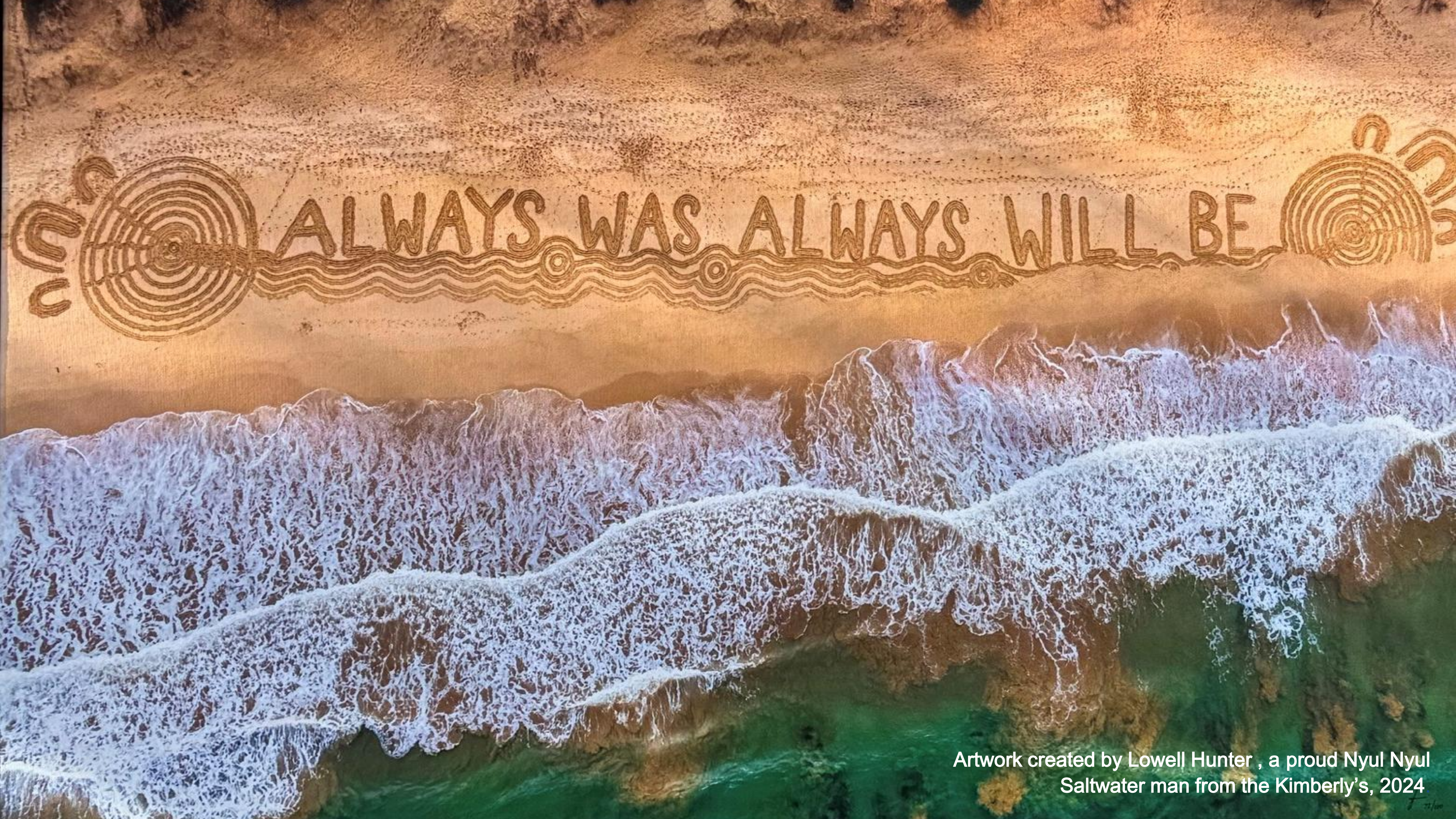




# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY







Artwork created by Lowell Hunter , a proud Nyul Nyul  
Saltwater man from the Kimberly's, 2024



LIVED & LIVING  
EXPERIENCE





# LEADING LIVED & LIVING EXPERIENCE

PRESENTED BY

**sharc**  
Self Help Addiction Resource Centre

  
**peer**  
PROJECTS  
A PROGRAM OF SHARC



RESIDENTIAL  
PEER PROGRAMS  
A PROGRAM OF SHARC



peer  
PROJECTS  
A PROGRAM OF SHARC

FAMILY  
DRUG AND  
GAMBLING HELP



We've been there  
A PROGRAM OF SHARC



ASSOCIATION OF  
PARTICIPATING SERVICE USERS  
A SERVICE OF SHARC



**SHARC PROGRAM  
& SERVICES**



# PEER PROJECTS

**Peer Projects is Victorians lead agency for the AOD lived experience workforce development and a central resource for the states peer led activity. Peer Projects:**

- Drives strategic direction for AOD lived experience
- Provides training and support for peer workers and organisations
- Employs and support of peer workers across sectors
- Provides discipline specific supervision to peer workers nationally across sectors
- Runs the Peer Mentors in Justice Program
- Collaborates with lived experience communities nationally and internationally








# WHAT IS LIVED EXPERIENCE?



- Lived refers to a past experience of substance use and/or addiction
  - An experience that radically changes a person's life and influences how they see the world
  - For some, this experience includes a self-determined healing journey
  - Often incorporates exposure to marginalisation, stigmatisation, criminalisation, and adversity
- 

**“ It is important to understand that the experiences, and impacts, are very personal and while ‘how much experience is enough’ is highly subjective, people with lived experience describe experiences that changed life as they knew it and took them on a different path from what they had planned. The experiences, particularly for people in personal lived experience roles also caused significant change to the way they viewed themselves and their place in the world. ”**

**LOUISE BYRNE**







# THE UMBRELLA OF THE LLEW

- \* Peer Workers (Direct LE or Family/Supporter LE)
- \* LE Consultants – Advisory role, project work, policy development.
- \* Executive LE roles – Managers, Team Leaders, Directors, Board Members

- \* LE researchers and educators
- \* LE advocate/representative – direct advocacy role, campaign development, public speaking.

Designated and non-designated roles  
(The Difference?)



Our values are illustrative of who we are, what is important to us and what underpins our work. They are born from passion, lived experience and lived expertise and provide a compass for the work we do today and the work of the AOD LEW in the future.

## **LIVED EXPERTISE**

the knowledge and insights gained from life changing experiences provide a unique and invaluable expertise that can transform services, systems and communities.

## **EMPATHY**

lived experience and lived expertise provide a pathway for relationships, where empathy, vulnerability and trust thrive.

## **COMMUNITY**

the AOD Consumer LEW is part of a longstanding community movement. We are diverse but unified by shared goals.



**LIVED EXPERIENCE  
VALUES**



CONTINUED ...

## **PARTICIPATION**

consumers have the right to participate in, partner and lead in decision making that affects them.

## **MUTUALITY**

in relationship, we work from a basis of mutuality, minimising power imbalances, embracing opportunities for co-learning and encouraging self-determination.

## **EQUITY**

we advocate for an equitable society where everyone has the opportunity to thrive, free from stigma and discrimination.

## **INTEGRITY**

our practice is underpinned by integrity, strong adherence to values and ethical principles.



**LIVED EXPERIENCE  
VALUES**



# WHAT IS PEER WORK?

*‘A peer support worker utilises their lived experience, plus skills learned in formal training, to deliver services in support of others.’*



**Victorian Alcohol and other Drugs (AOD)**  
**PEER WORKFORCE COMMUNITY OF  
PRACTICE**

Peer workers provide non-clinical assistance; they utilise their personal experiences in a way that promotes understanding and fosters connection. Peer workers offer support to others who have shared experiences by:

- Facilitating authentic connections
- Sharing their personal experiences in a way that inspires hope
- Offering help and support as an equal, within a defined role; and
- Developing positive relationships that demonstrate the power and possibility of change



# MYTHS & MISCONCEPTIONS

There is no difference between peer workers & other staff that have personal experience of alcohol & other drug use

Peer support is for people working on their own recovery

Peer support is just a way of saving money

There are no boundaries in peer work

Peers will be too fragile; they are likely to break down or relapse

Peer workers cannot work full time due to the level of responsibility and stress

Peers cannot be expected to conform to usual standards of confidentiality

Peers don't know the difference between friendships and working relationships

Peer workers uncover information about an individual receiving services to bring back to the rest of the team

Anyone who has received alcohol and drug treatment will make a good peer worker

An organisation needs to develop special policies for peer workers

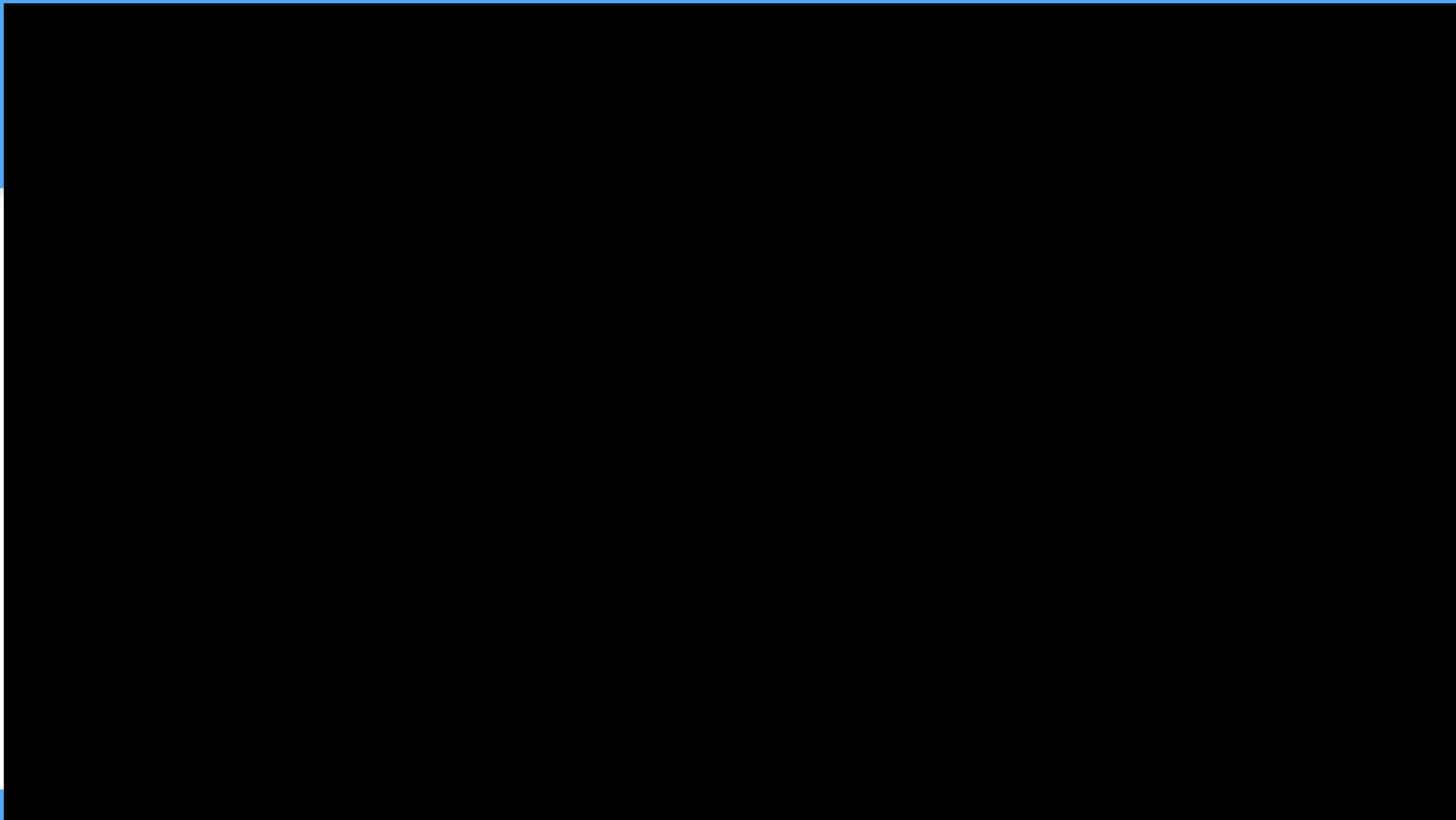
As long as we're all invested in integrating peer support roles, and take all the right steps, this should be easy, right?



**CURIOSITY AND  
CONNECTION**









# LIVED EXPERIENCE TO LIVED EXPERTISE



Personal experience past or present that radically changes their life and influences how they see the world

Knowledge, perspectives, insights, and understanding gained through lived experience

Formal training in peer work practice, guidance on the intentional and purposeful use of lived experience & training in competencies to work in formalised settings

Targeted training, both discipline specific and mainstream that enables a peer worker to operate in certain environments and deliver on responsibilities

Ongoing learning, discipline specific supervision and engagement with the broader peer workforce community



# BENEFITS OF PEER WORK



## Benefits for people accessing services

Mutuality

Increased empathy

Foster a sense of belonging/ community

More equitable relationships

Lived understanding aids trust

Living example of hope

Enhanced rapport, connection and trust

Advocacy

Risk adverse approaches replaced by dignity of risk

## Benefits for all

Increased hope and optimism

Greater wellbeing and inclusion

Improved culture for safe sharing

Challenges discrimination and prejudice

Increased value of lived experience

## Benefits for organisations and colleagues

Contribute to more person-directed services

Contribute to greater recovery understanding/ orientation

'Bridge' of understanding between people and accessing services and colleagues in traditional roles

Contribute to more positive/ inclusive/ flexible work culture

Co-production leads to safer and more accountable services



# ENABLERS FOR SUCCESS

- ✓ **Staff champions or LE leadership**

Importance of developing a staff champion or lived experience lead within organisations to drive change

- ✓ **Education for all staff**

The success of integrating peers into the workforce is decided, in part, by the interaction a peer worker has with their co-workers

- ✓ **Culture of wellbeing and inclusivity**





# BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

## ROLE CLARITY

- Clear functions, tasks and scope of practice
- Difference between clinician and peer worker

## PEER WORK AUTHENTICITY

- Emphasise, retain, and value the distinctiveness
- Remaining peer to peer

## PEER DRIFT

- Using clinical language
- Discomfort in utilising one's recovery story
- Focus on barriers, symptoms and diagnosis

## ROLE ISOLATION

- If a peer worker is not integrated into the team
- The only LLE worker in the service
- Unable to connect with other LLE workers

## LACK OF A SHARED UNDERSTANDING

- Ambiguity for peer worker and other staff
- Everyone has a different understanding
- Utilised in non-LLE specific tasks

## LIMITED CAREER TRAJECTORY

- Lack of opportunity to progress
- Lack of organisational vision
- High turnover of staff

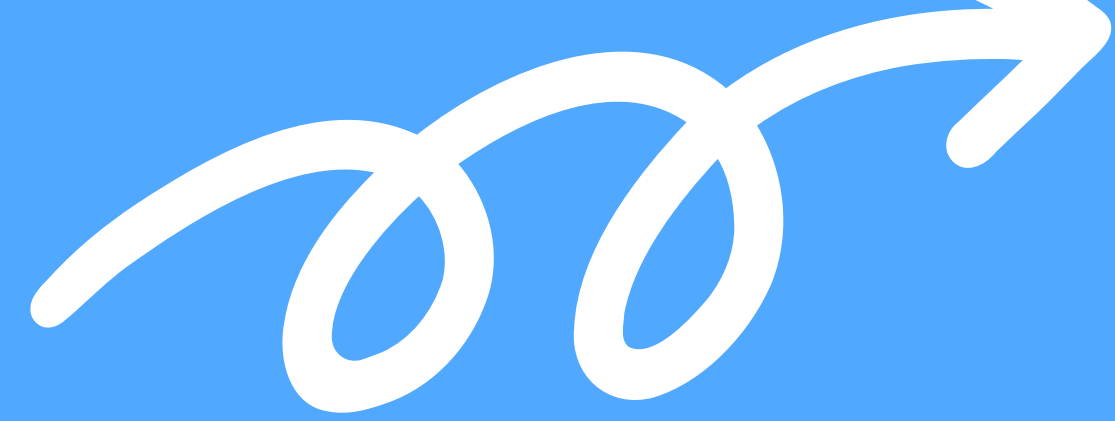


## FUNDING AND FTE





# THRIVING WORKFORCE



We create more peer roles

Stakeholders see the value  
of peer support workers

Peer roles are well-  
defined and effectively  
recruited

Peers thrive in their  
positions and add value for  
clients

Training and policy  
matches expectation of  
roles

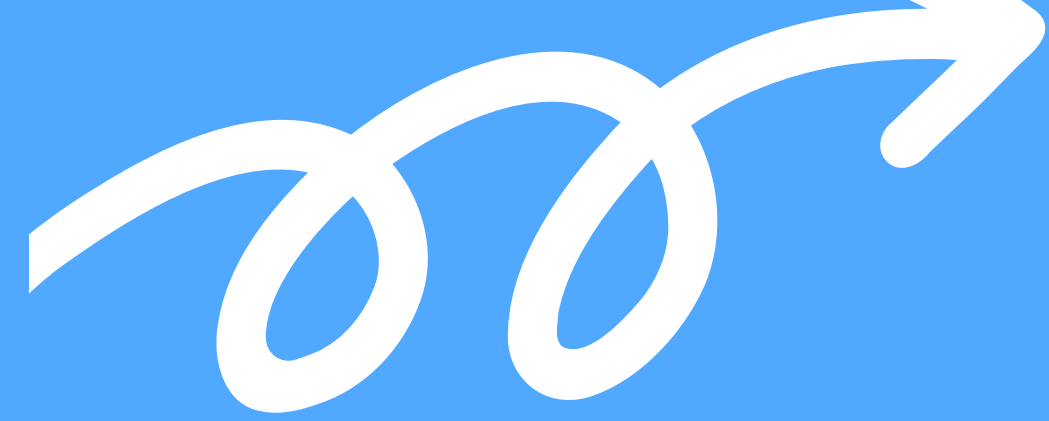
Managers, peers and colleagues  
understand the role

GROW





# BARELY SURVIVING WORKFORCE



We create more peer roles

Stakeholders see peer support workers as a liability

High turnover of peers

Peer roles are poorly defined

Training and policy contradicts the realities of the role

Managers, peers and colleagues disagree on what the role is





## **TLC (The Learning Collaborative): The Yale University Lived Experience Workforce Learning Collaborative project.**

Enhancing the capability of Victoria's mental health, drug and alcohol organisations to embed lived experience workforces through mutual support.

## **SOLE (Supporting Organisational Lived Experience): The Tailored Organisational Supports project.**

Tailored support for Victoria's mental health organisations to identify and close gaps in lived experience workforce development.



**LIVED/LIVING EXPERIENCE  
AT HEART (LLEAH) PROGRAM**







# TLC

## *THE LEARNING COLLABORATIVE*



The lived experience led Program for Recovery and Community Health (PRCH) at Yale University, have a model for building networks and mentoring between organisations who employ lived and living experience workforce, to create mutual learning and support, to better understand and enable an authentic lived experience workforce.

Peer Projects at SHARC are working with Yale and International expert Dr Louise Byrne to bring this groundbreaking initiative to Australia.

- This will be delivered in Victoria as the Lived Experience Workforce Learning Collaborative (LEWLC).
  - The program runs for 12 months and will commence on 30 October 2024.
  - Ten organisations are being selected to participate in the Australian first pilot.
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# SOLE

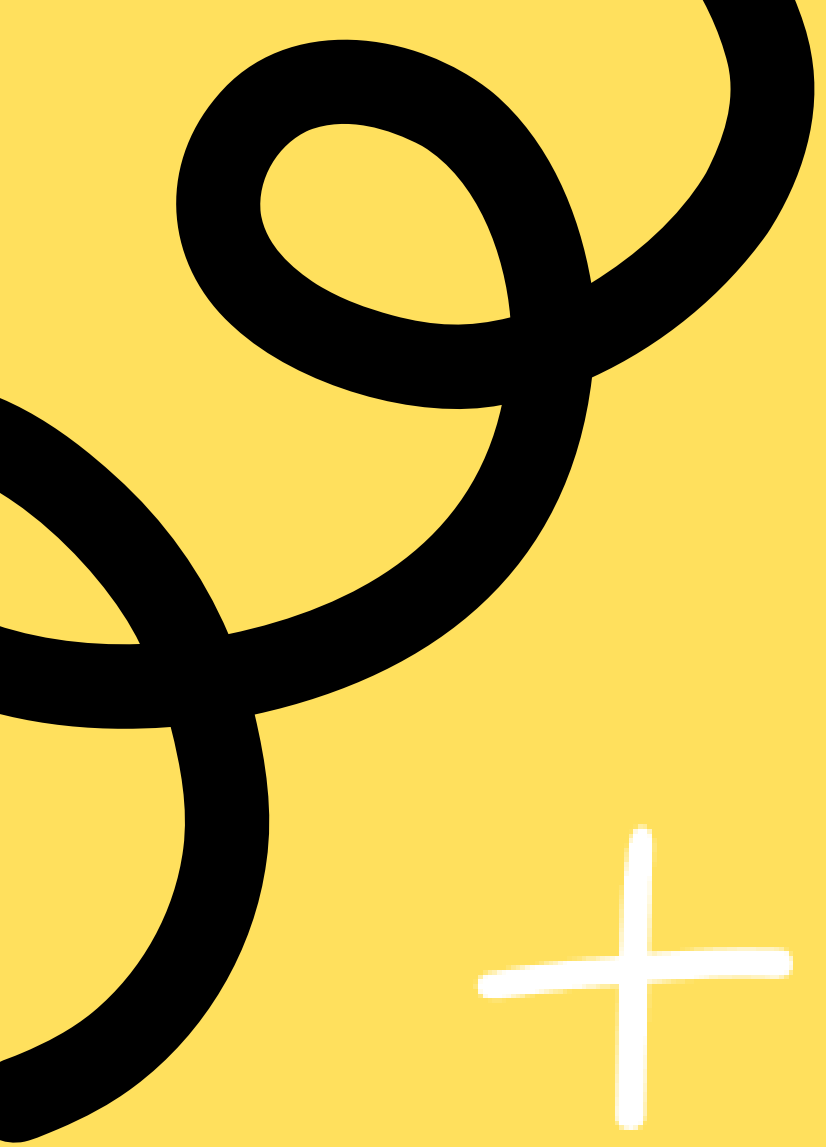
## SUPPORTING ORGANISATIONAL LE



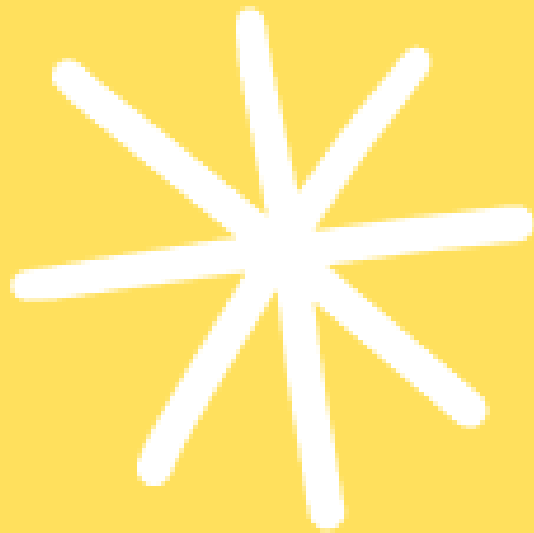
**This initiative is using a guided assessment tool for Lived and Living Experience Employers in Victoria.**

- The tool is based on The National Lived Experience (Peer) Workforce Development Guidelines
  - Through a consultation process using this tool, organisations will understand their current level of LLE literacy and room for development to be able to plan for evidence-informed progress.
  - The tool will be tested in one organisation, and then will be piloted in up to 6 organisations following the testing. There will be an EOI process for the pilot phase, but it's currently limited to MH only.
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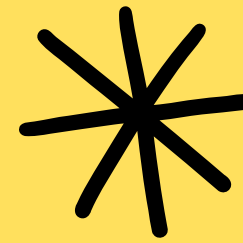
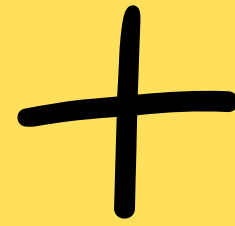




THANK  
you!







**CONTACT US**

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