

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Title	Justice Peer Researcher (designated lived and living experience)
Program	APSU
Award	Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010 (SCHCADS) Grade 3.1 - with salary and remuneration packaging
Reports to	Justice Peer Research Coordinator
Location	140 Grange Road, Carnegie, with some work conducted at the Burnet Institute 85 Commercial Road, Melbourne, Victoria 3004 Australia
Hybrid/onsite	Hybrid working arrangements can be negotiated in line with SHARC policy
Employment Type	As per contract
Date of Review	22/01/2026

About SHARC

Established in 1995, SHARC is a community of people impacted by alcohol, drugs and gambling, including family, friends and supporters. Together, we work towards an Australian society where our communities' lived expertise is at the heart of inclusive communities, services, and systems.

Our Vision: Lived expertise is at the heart of inclusive communities and services, where people proudly share their experiences and support each other in a society free of stigma and discrimination.

Our Purpose: We transform lives, services and society through our community's lived experience of alcohol and other drugs, gambling and related harms. We create change by being ourselves, supporting one another, telling our stories, sharing our knowledge, advocating and building allyships.

SHARC places a priority on a positive, supportive, and productive work environment. Our services operate within an empowerment framework which maximises clients' and volunteers' opportunities for self-responsibility, mutual support and participation.

We transform lives, services and society through our community's lived experience of alcohol and other drugs, gambling and related harms.

We are strongly committed to equity and inclusion, and we are looking for people who share these values. We warmly encourage applications from people with lived and living experience, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, women, younger and older people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, LGBTQI+ communities, and people living with disability.

SHARC is an equal opportunity employer that offers generous salary packaging and opportunities to undertake professional training and development.

About the Program

The project is funded by VAADA's Alcohol and Drug Research Innovation Agenda (ADRIA) Grant Program in partnership with The Burnet Institute and working alongside Odyssey House Victoria and Uniting.

The aim is to strengthen alcohol and other drug (AOD) support for people transitioning from prison to the community. It does this by deepening understanding of consumer experiences and identifying how peer-led services can better respond to the needs of people who access them.

Through co-design with people with lived and living experience, the research will inform service improvement, workforce development, and the meaningful integration of peer workers across justice settings in Victoria. The project seeks to improve health outcomes, reduce reincarceration, strengthen relationships and community participation, and expand employment pathways for peer workers, while also building a strong peer-researcher community and embedding consumer-led, strengths-based research approaches across the AOD sector.

The project coordination sits with The Association of Participating Service Users (APSU), the peak Victorian consumer body for people who use, have used, or are eligible to use alcohol and other drug (AOD) services. We include family and significant others impacted by AOD challenges. APSU is a service governed by the Self-Help Addiction Resource Centre and is informed, guided and supported by an Advisory Committee comprising a majority of people with personal experience of AOD use.

APSU believes that our needs, expertise and strengths should underpin the policies, systems, and services designed for us. That's why we provide opportunities for our members to advocate for the issues that matter.

Our training, resources and peer-led activities empower individuals to shape the debate around AOD and create change for all of us. Our activities include:

- Training consumers to develop the skills they need to be involved in participation and other lived experience activities within the AOD sector
- Working with key stakeholders to increase consumer impact on relevant policy development and implementation at the local, state and national levels
- Building capacity within the AOD sector to support and promote consumer involvement in the design and delivery of services
- Advocating and creating opportunities for systemic change on behalf of AOD consumers to better meet their needs and improve their quality of life.

Position Objective

This role is designed to build the skills of a person with lived and living experience of AOD challenges and engagement with the justice system. We are looking for two people with a passion for changing the AOD and justice system and an interest in learning about research and co-design. Mentoring and coaching will be offered to you from SHARC and Burnet Institute. A key objective of the project is to provide opportunities for people interested in building their skills in peer research.

Working as part of a research team under the guidance of the APSU Manager and Research Coordinator, the Peer Researcher will contribute to data collection, co-design activities, and peer-led research processes, while building skills in ethical research practice, qualitative methods, and strengths-based research and writing. In this role you will develop confidence in interpreting data, communicating findings, and translating lived experience into research that is respectful, accessible, and impact-focused.

Note: This role will require some out of business hours work and travel to regional areas and potential overnight stays.

Position Responsibilities

Lived experience leadership

- Use your lived or living experience appropriately and purposefully to support, empower and bring hope to people with experience of the justice system and alcohol and other drug use
- Continually build upon your learned lived and living expertise through discipline specific training, ongoing professional development, participation in LLE activities and practice expertise
- Draw on the broader lived experience knowledge base developed through engaging with this project and beyond to inform your practice
- Assist in recruiting people with experience in the justice system and AOD challenges for participation in activities.
- Support people with experience of the justice system and AOD challenges to ensure meaningful and supported participation.
- Assist with related engagement activities as required, promoting the research project and its outcomes, utilising your lived expertise
- Articulate the impacts of adverse experiences to inform relational skills through a lens of lived expertise.
- Embed a commitment to authentic co-production to the project.

Research

- Conduct research tasks as required (e.g., participant recruitment, data collection and analysis).
- Work collaboratively with study investigators, other peer researchers, and related colleagues.
- Co-produce research outputs as required (e.g., conference abstracts, journal articles, translational resources).

- Engage the expertise from the Lived and Living Experience Workforce to help inform research practices and outputs (e.g., proposed model of care).

Key Working Relationships

Internal:	External:
APSU Manager	Senior Research Fellow, Social Impact and Innovation Implementation Science and Justice Health Groups Burnet Institute
Research Coordinator	Consumer participants
Communications Advisor	Peer workforce
APSU team members	Justice and AOD Sector Stakeholders
Manager Peer Projects	VAADA (funding body)
	Justice and AOD sector organisations

Selection Criteria

Essential:

- An interest in **learning about research, evaluation and co-design**, particularly in justice and AOD settings.
- An openness to learning, reflection and feedback, and an understanding that **lived experience is a valuable form of knowledge**.

Highly desirable:

- Exposure, experience (informal or formal), **curiosity, or knowledge about using co-design and coproduction** principles and practice.
- An interest in **building relationships and working collaboratively** with a range of people, including those with lived experience and professionals from different backgrounds.
- An ability to **share lived experience insights** in ways that support learning, discussion and improvement, with guidance and support.
- Emerging experience or interest in **consultation, research, writing, advocacy, evaluation or collaboration**, gained through work, volunteering, study or community involvement.
- Organisational skills and an ability to **manage tasks with support and guidance**.
- Capacity to work **both independently and as part of a team**, with encouragement and supervision.
- Familiarity with **Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint**

Desirable

- Interest in or introductory experience with **qualitative research**, such as interviews, group discussions or reflecting on themes and stories.
- A developing ability to **read and make sense of research findings**, including simple quantitative information, with support.
- Interest in learning data systems and tools (no prior experience needed)

Attributes

- A genuine interest in **contributing to positive change** in the justice and AOD systems, informed by lived and living experience.
- A respectful, approachable and empathetic way of engaging with people, helping them feel **heard, safe and valued**.
- Clear and thoughtful communication skills, including the ability to **listen well and share ideas respectfully**.
- Care and attention when completing tasks, with support to build confidence and accuracy.
- A flexible approach to time management, with the ability to **adapt to changing priorities** with guidance.
- A **curious, reflective and solutions-focused mindset**, with a willingness to learn from mistakes.
- Sensitivity and respect when working with people from **diverse cultures, backgrounds, abilities, ages, sexualities and gender identities**.
- An ability to **work well in a team**, particularly in environments that value lived and living experience.
- Open to co-facilitating groups and speaking publicly in a supported environment with support and coaching.

Additional Requirements

All employees are required to:

- Obtain a valid Working with Children Check for this position; a police check will be administered for preferred candidates. Note: we understand that a requirement for this role is to have experience of the criminal justice system and all candidates will have a police record. SHARC has a procedure in place for supporting people through these processes.
- Comply with relevant policies and guidelines.
- Comply with and accept responsibility for ensuring the implementation of health and safety policies and procedures.
- Fully co-operate with SHARC in any action considered necessary to maintain a working environment which is safe, and without risk to health.
- Take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of other personnel who may be affected by their conduct.
- Protect confidential information from unauthorised disclosure and not use, disclose or copy confidential information except for the purpose of and to the extent necessary to perform your employment duties at SHARC.
- Safeguard children and young people in our care, by ensuring that your interactions are positive and safe, and report any suspicions or concerns of abuse by any person internal or external to SHARC management. SHARC is committed to child safety and is a Child Safe organisation.
- Be aware of and comply with the SHARC Code of Conduct.
- Participate in mandatory training requirements to support the delivery of a safe and effective service
- Have valid working rights to work in Australia.

General Information

- New employees at SHARC are subject to a six-month probation period.
- Employment terms and conditions are provided in accordance with SCHADS Award.
- Salary Packaging is available in accordance with current legislation.
- Hybrid working arrangements may be negotiated with the relevant manager in accordance with SHARC policy.
- SHARC is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to providing for its employees a work environment which is free of harassment and/or discrimination. The organisation promotes diversity and awareness in the workplace.
- Under the Accident Compensation Act, it is the applicant's duty to advise SHARC of any pre-existing condition, which could be aggravated by the type of employment they are applying for. Failure to do so seriously jeopardises any entitlement the employee might have for a work-related aggravation of that non-disclosed pre-existing condition.
- This position description is intended to describe the general nature and level of work to be performed by the person appointed to the role. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties and skills required.
- SHARC reserves the right to modify position descriptions as required. Employees will be consulted when this occurs.
- Redeployment to other services or sites within SHARC may be required.
- Occasional out of hours work may be required.

I confirm I have read the Position Description, understand its content, and agree to work in accordance with the requirements of the position.

Employee Name:
Employee Signature:
Date:
Approved by Chief Executive Officer (signed):