

WHY WE EXIST & OUR IMPACT SO FAR

LELAN is the independent peak body in South Australia by, for and with people with lived experience of mental distress, social issues or injustice.

Our systemic advocacy targets the mental health and social sectors in SA, whilst our thought leadership and expertise on lived experience, leadership and governance is borderless.

By centring the experiences, collective insights and solution ideas of people with lived experience in all of our work, as well as being immersed in the lived experience community from grassroots to strategic and governance levels, we demonstrate the principles, practices and change dynamics that the social sector is calling for and desperately needs.

We have extensive experience and a proven methodology for leading lived experience-led and/or co-creation initiatives, frequently with a focus on sensitive issues and including groups that bring divergent perspectives to the conversation.

Here are some examples of what this looks like in practice:

Community Building

We provide collective, strategic and system-wide lived experience representation. Recently this has included providing submissions with direct input from our members and people with lived experience into the review of the state Mental Health Act and on the potential for a Human Rights Act for SA. We were also an integral member of the team advocating for, codesigning, commissioning and supporting the establishment of the Safe Haven in Adelaide's North.

We design and deliver learning and development opportunities with our community. Options range from using (y)our lived experience for change through to building skills and confidence to contribute to decision-making. We continue to build on our Lived Experience Development, Governance & Education Project (2020-2024) to grow the capability and influence of people with lived experience and lived experience communities, including linking them to committee's and representative opportunities that are advertised or sought by organisations.

Innovation Partnerships

We work closely with partner organisations to authentically evaluate and embed lived experience, and enable effective transformation of their practices, services, operations, strategy, decision-making and governance. This includes auditing organisations on their readiness, willingness and capability for embedding lived experience and co-production, as well as delivering short-term one-off projects or nurturing longer-term partnerships where we walk beside our partners over months and years.

A significant innovation partnership has been working with Mind Australia to hold space for the development of their new lived expertise-led practice and governance approach. Our initial work together was over an intensive 18-month period that has been followed by further work to transition Mind's new practice approach (*Connection and Community*) and their *Lived Experience Governance Framework* to implementation and evaluation.

Systems Shaping

We contribute to a number of state level committees, including the Mental Health Strategy and Planning Advisory Group and the Human Rights and Coercion Reduction Committees, and provide advice to relevant state and national requests for submissions, inquiries and other reform activities. LELAN has been an active member to the National Mental Health Consumer Alliance (the Alliance) since 2019 and are proud to have been part of the tender process resulting in the Alliance being appointed as the National Consumer Peak representing people with a lived experience of mental health issues in 2024.

We have informed and guided the reshaping of services and state decision-making to benefit people with lived experience who use services. One example of this with significant impact was the codesign of the *Philosophy of Care* to underpin the service offering of the Urgent Mental Health Care Centre, an ED alternative in Adelaide's CBD. This was a partnership with the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist and the Australian Centre for Social Innovation that speaks directly to the experience that people want, and have the right to receive, from services. Initial work was completed in 2020 and updated in 2022.

We advocate for lived experience-led understanding of and responses to mental distress and suicidality and have taken action to build evidence on their value. This most notably has been enabled through our work to systematically embed the Alternatives to Suicide approach across South Australia and to demonstrate strongly that lived experience (peer)-led community-based support options do work.

Thought Leadership

We are nationally recognised for our expertise and leadership in the areas of lived experience involvement, expertise, leadership and governance.

Our work in this area began with LELAN's first funded project in 2019, a two-year participatory action research and codesign partnership with the Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Research and Education Group from the University of South Australia. Our innovative work together resulted in the publication of *A Roadmap for Strengthening Lived Experience Leadership for Transformative Systems Change* and the groundbreaking *Model of Lived Experience Leadership* and continues to be documented in multiple peer reviewed journal articles.

We are regularly commissioned by organisations to disrupt their old ways of thinking and move them into imagining new ways and doing differently. In July 2023 the *Lived Experience Governance Framework: Centring People, Identity and Human Rights for the Benefit of All* and the aligned *Toolkit to Authentically Embed Lived Experience Governance* were published. The conceptualisation of Lived Experience Governance and its meaningful implementation offers one of the most significant provocations and guides for rights-based and person-directed systems change that over 200 people across Australia contributed to developing.

**EXAMPLES OF LELAN'S WORK CAN
BE ACCESSED ON OUR SHARED
RESOURCES PAGE AT
www.lelan.org.au/shared-resources**