

Expression of Interest now open: Safety and Quality Group

The Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (the Department) is seeking a mental health family, carer and kin lived experience representative to contribute to the work of the Safety and Quality Group under the [National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement](#) (the National Agreement). Mental Health Carers Australia (MHCA) is inviting expressions of interest on behalf of the Department for this national paid participation opportunity.

Background to this opportunity

The National Agreement supports joint action by the Commonwealth and state and territory governments. Its implementation is overseen by the [Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Senior Officials Group](#) (MHSPSO) and supporting Working and Project Groups.

Following the Productivity Commission's review in 2025, the current National Agreement has been extended until 30 June 2027 while governments develop the next agreement. Lived experience representation arrangements are being refreshed during this transition. A range of lived experience positions will be available across MHSPSO and its Working and Project Groups. Positions are for an initial 12-month period from July 2026 to June 2027 aligning with the 12-month extension of the National Agreement, with a possibility of extension.

Positions are eligible for remuneration in line with the National Mental Health Commission's [Paid Participation Policy](#). While meetings will predominantly be held online, where face-to-face attendance is required, reasonable travel costs associated with participation will be covered in line with the policy.

As the national peak body for mental health families, carers and kin, MHCA has established a paid participation register to support fair, transparent and well-matched lived experience representation across national opportunities.

We are seeking people who can bring lived experience, strategic insight and a broader collective advocacy perspective to this work. This may include experience supporting someone living with mental health challenges, suicidal distress, or experience of bereavement by suicide.

For this particular opportunity, the successful applicant will also need specific experiences and knowledge of human rights in mental health care, including issues related to mental health legislation and restrictive practices; and understand critical transition points in care, including between jurisdictions.

The successful applicant will be someone who can contribute confidently and collaboratively in a high-level national governance setting, including alongside government, sector peak bodies, lived experience representatives, First Nations representatives and workforce leaders.

Successful applicants will also have the opportunity to participate in MHCA's Level 1 Strategic Advocacy Development Series. This reflects MHCA's commitment to ensuring lived experience advocacy is supported, prepared and continuously developed. These opportunities aim to build advocacy capability, support reflective practice, and create strong feedback loops between representatives and the broader family, carer and kin community.

Successful individuals will be provided with access to the following:

- Onboarding documentation and resources
- Handover brief with outgoing lived experience member/s
- Introductory meeting with Working or Project Group Chair and/or Secretariat
- Support from MHCA with information and debriefing
- Pre-briefings with Chair/Secretariats prior to each official meeting, as required.

Applications

Interested individuals are asked to submit an expression of interest (up to 300 words in total) addressing:

- Your lived experience as a mental health family member, carer or kin, and how your perspectives and capabilities would contribute to the Safety and Quality Group.
- Any experience you have using lived experience to inform policy, programs, service improvement, education, governance or advocacy.
- What support, preparation or development would help you participate meaningfully in this national governance opportunity.
- How you would work with others to ensure perspectives beyond your own experience are considered, including diverse and intersecting family, carer and kin perspectives.
- Describe your specific knowledge of human rights in mental health care, including issues related to mental health legislation and restrictive practices; and your understanding of critical transition points in care, including between jurisdictions.

How to Apply

To be considered for this opportunity, you must first register with MHCA's National Contact Register as a 'Family Member, Carer, or Kin' and opt in to receive paid participation opportunities.

[Click here to sign up and register your interest in MHCA's paid participation opportunities](#)

Once you have created an account and signed in, you can submit your Expression of Interest (EOI) using the link below

[Click here to apply for Safety and Quality Access Group EOI](#)

Please note that if you have not registered and opted in to paid participation opportunities, you will not be able to access or complete the application form.

Expressions of interest close: Friday 24 July 2026

Shortlisting and selection: Week commencing 27 July 2026

Notification of successful outcome: Friday 31 July 2026

MHCA is committed to a fair and transparent selection process. EOIs will be reviewed against the requirements of the opportunity, the applicant's demonstrated capacity to contribute to collective lived experience advocacy, and the need to support diverse representation across the family, carer and kin community.

Safety and Quality Group

There is one family, carer and kin lived experience position to be filled for the Safety and Quality Group (SQG). The SQG is expected to meet 4-5 times over the 12-month period, with the first meeting in 2026-27 to be held on 1 September 2026.

About the SQG

The SQG was established by MHSPSO to provide oversight for safety and quality matters relating to national mental health and suicide prevention reforms and services. The SQG reports to MHSPSO in accordance with the National Agreement governance structures.

Clauses 115 to 117 of the National Agreement commit to making safety and quality central to mental health and suicide prevention service delivery. The National Agreement also includes broad commitments relating to gaps in the system of care, workforce standards, implementing new models of care, outcomes, and reducing system fragmentation, gaps and duplication across the system. The SQG provides expert advice to support national leadership on safety and quality in mental health and suicide prevention by:

- Identifying and considering emerging and ongoing safety and quality issues, including long-term or downstream impacts on the mental health and suicide prevention systems.
- Providing a national mechanism to share best-practice safety and quality learning between jurisdictions and services.
- Improving accountability for new services and models of care implemented through bilateral schedule initiatives and broader mental health and suicide prevention reforms.
- Working collaboratively to promote continuous improvement in safety and quality nationally in selected priority areas.

SQG Workplan

The SQG has been progressing work in the following areas of identified priority:

Mental Health Standards

Supporting a national transition away from National Standards in Mental Health Services to the relevant Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACQSHC) standards (National Safety and Quality Mental Health Standards for Community Managed Organisations, National Safety and Quality Health Standards

and/or the Digital Mental Health Standards) ensuring standards are appropriate for mental health services.

Sexual safety

Supporting a consistent national approach to promoting sexual safety and reporting on it.

Cultural safety and responsiveness

Working in partnership with Gayaa Dhuwi and the Social and Emotional and Wellbeing Policy Partnership to explore how to support implementation of the Gayaa Dhuwi Declaration Implementation.

Plan and promote consistent standards and monitoring of cultural safety across the mental health and suicide prevention system.

National Mutual recognition of Mental Health Orders project

Continuing to support and progress the work towards mutual recognition of mental health orders.

Membership

Membership of the SQG includes one representative from each jurisdiction, either a Chief Psychiatrist or a Mental Health Commission representative, as well as representatives from Mental Health Australia, the ACSQHC, the National Mental Health Commission, and lived experience representatives.

Position requirements

The successful individual must have lived experience as a mental health family, carer or kin. This could be coupled with a lived experience of supporting someone who lives with suicidal distress, or someone who has been bereaved by suicide. Additionally, the successful individual should:

- have the ability to apply and contribute a collective lived experience perspective to strategic thinking;
- have the ability to contribute confidently and collaboratively to a national governance committee, which includes chief psychiatrists and CEOs;
- have knowledge and experience of the broad mental health and suicide prevention system; including non-clinical and suicide prevention areas;
- have knowledge and interest in improving the safety and quality of mental health and suicide prevention services;

- have a sophisticated understanding of human rights in mental health care including issues related to mental health legislation and restrictive practices; and
- understand critical transition points in care, including between jurisdictions.