

Southern Homelessness Services Network

Lived/Living Experience

Engagement Plan

2026-27 to 2028-29



Acknowledgement of Country

The SHSN acknowledges the people of the Kulin Nations, on whose lands we live and work, and we pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge that this land was never ceded. We acknowledge that the vast over-representation of Aboriginal people amongst those experiencing homelessness is a direct and ongoing consequence of colonisation.

Executive summary

Background

The Southern Homelessness Services Network (SHSN) comprises all funded Specialist Homelessness Services in the Southern Region of Melbourne including services providing crisis, transitional, long term, family violence and youth support and accommodation.

This SHSN Lived/Living Experience Engagement Plan (the Plan) is an outcome of the SHSN's efforts to strengthen Lived/Living Experience Engagement (LLEE) and to embed LLEE to inform our work.

The lived/living experience members of the SHSN Lived Experience Working Group (LEWG) were central to the development of this Plan and have established themselves as leaders in our continued progress towards embedding lived/living experience voice in all that we do.

Overview

This Plan sets out the activities that the SHSN will pursue to solidify and advance the involvements of people with lived/living experiences of homelessness, and the guiding principles that underpin this.

As this Plan is written during a time of transition for LLEE involvements in the homelessness services sector, we have taken the opportunity to define some of our key terms.

For example, we have defined 'lived/living experience' to include all experiences of homelessness, whether or not the person has accessed services for homelessness supports, with a recognition that there are likely to be differences between experiences that have passed and those that are current.

Further, we define Lived Experience Expertise as referring to those who have intentionally transformed their lived/living experiences into a relevant expertise about the structural issues that contribute to homelessness, how systems and lived/living experiences relate to one another, and how the systems can be improved through the inclusion of collective lived/living experience voice.

Guiding principles

We have identified the following guiding principles as critical foundations to this Plan:

- **Authentic Listening:** We listen deeply to LLE and sit with any discomfort that may arise.
- **Collaboration:** We work to create change together.
- **Sustainability:** We strive for consistent governance and continuous funding.
- **Accountability:** We enable legitimate opportunities for LLE influence and always report back.
- **Inclusivity & Belonging:** We recognise the diversity of LLEE as integral to our collective success.

Planned actions

We have committed to ambitious but achievable actions. This will require strong leadership, from the homelessness services sector and from people with Lived Experience Expertise. As such, we concluded that the sustainability of an SHSN Lived Experience Leadership Group (LELG), comprised of people with LLE, Lived Experience Experts, and staff specialists, is paramount to this Plan.

Action 1: Establish a sustainable LELG.

All subsequent SHSN LLEE Plan actions rely on a sustainable LELG.

Action 2: Ensure lived/living experience representation in all SHSN activities.

Action 3: Utilise lived/living experience-led case studies and data collection.

Action 4: Create a lived/living experience-led feedback, compliments, & complaints best practice guide.

Action 5: Scope the opportunities for Peer Work and Lived Experience Expertise roles in homelessness services.

Review

The SHSN will undertake a review of this Plan during 2028-2029.

The development of our subsequent LLEE Plan in will be prioritised for 2029.

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Acknowledgements

This Plan is founded in the efforts of the SHSN Lived Experience Working Group (LEWG) members, working collaboratively with the SHSN Managers Group to co-produce a plan that all SHSN members can be proud of and look forward to implementing over the next three years.

This plan has been prepared by Skye Constantine, of [Constantly Learning](#), following their facilitation of a series of information and planning workshops involving the LEWG and the SHSN Managers Group.

We acknowledge that this project was made possible with funding from the Victorian Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and the SHSN thanks them for their invaluable support.

We thank all who have contributed to the development of this Plan, including the following workshops participants:

- Sim Crawford, LE Member & LEWG Chair
- Maurya Bourandanis, LE Member
- Christopher Reid, LE Member
- Vasileios Tsialtas, LE Member
- Lawrencea Tahuriorangi, LE Member
- Amanda Bingham, LE Member
- Tyson Grey, LE Member
- Ella D'Abbs, Launch Housing
- Nadine Howard, Launch Housing
- Gaye Ealy, Emerge
- Claire Edmanson, The Salvation Army
- Ruth Gordon, SHSN Coordinator
- Karen Lococo, SHSN Dep Chair, Wintringham
- Sarah Honan-Barnes, Sacred Heart Mission
- Steve Nidenko, SHSN Chair, Wayss
- Rosie Taylor, ERMHA
- Lachlan Smith, DFFH
- Sue Seymour, DFFH
- Arielle Milecki, YWCA
- Jo Smith, YWCA
- Michelle Olley, VincentCare
- Shyleen Magejo, Better Health Network
- Bianca Blair, DFFH
- Megan Garrett, Moira
- Anna Paris, Melbourne City Mission

We also acknowledge that the work of this Plan is indebted to many generations of advocacy work, led by people with experiences of profound injustice, attempting to transform these experiences into opportunities for collective solutions.

Acronyms

LELG	Lived Experience Leadership Group
LEWG	Lived Experience Working Group
LLE	Lived/living experience
LLEE	Lived/Living Experience Engagement
MG	Manager's Group
SHSN	Southern Homelessness Services Network

1. Introduction from the SHSN LEWG Chair

It's been my privilege to Chair the SHSN LEWG. It has been incredibly gratifying not just to work with my fellow LLE members but to see the buy in from our member services.

The SHSN members have shown they understand lived or living experience brings a level of insight into homelessness that data alone cannot capture.

People who have navigated housing insecurity understand the day-to-day barriers, service gaps, and unintended consequences of policies, in ways that are often invisible to system designers. Their perspectives can reveal how fragmented services, rigid eligibility criteria, or stigmatising practices discourage engagement and perpetuate a cycle of instability. By incorporating these insights, systems can become more responsive, accessible, and humane; addressing not just immediate needs like shelter, but also the underlying factors that contribute to long-term homelessness.

This, I think, is a strength of the SHSN. It's not just about a roof.

I'd like to thank all the member services for committing to one of the core tenets of this work: sustainability. We have come a long way since the launch of the SHSN Consumer Participation Guide in May 2019. Different services are at different stages and that is fine: this is a start.

This work is meant to provide a framework for the future.

Nothing about us without us can be seen as a trope, however what I have seen through my role gives me hope for the future. I see a future where all organisations recognise the value of LLEE, not just because it's what you should do, not just because it looks great in the Corporate Social Responsibility portion of the annual report, but because of a genuine recognition that LLEE leads to better systems for the people the member services are meant to serve.

Lastly it would be remiss of me to not make sure that Ruth Gordon is mentioned front and centre, as the coordinator of the SHSN and a ceaseless champion of LLEE, well before it was fashionable.

Embrace expertise, reject tokenism.

Sim Crawford

April 2026

2. Introduction from the SHSN Chair

As Chair of the Southern Homelessness Services Network (SHSN), my participation with the LEWG was a valuable opportunity to listen, learn, and be guided by people deeply committed to strengthening our homelessness service system.

The LEWG brought together individuals whose expertise is grounded in direct experience of homelessness and navigating the service system, alongside experienced practitioners and program leaders working across local homelessness services.

Through robust and thoughtful discussion, the LEWG reinforced the importance of moving beyond consultation as a one-off activity, towards genuine and ongoing participation that recognises lived and living experience as essential expertise.

We also acknowledged that services across the Southern region are at different stages in listening to, valuing, and embedding LLE voices across organisational domains, including service design, workforce development, governance, and evaluation.

This diversity reflects both the progress already achieved and the ongoing need for a shared framework that can support services to continue this work in ways that are responsive to their readiness and capacity.

A clear and consistent message from the LEWG was that LLE engagement must be meaningful, sustained, and accountable, rather than symbolic or time-limited. Achieving this requires clear pathways for influence, transparent feedback loops, and practical structures that ensure LLE contributions genuinely shape decisions and outcomes over time.

The objectives outlined in this Plan provide a strong foundation and shared direction for this work. Importantly, the Plan has been intentionally designed to avoid unnecessary rigidity, recognising that a flexible approach is essential to meeting the diverse needs of services, service users, and communities across the region.

I look forward to supporting the implementation of this Plan and to working collectively across the SHSN to translate its principles into practice, as we continue our shared commitment to embedding LLE as a core strength of our homelessness service system.

Steve Nidenko

April 2026

3. About the SHSN

The SHSN comprises all funded Specialist Homelessness Services in the Southern Region of Melbourne including services providing crisis, transitional, long term, family violence and youth support and accommodation.

The Southern Region comprises ten local government areas in Southern Melbourne - Bayside, Cardinia, Casey, Frankston, Glen Eira, Greater Dandenong, Kingston, Mornington Peninsula, Port Phillip and Stonnington. This is a geographically and socio-economically diverse region.

Our members include Launch Housing, the Salvation Army, Wayss, Sacred Heart Mission and the Better Health Network. More information about the SHSN can be found on our website <https://www.shsnetwork.online/>

The **Vision** of the SHSN is an end to homelessness in Southern Region of Melbourne.

The **Mission** of the “Victorian Homelessness Networks is to facilitate, inform and support the region’s homelessness services and stakeholders to work together to co-ordinate services to people who are experiencing or who are at risk of homelessness.”

The key strategic objectives of the SHSN are:

- 1. Working together to end homelessness;**
- 2. Acting as a conduit between the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and the Southern Region’s services sector on issues and trends to inform policy; and**
- 3. Strengthening the coordinated homelessness service system in the best interests of clients.**

4. About the Lived/Living Experience Engagement Plan

In March 2025, the SHSN established the LEWG, comprising four members with LLE of homelessness and several other members working on lived experience within their agencies, from Sacred Heart Mission, Launch Housing and YWCA Australia.

The remit of the LEWG was to advance the SHSN's progress towards:

Strategic Priority 3.2: Embedding the voice of people with lived experience (including First Nations and CALD voices) to inform what we do.

Specifically, the LEWG would:

3.2.2 Build on SHSN work to date including the SHSN Consumer Participation Guide and Consumer Survey to develop a Consumer Participation plan for SHSN¹²

A key part of this work has been building on the SHSN's work in this area before COVID. This work is available on the [SHSN website](#) and included:

- SHSN member consumer participation mapping exercise to benchmark current practice (survey of SHSN members)
- Adaptation of the North-West Homelessness Networks' Client Participation Guide as the SHSN Consumer Participation Guide, launched May 2019
- Implementation of SHSN activities under the Guide including a consumer survey

The purpose of the SHSN Consumer Participation Guide is to:

- *to demonstrate the commitment of the SHSN and member agencies to consumer participation and to show the strong value we place on involving consumers in all aspects of our work as people with lived experience and expertise in homelessness.*
- *to provide a model of effective consumer participation practices in a range of settings and with different consumer groups*
- *to encourage agencies to develop and improve their own consumer participation practices.*

¹ SHSN Strategic Implementation Plan 2024-25

² Note that the wording has since changed from "Consumer Participation" to "Lived/Living Experience Engagement".

A Consumer Participation Working Group was established to implement the SHSN commitment in the Guide, as follows:

1. Launch the Guide
2. Develop and implement SHSN Consumer Survey (every 2 years)
3. Develop member annual reporting process to the SHSN on consumer participation progress
4. Promote recruitment of consumers from the Southern region to consumer participation opportunities including the Launch Housing Lived Experience Group and the Council to Homeless Persons Peer Education and Support Program Group.

All the above items, except item 3, were implemented but not continued due to COVID.

Since 2022, the SHSN has been committed to including people with LLE particularly as guest speakers at SHSN Forums. This included a lived experience speaker at the COVID Learnings and Reflections Forum and the guest speakers at the 2023 SHSN Networking Forum. A Lived Experience Panel was convened at the 2024 SHSN Networking Forum which was rated as extremely valuable by participants.

In addition, the SHSN has continued to promote lived experience opportunities through the newsletter and heavily promoted invitations to participate in the AHURI research project *Nothing About Us Without Us*, resulting in strong engagement with people with lived experience in the Southern Region in the project focus groups.

This LLEE Plan is a continuation of the SHSN's efforts to strengthen LLEE and to embed LLEE to inform our work. We note that our continuing efforts align with the recent communique from the Ministerial Homelessness Reform Advisory Group (MHRAG) Working Group that "embedding Lived Experience workers into governance, design and delivery of homelessness services including the new system and place-based governance model" is a priority for homelessness reform in Victoria³.

³ Homes Victoria (2026) Update on homelessness reform discussions. Available: https://chp.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/MHRAG-Communique-6.pdf?mc_cid=20ff3f9b3c&mc_eid=18bbd12500

5. Language choice and lived/living experience voice

This Plan sets out the activities that the SHSN will pursue to solidify and advance the involvements of people with lived/living experiences of homelessness in our shared goal of ending homelessness for all.

This Plan is written during a time of transition for LLEE involvements in the homelessness services sector and is a substantial advance towards achieving, and demonstrating, “nothing about us without us” in the SHSN.

Our progress is, in part, represented by our changing language from “consumer participation” to “lived/living experience engagement”. Our language choices and what we mean by these words is explained further below.

Beyond language choices, the progress of the SHSN can be seen in the leadership of the lived/living experience members of the LEWG. As discussed below, the lived/living experience members of the LEWG were central to the development of this LLEE Plan and are critical to the SHSN’s continued progress, embedding lived/living experience voice in all that we do.

5.1 What do we mean by “lived”, “living”, “experience”, and “expertise”?

The idea that people should be involved in the service and policy decisions that affect their lives has a long history in Australia, originating from mid-20th century consumer movements in health and human services and other sites of community activism.

However, in the homelessness services sector, it is still not always clear who gets to be heard, when they get to be heard, and which experiences are then heard^{4,5}.

When the SHSN published our 2019 guide to participation, *Engaging and Valuing Consumers: Consumer Participation Guide*, we chose to focus on “consumers,” that is,

⁴ Martin, R., Stubbings, J., Corrone, C., Cataldo, M., David, C., Edwards, K., Fisk, L., Jarldorn, M., Lovett, D., Maihi, A., Martin, S., Matthews, H., Nipperess, S., Thirkell, C., Watson, J. & Zufferey, C. (2024) Lived experience participation and influence in homelessness and housing policy, service design and practice, AHURI Final Report No. 433, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited, Melbourne, <https://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/final-reports/433>, doi: 110.18408/ahuri5332501.

⁵ Constantine, S. (2024) Consumer participation in homelessness service delivery in Australia: What is it for? *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 59, 554–570. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajs4.294>

“people accessing/using specialist homelessness services.” Our choice reflected the “currently accepted terminology” and ideas of the time.⁶

Since then, opportunities for participation are more commonly referred to as “lived experience engagement” and/or “lived experience expertise,” with a recognition that people with lived/living experience want active involvements in the decisions that affect their lives and that they gain expertise through their lived experiences. This is sometimes described as being “experts by experience.”

These changes in language also recognise that people with experiences of homelessness might or might not access homelessness services, and that those who choose not to access services might still have experiences that are important for policy and services to consider.

While these changes in language are important, it is still not always clear who is included as having “lived experience” and whether “experience” is different from “expertise”⁷.

For the purposes of this Plan, we have chosen to use the terms “lived/living experience” and “Lived Experience Expertise.”

Lived/living experience includes all experiences of homelessness, whether or not the person has accessed services for homelessness supports.

We refer to both “lived” and “living” experiences in recognition of the probable differences between the experiences of people who *previously experienced* homelessness and those that are *currently experiencing* homelessness.

One significant difference can be that those who are currently experiencing homelessness might be falling through gaps in the services systems that those who are no longer experiencing homelessness never saw.

However, it is also important to recognise that the differences between lived and living experiences can be hard to define – many people who have experience of homelessness continue to experience housing precarity.

⁶ Southern Homelessness Services Network (2019) Engaging and Valuing Consumers: Consumer Participation Guide. Available:

https://www.shsnetwork.online/files/ugd/776f42_1099737545274f0cab9a17e2b11c700b.pdf

⁷ Constantine, S. (2024) Consumer participation in homelessness service delivery in Australia: What is it for? Australian Journal of Social Issues, 59, 554–570. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajs4.294>

Furthermore, lived/living experiences of homelessness can also involve experiences related to race, ethnicity, gender (identity and expression), sexual orientation, class/socioeconomic status, religion/faith, age, caste, physical ability, neurodiversity, body size, mental health, citizenship/visa status, language, education, geographical location, family structure, and personal history. While these might sometimes directly impact an experience of homelessness, they are more commonly influenced by related experiences of discrimination and prejudice. Lived/living experience of homelessness is inherently intersectional.

The SHSN recognises that it is not always easy to define when living experience transitions into lived experience, the impacts of intersectional experiences, and/or how the insights of lived experience might change over time. We acknowledge that it is important to continuously reflect on whose voices are being heard, and whether they include an adequate share of voices from the people most affected by the issue being discussed.

Lived Experience Expertise refers to people who have intentionally transformed their lived/living experiences into relevant expertise.

For many, Lived Experience Expertise is developed through involvements in LLEE opportunities.

Lived Experience Expertise includes an awareness and understanding of the structural issues that contribute to homelessness, how systems and lived/living experiences relate to one another, and how the systems can be improved through the inclusion of collective lived/living experience voice^{8,9}.

The LLE members of the SHSN LEWG are additionally Lived Experience Experts. Their involvements with the SHSN have been instrumental in the development of this Plan and, in this, they have established themselves as Lived Experience Leaders.

⁸ Byrne, L., & Wykes, T. (2020) A role for lived experience mental health leadership in the age of Covid-19. *Journal of Mental Health*, 29(3), 243–246. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09638237.2020.1766002>

⁹ It is important to note that Peer Work and Lived Experience Expertise can, but do not always, overlap. In the homelessness services sector, Peer Work focuses on using lived/living experience informed expertise to support other people who experience homelessness while Lived Experience Expertise focuses on using lived/living experience informed expertise to improve the systemic context.

5.2 Lived/living experience leadership and our co-produced plan

The SHSN LEWG members, both LLE and SHSN member staff specialists, began workshopping ideas for a LLEE Plan during their first meeting in March 2025.

Early ideas included collaborative work with SHSN member agencies to increase lived/living experience engagement, the LEWG providing secondary consultation about LLEE issues, and the embedding of lived experience voice across the network through identified Lived Experience Expert staff roles.

In September 2025, the SHSN LEWG identified the need for a skilled facilitator, with deep knowledge of the sector and LLEE, to support the LEWG and the SHSN Managers Group (MG) to collaboratively develop an effective, realistic and non-tokenistic Plan.

While waiting for confirmation on funding to support this, and an expansion of the LEWG to support greater diversity in its members, the LEWG started scoping their plan for facilitated LLEE Plan workshop sessions. They decided on a series of three workshops for the LEWG and the MG to: (1) receive training and support the development of shared understandings about LLEE; (2) collaboratively workshop the creation of an LLEE Plan; and (3) finalise the drafting of the LLEE Plan, with both LEWG and MG endorsement.

In January 2026, Constantly Learning was contracted to facilitate the development of the SHSN LLEE Plan.

In recognition of the substantial challenges for co-production that pre-existing power imbalances can present, such as between people who access services and those who provide them, additional meetings were scheduled between the LLE members of the LEWG and the facilitator to enable a recognition and prioritisation of LLE-led concerns.

In collaboration with the facilitator, the LLE members of the LEWG provided leadership in the co-production of this LLEE Plan, working together with the MG and the LEWG member staff specialists, to leverage the expertise of both LLE and comprehensive sector knowledge.

6. Our guiding principles

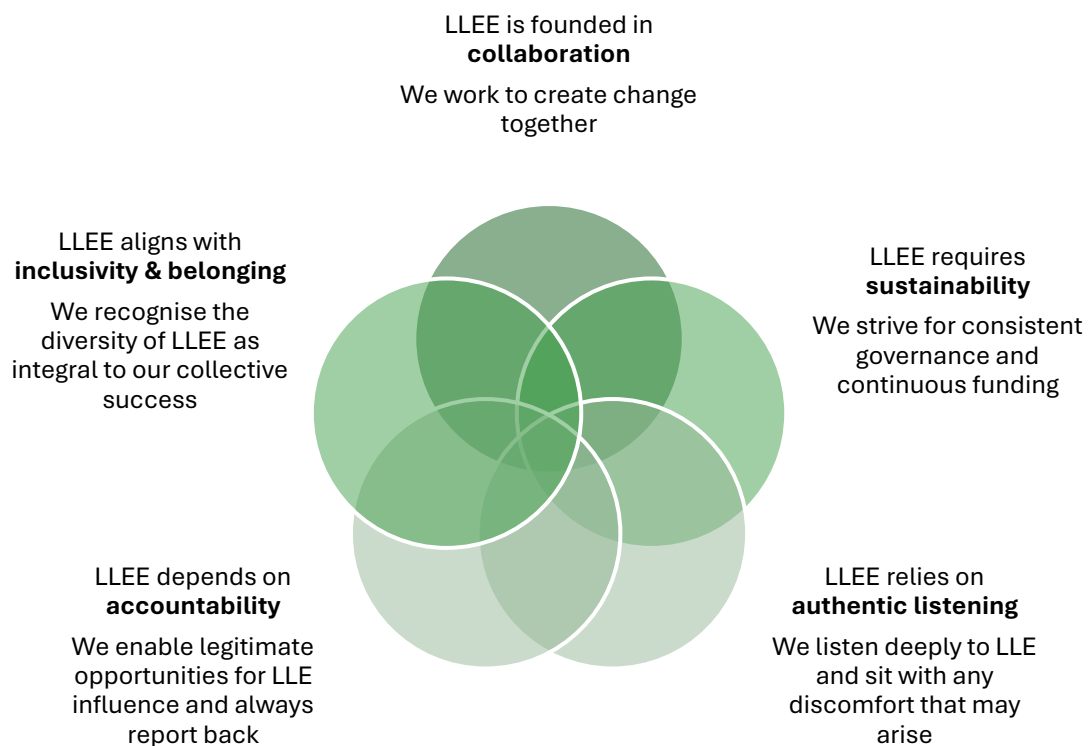
LLEE is not just about what is done, it is also about the fundamental principles that guide how it is done.

In discussing the development of this Plan, the LEWG emphasised the importance of the quality of the relationships between people who experience homelessness and the homelessness services sector.

The LLE members of the LEWG stated that not having opportunities for LLEE was preferable to LLEE that is tokenistic and/or ineffective.

As the LEWG and the MG discussed this Plan, we agreed that our shared purpose is to see the end of homelessness. We also agreed that both LLEE and ending homelessness requires people with experience of homelessness and the homelessness services sector to join each other in partnership to create long-term change.

We agreed to the following guiding principles as fundamental to all SHSN LLEE activities, those contained in this Plan and those that we will continue to explore and experiment with together.



6.1 Authentic listening

LLEE work begins with deep listening. Deep listening takes time: it continues until the person sharing feels adequately heard. Deep listening requires the listener to sit with any discomfort that may arise for them and to centre the experience of the person sharing.

Deep listening requires the homelessness services sector to recognise that many people who experience homelessness, particularly those who rely on services for their basic needs, often experience being unheard and that the priorities they present might not always align with those of the sector.

6.2 Collaboration

LLEE work relies on collaboration. All involved persons, sector and/or LLE, need to understand and agree on the purpose/s of any LLEE opportunities.

Collaboration requires the homelessness services sector to recognise the power it holds in relation to people with experience of homelessness and to account for this in their planning for, and invitation to, opportunities for LLEE collaboration.

6.3 Sustainability

LLEE work needs to be sustainable. Trust in collaboration cannot be built and rebuilt in coordination with funding cycles and changing ideologies. Sustainability requires a consistent governance for LLEE opportunities and continuous funding.

Sustainability requires the homelessness services sector to regard LLEE as integral and essential. It is critical that LLEE promises do not exceed what can be reliably achieved.

6.4 Accountability

LLEE work depends on accountability. LLEE requires a recognition that the homelessness services sector is fundamentally answerable to people experiencing homelessness. Accountability includes a willingness to provide LLEE opportunities that are inclusive, influential, and cover all aspects of the systems that respond to homelessness.

Accountability requires the homelessness services sector to constructively engage with criticism and complaint, and to ensure that all LLEE activities include timely feedback on all outcomes.

6.5 Inclusivity & Belonging

LLEE work aligns with inclusivity and belonging¹⁰. Experiences of homelessness are inherently influenced by intersectionality, and the related experiences of discrimination and prejudice. Inclusivity and belonging are necessary for legitimate LLEE and are integral to a collective success.

Inclusivity requires the homelessness services sector to recognise that the perspectives of all people matter. Belonging requires the homelessness services sector to fully engage with this diversity of perspective and to explore the possibilities that become available when this diversity of perspectives is integrated.

¹⁰ We have based our description of Inclusivity & Belonging on Byrnette, K. (2021) Belonging: A conversation about Equity, Diversity & Inclusion. Available: <https://www.krysburnette.com/blog/belonging-a-conversation-about-equity-diversity-amp-inclusion>

7. Planned actions toward embedding the voices of people with lived/living experience

In developing this Plan, the LEWG and MG committed to developing actions that were ambitious but achievable, in the current context of the homelessness services sector.

We reflected on the SHSN's strategic priority of "embedding the voice of people with lived experience (including First Nations and CALD voices) to inform what we do" as an opportunity for creating short/medium-term goals as well as longer-term aspirations.

In reflecting on our current practices and experiences, we identified the promise of LLEE across the SHSN through LLE involvements in sector events; the demonstrated success of LLEE activities at individual services; and the increasing availability of sector staff and LLE leaders who hold comprehensive knowledge and commitments to LLEE.

We also noted movements, with more work to come, in acknowledging and facilitating diverse LLE views and experiences; ethical storytelling; and ensuring LLEE practice are well supported and trauma informed.

However, we also identified that effective LLEE is often prevented due to shortfalls in resourcing; the lack of targeted funding for LLEE and LLEE-responsive action; the lack of LLEE opportunities for some cohorts, such as children; and widespread limitations in service knowledge and/or staff skills in LLEE and LLEE-informed practices, partially as a result of the absence of established frameworks and strategic planning for LLEE in the homelessness services sector.

We agreed that moving forward with LLEE requires strong leadership, from the homelessness services sector and from people with Lived Experience Expertise.

We concluded that the sustainability of an SHSN Lived Experience Leadership Group, comprised of people with LLE, Lived Experience Experts, and staff specialists, is paramount to this LLEE Plan.

This Lived Experience Leadership Group (LELG) will pick up where the LEWG left off. However, as the noted LEWG LLE members have noted, tokenistic and/or ineffective LLEE can be harmful. As such, the LELG will require adequate resourcing and remit to

ensure the LLE members confidence. Therefore, securing continuous funding and planning for the consistent governance of a LELG is the key priority of this LLEE Plan.

Once a LELG has been formed, and its members are confident that it is sufficiently sustainable, it will lead the SHSN's work through the remaining actions: (i) ensuring LLE representation in all SHSN activities; (ii) utilising LLE-led case studies and data collection; (iii) creating a LLE-led feedback, compliments, & complaints best practice guide; and (iv) scoping the opportunities for LLE expertise in services.

Establish a sustainable Lived Experience Leadership Group

Ensure lived/living experience representation in all SHSN activities

Utilise lived/living experience-led case studies and data collection

Create a lived/living experience-led feedback, compliments, & complaints best practice guide

Scope the opportunities for Peer Work and Lived Experience Expertise roles in services

7.1 Establish a sustainable Lived Experience Leadership Group (LELG)

Objectives	Strategies	Timeframes	Leadership	Resources/Support	Outcomes
Identify and obtain sustainable funding streams for LELG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investigate opportunities for sustainable funding - Take action towards sustainable funding based on the above investigations 	2026-2027	SHSN coordinator LEWG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding might be required to complete this stage – DFFH? Other grants? Philanthropy? - Student placements might support this action 	LELG has secure and sustainable funding
Development of a governance and operations framework for LELG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creation of terms of reference and governance mechanisms for LELG¹¹ 	2026-2027	SHSN coordinator LEWG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Depends on funding, as above - Student placements might support this action 	LELG has clearly defined purpose, strategy, and decision-making delegations
Review of sustainability of the LELG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Independent review of the sustainability of the LELG in relation to funding and governance 	2027	SHSN coordinator LEWG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Depends on funding, as above - Funded or pro bono consultation required 	LELG is confident that its financial and governance frameworks are sustainable

¹¹ This includes, but is not limited to, agreements regarding: LELG purpose, role, and functions; decision making delegations; remuneration; diversity/representation quotas; recruitment processes and criteria; resourcing for supports to LLE members; duty of care/dignity of risk for members; leadership capacities; and minimum membership capabilities.

7.1 Establish a sustainable Lived Experience Leadership Group (LELG) continued

Objectives	Strategies	Timeframes	Leadership	Resources/Support	Outcomes
Review of LELG priorities in reference to below identified actions and LELG evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review and prioritisation of below actions and other LELG operations - Update LLEE Plan as required 	2027	LELG	- Depends on outcome of sustainability review, as above	LELG has a clear operational plan for 2027/8-2029

All subsequent SHSN LLEE Plan items rely on the establishment of a sustainable LELG

The following items are regarded as statements of intent until confirmed by the LELG

7.2 Ensure lived/living experience representation in all SHSN activities

Objectives	Strategies	Timeframes	Leadership	Resources/Support	Outcomes
Ensure lived/living experience representation in all SHSN activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LELG representatives (min. 2) at MG meetings - LELG involvements in all SHSN strategy and planning events - LLE involvements in all SHSN networking and promotion events 	2026-2029	MG SHSN coordinator LEWG/LELG	- Adequate LELG sustainability including remuneration for LLE involvements	LLE is represented and influential in all SHSN activities

7.3 Utilise lived/living experience-led case studies and data collection

Objectives	Strategies	Timeframes	Leadership	Resources/Support	Outcomes
Establishment of best practices for LLE-led case studies and data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of relevant literature - Upskilling in ethical storytelling, etc. - Consultation with people with experience of homelessness to identify priorities for case studies and data 	2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LELG MG SHSN coordinator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adequate LELG sustainability including remuneration for LLE involvements - Facilitation of experts/consultants might be required - Student placements might support this action 	SHSN has a framework for identifying and collecting LLE-led case studies and data
Collection and collation of LLE-led case studies and data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SHSN services are supported to collect LLE-led case studies and data - SHSN to create a repository of LLE-led case studies and data 	2027-2029	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MG SHSN coordinator LELG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adequate LELG sustainability including remuneration for LLE involvements - Student placements might support this action 	SHSN has a repository of LLE-led case studies and data
Effective use of LLE-led case studies and data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of LLE-led case studies for SHSN advocacy and promotional purposes 	2027-2029	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SHSN coordinator LELG MG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adequate LELG sustainability including remuneration for LLE involvements 	SHSN's advocacy and promotional work is supported by ethical LLE-led case studies and LLE-led data priorities

7.4 Create a lived/living experience-led feedback, compliments, & complaints best practice guide

Objectives	Strategies	Timeframes	Leadership	Resources/Support	Outcomes
Creation of an LLE-led feedback, compliments, & complaints best practice guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consultation with people with experience of homelessness to identify experiences of best/lacking practices - Review of relevant literature - LELG-led drafting of best practice guide 	2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LELG SHSN coordinator MG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adequate LELG sustainability including remuneration for LLE involvements - Student placements might support this action 	SHSN has an LLE-led feedback & complaints best practice guide
Promotion and training for use of LLE-led feedback, compliments, & complaints best practice guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of LLE-led feedback, compliments, & complaints best practice guide through launch, webinars, etc. - Training in best practices for feedback, compliments, & complaints for the SHSN 	2028-2029	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LELG SHSN coordinator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adequate LELG sustainability including remuneration for LLE involvements - Student placements might support this action 	SHSN member agencies are aware of, and trained in, LLE-led feedback & complaints best practice guide

7.5 Scope the opportunities for Peer Work and Lived Experience Expertise roles in services

Objectives	Strategies	Timeframes	Leadership	Resources/Support	Outcomes
Scoping of the opportunities for Peer Work and identified Lived Experience Expertise roles in services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Survey/ consultation with SHS member agencies - Review of practices in other networks and sectors - Review of relevant literature 	2028-2029	<p>LELG</p> <p>SHSN coordinator</p> <p>MG</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adequate LELG sustainability including remuneration for LLE involvements - Student placements might support this action 	SHSN has a guide to opportunities for LLE-identified roles in the homelessness services sector to support further planning

8. Measuring impact and evaluating progress

LLEE is a “relational practice”¹²: the quality of the relationships it involves are critical to its progress and success.

It is possible to tick off all of the outcomes listed in the previous sections and still create LLEE that has no impact, or that risks harm to those it intends to involve.

It is also possible to demonstrate little progress in the actions of the previous section and to create a highly impactful culture of quality LLEE.

LLEE relies on trust between people with LLE and the homelessness services sector, first and foremost.

The people with LLE need to trust that they will be heard and that they hold influence and an adequate share of power within the homelessness services sector.

Currently, the involvements of the LEWG in the development of this LLEE Plan indicates trust between the SHSN and a group of Lived Experience Experts. This is a strong measure of the LLEE impact so far and has enabled our progress in a coproduced LLEE Plan.

Continued impact and progress might also be measured by who remains involved in the development of the next LLEE Plan, which voices are newly and/or increasingly represented, and how the future planning is led.

In 2029, the SHSN hopes to see a strong and influential Lived Experience Leadership Group that is confident its sustainability, its impact across the SHSN, and its capacity to continue to grow the involvements of people with experiences of homelessness in all of the processes of the SHSN and its members, as we collectively progress towards the end of homelessness for the Southern Melbourne regions.

The SHSN will undertake a review of this LLEE Plan during 2028-2029.

The development of our subsequent LLEE Plan will be prioritised for 2029.

¹² Cleece, K., Cheneler, B., Harrison, J., & Hill, J. E. (2025) Relational practice, a critical component for successful social work. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2025.2492402>