

Lived Experience Peer Cadet Program

Uniting



What is the Peer Cadet Program?

The Lived Experience Peer Cadet Program is an employment opportunity for people with lived experience undertaking the Cert IV in Mental Health Peer Work, to enter paid employment across one of six participating Victorian non-government community mental health services.

Beginning early 2022 , the program offers a paid two day a week cadetship over 12 months.

The Lived Experience Peer Cadet Program is funded by the Victorian Government.

Purpose of the Peer Cadet Program

The Peer Cadet Program responds to the Royal Commission's recommendation to increase the number of entry points into the lived experience workforces. Objectives include:

- creating a supportive and structured environment for applied learning and consolidation of skills
- providing opportunities for people with lived experience to enter paid employment while undertaking relevant study
- complementing formal vocational education such as the *Certificate IV in Mental Health Peer Work*
- increasing the pipeline of lived experience workers and provide a means to grow the workforces.

Program Deliverables

This program is intended to deliver the following:

- 30 part-time peer cadet positions in 2022-23
- 6 part-time project leads
- 1 State-wide coordinator
- Replicable and sustainable models of cadet learning structures and supports
- A post-implementation learning report on the outcomes of this program, led by the state-wide coordinator.

Who is eligible to take part in the Peer Cadet Program?

To be eligible, applicants must be enrolled to begin within the Cadetship Period or already undertaking the Cert IV in Mental Health Peer Work and meet the selection criteria defined by the participating organisations.



Organisations taking part in the Peer Cadet Program

Peer Cadets will develop knowledge, skills, and confidence in a structured and supported environment. Throughout their employment cadets will receive supervision and reflective practice opportunities that are discipline-specific with the following organisations;

- Cohealth
- Each
- Mind
- Neami National
- Uniting Victoria Tasmania
- Wellways
- Mental Health Victoria (Program Coordination)

Uniting Vic Tas

- Uniting works alongside people of all ages in local communities across Victoria and Tasmania. Our services reach to Albury-Wodonga in the north, Mallacoota in East Gippsland, the Wimmera region in the west, and across Tasmania.
- We deliver a broad range of services in the areas of aged and care, alcohol and other drugs, child, youth and families, crisis and homelessness, disability, early learning, employment and mental health.
- The work we do is all about giving people the support they need to live happy and meaningful lives. We are committed to being people-focused and rights-based.



What does a cadetship at Uniting look like?

- The Peer Cadet program sits within Uniting's Mental Health & AOD division.
- Peer Cadets will be supported in extensive professional development and training during orientation as well as ongoing throughout the cadetship.
- Peer Cadets at Uniting will be supported to have a range of industry experience in areas they are interested in.
- Peer Cadets will also have access to regular supervision, mentoring support, community of practice.



Why does it look like that?

- **Values, principles, and theories** – Ensuring Cadets are supported to understand the value of peer work, the underpinning principles, and theories while developing understanding of what lived/living experience is for them.
- **Skills and competencies** - Ensuring Cadets have diverse knowledge and skill base, while also addressing gaps in industry.
- **Lived experience practice** – Transferring skills & theory into practice as well as space for lived/living experience practice reflection and continued development.

Reference to the National Lived Experience (Peer) Workforce Development Guidelines

Program Outcomes At Uniting

Local level

- More pathways for Lived/living Experience workers into long term employment.
- Opportunity for local leadership and workforce diversification.
- Opportunity for Lived/living Experience Workforce Growth and Development.

Overarching goal of

- Further integration of Lived / living experience into the Mental Health and AOD workforce
- Strengthening understanding & collaboration to ensure better outcomes for our participants.



Thank You!

Questions

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Book a time to chat with Kris <https://calendly.com/k-obrien-1>