National Mental Health Commission

Paid Participation Policy

for people with a lived experience of mental health difficulties, their families and support people

Revised: August 2014
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Preamble

We value people

- We care about people, the experiences they have and the way they are treated
- We value the rights, roles and contributions of people with a lived experience, their families, support people and the community
- We listen in ways that are authentic, responsive and genuine

The values\(^1\) of the National Mental Health Commission (the Commission) are central to our work and place a strong emphasis on listening to and collaborating with people who have a lived experience of mental health difficulties, their families, friends and other support people.

This policy puts these values into action, by recognising the contribution to our work, by people with lived experience, their families and other support people.

In developing this policy we have considered a number of existing policies including those of the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum, the Mental Health Council of Australia and several government agencies. We acknowledge that this policy adapts and builds on them to reflect our operating environment\(^2\). In particular it considers the Consumer and Carer Participation Policy: a framework for the mental health sector\(^3\). A list of documents we have considered to inform this policy and related Commission documents is at Appendix A.

In line with the performance indicators in our Strategies and Actions 2012-2015\(^4\), which commits us to accountable and transparent reporting as well as to collaboration, we will report on the level of Paid Participation, as well as informal involvement in our Annual Report.

1. Purpose

Paid Participation recognises the valuable specialised and expert contributions made by people who have a first-hand experience of a mental health condition or are a family member or support person.

This policy sets out the Commission’s commitment to supporting paid participation by people with a lived experience of mental health difficulties, their families and support people by offering:

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• a daily or pro rata payment for an individual’s time when they are personally nominated or invited to give expert advice and share their experiences to inform the Commission’s work;
• to pay for travel and accommodation costs to allow these individuals to give their time; and
• to reimburse any reasonable associated out of pocket expenses.

While this policy aims for full and broad participation, like any organisation, the Commission has resource constraints and is not in a position to provide payment for participation in every activity.

This policy does set out clearly how much we will pay, when and for what, so that individuals understand clearly the Commission’s position prior to engaging with us. It also commits the Commission to plan and budget for people’s participation.

2. Language

In the Commission’s Strategies and Actions 2012-2015 document, the Commission commits to using person centred language in line with a recovery approach, with terms like ‘person’, ‘individual’, ‘people with a lived experience’ and ‘people accessing mental health services.’

The Commission also recognises that many people with a lived experience of mental health conditions refer to themselves as consumers, and that this term has an important and meaningful history.

However to ensure that our language is clear both to people who recognise the term ‘consumer’ and those who do not identify with an established mental health consumer movement, the Commission refers to people with a lived experience of mental health difficulties, their families and support people.

In addition, we will not use the term ‘commit’ in association with suicide. This entered our lexicon in the days when suicide was a crime, and its use is something we will work towards changing.5

3. Scope of this Policy

Definition of Paid Participation

Paid Participation is defined as an activity whereby a person with a lived experience of a mental health difficulty, their family member or support person is personally asked to participate in an activity from which the Commission will receive a benefit that will assist its work.

Activities may be initiated through an invitation from the Commission, stating they are Paid Participation activities, describing the format and outcomes required, estimating the time required and period of the activity.

5 With acknowledgement to the National Recovery-Oriented Mental Health Practice Framework Project Discussion Paper, Craze Lateral Solutions, 8 March 2012, Prepared for Safety and Quality Partnership Subcommittee of the Australian Health Ministers’ Advisory Council, Mental Health Standing Committee
Participation activities may take a number of formats depending on the purpose and outcome sought, such as:

- individual or group consultations
- roundtables
- teleconferences
- face to face meetings
- written correspondence seeking significant input on a piece of work
- representational activities where an individual presents, speaks or appears in an event or forum (either in person or online) on behalf of the Commission
- training or development activities.

Who is eligible for Participation Payments?
The Commission will provide participation payments to individuals where we are seeking particular advice to contribute to the work of the Commission.

The guidelines are applicable to the following:

- People with a lived experience of a mental health condition who may or may not access mental health services and supports;
- Family members or friends who provide support to another family member who experiences a mental health condition;
- Other unpaid support people or carers who care on a daily basis for a person with a mental health condition.

They do not include:

- Professional Consumer/Carer Consultants: any people who are engaged to provide professional services through government tenders or who are contracted to supply services for the Commission fall under standard procurement processes and guidelines and contract payments. For this policy, therefore, this definition is not a reference to a person’s job title but to the way in which they are engaged to provide services to the Commission.

When people will be paid
Payment fees will be provided on a daily or half day rate for Paid Participation activities where individuals:

- are invited by the Commission to make a significant contribution to its work;
- do not hold a formal representative role; and
- are not funded by another organisation, group or council to represent it in engagements with the Commission.

When people will not be paid
Payment for participation and reimbursement of travel costs will not apply where activities are not defined as Paid Participation. This includes:

- invitations to attend an open forum or presentation by the Commission;
- ad hoc communication and discussions with the Commission;
- where an individual represents another organisation, group or council and are funded as part of their recognised duties to engage with the Commission; and
- where an individual is a professional consultant, contracted to advise on and/or facilitate other mental health or suicide prevention activities or matters at the Commission, as they fall within standard procurement guidelines for engaging consultants and contract terms.
Recruitment Process
The Commission recognises the contribution of the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum (NMHCCF) as a source of expertise and advice, as well as an established recruitment mechanism and will seek representatives through the NMHCCF’s established processes where it aligns with the Commission’s purpose and objectives.

The Commission welcomes the opportunity to work with the new national mental health consumer organisation, including the membership of its Consumer Reference Group, and the Mental Health Council of Australia as the auspice body for its establishment. The Commission looks forward to working with the organisation once it has been established.

The Commission also recognises that many people with a lived experience of mental health difficulties, their families, friends and other support people, along with young people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and many others, may not identify either with the terms ‘consumer or carer’ or be linked in with an established network.

On this basis the Commission reserves the right to recruit according to purpose through alternative means, ensuring representation across the many diverse populations with an interest in mental health.

Recruitment processes may involve inviting people to submit an Expression of Interest based on the use of one or more selection criteria; examples of these are at Appendix B.

4. Payment Rates

Daily Rate
In line with the NMHCCF policy on participation, sitting fees are remunerated according to Category 2 of the Australian Government Remuneration Tribunal Remuneration and Allowances for Holders of Part Time Public Office.

The payments available are: $384 per day for general participation, and should a participant be asked to take on a more substantial role such as chairing a meeting or event, the rate will be $512 per day.

Periods of travel are included in the overall hours. Unless agreed in advance with the Commission, preparation time is not considered to be included, and should not be included in the number of hours submitted for payment.

The maximum time for working and/or travelling time that may be remunerated in one day is eight hours.

Pro rata payments are available for remuneration of periods of less than three hours, but generally amounts will be allotted by full or half day.

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Travel Costs
The Commission will endeavour to meet all reasonable travel costs associated with participation in Commission activities. The Commission Secretariat will aim to ensure that optimal travel arrangements are provided, including by providing cab charges wherever possible within the constraints of the Commission financial budget to limit out of pocket expenses.

Out of pocket costs for meals, taxis and parking
Out of pocket travel costs are to be agreed in advance with the Commission and include taxi fares and reasonable costs for meals where an overnight absence from home is required. Receipts should be kept for all expenditure and provided to the Commission Secretariat for reimbursement within two weeks of the expenditure. The Commission will provide catering at events where appropriate.

Airfares and accommodation
Flights and accommodation (where an overnight absence from home is necessary) for people to participate in Commission activities will be booked by the Commission Secretariat and costs met through the Commission budget. In keeping with Australian Government policy, it is the responsibility of the Commission Secretariat to purchase the most efficient and economical bookings for participants.

All airfares will be booked economy class, at the best available rate, in line with Australian Public Service guidelines, and any changes to flight or accommodation bookings must be made by the Commission Secretariat.

5. Process

Process
The process for managing Paid Participation is as follows:
1. The Commission will issue an invitation to an individual personally or through an organisation nomination for Paid Participation which includes:
   a. detail on the scope of the invitation and outcome sought;
   b. an estimate of the time and effort required;
   c. a reimbursement form for logging hours and out of pocket costs, and a bank details form; and
   d. an ‘Australian Tax Office Statement by Supplier’ form (this form does not apply if the individual has their own ABN).
2. Once the invitation has been accepted, the Secretariat will contact the individual to arrange any travel required.
3. Following the conclusion of activities, all forms for reimbursement need to be submitted to the Commission within two weeks.

Disputes
Any disputes over payment of sitting fees are to be discussed with the nominated contact in the first instance, and then if not resolved presented to the Commission Deputy CEO for their determination.

Right to review payment rates
The Commission has voluntarily adopted the rates of remuneration set by the Australian Government Remuneration Tribunal. The ability of the Commission to meet these rates is dependent on available funding, and therefore the Commission reserves the right to review remuneration rates at any time.
Ad Hoc Requests
Any requests for financial support for participation outside of these guidelines, including on financial hardship grounds, will be considered at the discretion of the Commission on an ad hoc basis. Should an individual wish to make such a request they should do so by emailing the Deputy Chief Executive Officer, at enquiries@mentalhealthcommission.gov.au outlining their request.

Authorisation and Review
These guidelines will be reviewed on an annual basis or as determined by the Commission, and will be published on the website of the Commission.

Author: Policy, Strategy and Projects Team

Revision and approval history

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Appendix A – Supporting documents

Documents considered to inform the National Mental Health Commission’s Paid Participation Policy:


National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum Operating Guidelines,

Selection of Mental Health Consumer and Carer Representatives to National Committees, Mental Health Council of Australia

Finance Business Rules: Section 7.10 - Informal Groups, Department of Health and Ageing


Australian Government Remuneration Tribunal determination on Official Travel by Office Holders for holders of Part time public office,

Commission specific documents:

National Mental Health Commission’s Operating Principles (2012),
Appendix B – Example of Selection criteria

Selection criteria for people with a lived experience of mental health difficulties, their families and support people

The key criteria applied when recruiting people with a lived experience, their families, support people to engage with the National Mental Health Commission through Paid Participation is a demonstrated ability to provide expert and specialist advice and perspectives to inform the Commission’s work at a system advocacy level.

For example, such perspectives could include:
- A particular understanding of the principles of participation by people with a lived experience, families and support people;
- Being widely informed of and able to represent lived experiences beyond one’s own personal experience;
- Familiarity or the ability to gain familiarity with state, territory and national policy issues in mental health and suicide prevention;
- Being able to provide advice and strategic direction to the Commission on behalf of people with a lived experience, families and support people;
- Being able to problem solve, use initiative and contribute to the goals of the Commission.

Other perspectives and attributes which are considered valuable

Demonstrated ability to maintain networks with national, state and/or territory-based mental health and suicide prevention organisations or government bodies and their constituents;

Well-developed interpersonal skills including the ability to work as part of a team, respect other views, and also maintain good working relationships with Commission staff and other stakeholders in the policy development process e.g. government, service providers.

Well-developed communication skills including listening, providing feedback, negotiation and the demonstrated ability to use these to achieve results.

Willingness to participate in development or training roles relevant to the work of the Commission (this role would not be onerous and would be provided through the Commission as required).

An understanding of the diversity of the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of our community, and the impact this has on people with lived experience and their families’ experiences of mental illness and suicide.

A letter of support from relevant organisations or entities outlining what makes them suitable for Paid Participation activities.
Claim made by (name)

Address

ABN (if you have one)

Bank: BSB: Account:

Attending meeting of Held in (city) on (date)

Expenses

(1) **Daily Fee** [ ] day(s) or [ ] hour(s), calculated based on table below. This is inclusive of travel time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>General Participant</th>
<th>Chairperson</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily Rate</td>
<td>$384</td>
<td>$512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two to three hours</td>
<td>$230.40</td>
<td>$853.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than two hours</td>
<td>$153.60</td>
<td>$204.80</td>
</tr>
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</table>

(2) **Hourly Fee on Non-Meeting Day** [ ] hour(s) @ $76.80 per hour for General Participant, $102.40 for a Chairperson up to a maximum of five hours per day

(3) **Other** – e.g. Taxi, parking fees, etc. (attach tax invoice/receipts) (Note: for use of private motor vehicles, you are not entitled to claim mileage using the cent per km rates – please submit fuel receipts)

Total TOTAL

Please select one of the following options below:

- I have an ABN and provide the National Mental Health Commission with this form as my Tax Invoice to cover reimbursement for meeting attendance.
- I have an ABN but am not registered for GST. I will receive payment based on this claim without GST.
- I do not have an ABN (Note: the Commission is required by law to withhold 46.5% income tax, unless you lodge an Australian Taxation Office Statement by a supplier reason for not quoting an ABN with the Commission.)

I confirm that I am not entitled to any other payment or wage for the time spent doing these activities.

I submit that the details contained in this claim are correct and relate solely to expenses incurred in respect of activities undertaken to contribute to the work of the National Mental Health Commission.

Signature…………………………………………………………………………………………………………..Date ............../ ............ / ........

OFFICE USE ONLY

AUTHORISATION OF PAYMENT APPROVED:..........................................................DATE........../........./.............

Cost code: ..........................................................$__________
Appendix D – Statement by supplier

Complete this statement if you:
- are an individual or a business
- have supplied goods or services to an other enterprise (the payer), and
- are not required to quote an Australia business number (ABN).

Payers must withhold 46.5% of the total payment it makes to you for a supply that you make as part of your enterprise you carry on in Australia, unless an ABN has been quoted or there is no need to quote an ABN.

Section A: Supplier details

1. Your name?

2. Your address?

Suburb/town

State/territory

Postcode

3. Your reason/s for not quoting an ABN? Place X in the appropriate box/es.

- The payer is not making the payment in the course of carrying on an enterprise in Australia.
- The supplier is an individual aged under 18 years and the payment does not exceed $120 a week.
- The payment does not exceed $75, excluding any goods and services tax (GST).
- The supplier is an individual and has given the payer a written statement to the effect that the supply:
  - is made in the course or furtherance of an activity done as a private recreational pursuit or hobby, or
  - is wholly of a private or domestic nature (from the supplier’s perspective).
- The supplier is not entitled to an ABN as they are not carrying on an enterprise in Australia.
- The whole of the payment is exempt income for the supplier.

Section B: Declaration

Under pay as you go (PAYG) legislation and guidelines administered by the Tax Office, the named supplier is not quoting an ABN for the current and future supply of goods or services for the reason or reasons indicated.

Name of supplier (or authorised person)

Signature of supplier (or authorised person)

Daytime phone number

Date

Penalties apply for deliberately making a false or misleading statement.

Do not send this statement to the Tax Office.
Give the completed statement to any payer that you are supplying goods or services to. The payer must keep this document with other records relating to the supply for 5 years.

Payers can check ABN records of suppliers by visiting www.abr.business.gov.au or phoning 13 72 26 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.