

# **Paid Participation Policy**

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



**Australian Government**  
**National Mental Health Commission**

## CEO's Commitment

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 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 of people with lived experience to our work. People with a lived experience of mental health, including carers, families and other support people, are actively engaged in all areas of the Commission's work. The Commission works to ensure the right of all people to participate in decisions that affect their care and the conditions that enable them to live contributing lives – nothing about us without us. The Commission ensures diverse and genuine engagement with people with lived experience in order to add value to decision-making. The direct knowledge about the actual needs of the community results in better targeted and more responsive services and initiatives.

In developing this policy, we considered a number of existing policies including those of the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum, Mental Health Australia and several government agencies. We acknowledge that this policy adapts and builds on them to reflect our operating environment. In particular it considers the *Consumer and Carer Participation Policy: a framework for the mental health sector*<sup>1</sup>. A list of documents we have considered to inform this policy and related Commission documents is at Appendix A.

We will report on the level of Paid Participation, as well as informal involvement, in our Annual Report.

Maureen Lewis

a/g Chief Executive Officer

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<sup>1</sup> *Consumer and Carer Participation Policy: A Framework for the Mental Health Sector* (2004), National Consumer and Carer Forum, <http://nmhccf.org.au/publication/consumer-and-carer-participation-policy>

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## 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:

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

## 2. Language

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.<sup>2</sup>

## 3. Scope of this Policy

### 3.1 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.

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<sup>2</sup> 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

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.

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.

### **3.2 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.

This includes:

- 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.

This does 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.

Note: for this policy 'Professional Consumer/Carer Consultants' is not a reference to a person's job title but rather to the way in which they are engaged to provide services to the Commission.

### **3.3 When people will be paid**

Payment fees will be provided on a daily or pro-rata rate (see 4.1) 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.

### **3.4 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.

#### ***Examples of eligibility for paid participation***

Would be paid:

A person who has lived experience of mental illness and works as a peer worker for a community mental health organisation is invited to attend an NMHC event in their capacity as an individual with lived experience, not because of their role. They are not paid by their organisation for their attendance.

Would not be paid:

A person with lived experience of mental illness who works for a mental health peak body and is invited to an NMHC event in their capacity as a representative of that body, and is paid by that body during their attendance.

The Commission acknowledges that on occasion there may be people who do not quite meet either category. Paid participation in these occasions will be considered on a case by case basis.

### **3.5 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 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.

Where formal recruitment processes are used, they 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**

### **4.1 Daily Rate**

In line with the NMHCCF policy on participation, sitting fees are remunerated based on the Australian Government [Remuneration Tribunal Remuneration and Allowances for Holders of Part Time Public Office Determination](#), as “Offices not specified”. The applicable determination and the rates are amended periodically.

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.

Payments are calculated pro-rata (hourly) on the basis of a five hour day. That is, 20% of a daily fee for each period of at least one hour( i.e. 1 hour = 20%; 2 hours = 40% etc). The maximum time for working and/or travelling time that may be remunerated in one day is five hours (i.e. 5 hours = 100%).

### **4.2 Travel Costs**

The Commission will endeavour to meet all reasonable travel costs associated with participation in Commission activities. The Commission will aim to ensure that optimal travel arrangements are provided, including by providing cab charges wherever possible (and within the constraints of the Commission budget and government policy or requirements).

### **4.3 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 and meals are not otherwise catered for. Receipts should be kept for all expenditure and provided to the Commission for reimbursement within two weeks of the expenditure. The Commission will provide catering at events where appropriate.

### **4.4 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 and costs met through the Commission budget. In keeping with Australian Government policy, it is the responsibility of the Commission 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.

## **5. Process**

### **5.1 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;
  - d. an 'Australian Tax Office Statement by Supplier' form (this form does not apply if the individual has their own ABN) and
  - e. A travel and accommodation form if travel is being undertaken
2. Once the invitation has been accepted, the Commission 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.

## **5.2 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's Chief Operating Officer for their determination.

## **5.3 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.

## **5.4 Ad Hoc Requests**

Any requests for financial support for participation outside of this policy, 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 Chief Operating Officer, at [enquiries@mentalhealthcommission.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@mentalhealthcommission.gov.au) outlining their request.

## **5.5 Authorisation and Review**

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or as determined by the Commission, and will be published on the website of the Commission.

# **6. Revision and approval history**

**Author:** a/g Manager, Compliance & Reporting

Version	Authorisation Date	Authorisation Position	Approval/Revision Type
1.0	29 June 2012	Deputy CEO	Approval
1.1	30 April 2013	Deputy CEO	Approval
1.2	13 November 2013	A/CEO	Approval
1.3	27 August 2014	Deputy CEO	Approval
1.4	22 June 2017	Chief Operating Officer	Approval

1.5	19 March 2018	Chief Operating Officer	Approval
1.6	10 March 2019	Interim CEO	Approval

## Appendix A – Supporting documents

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

- Consumer and Carer Participation Policy: A Framework for the Mental Health Sector (2004) National Consumer and Carer Forum available at:  
<https://nmhccf.org.au/sites/default/files/docs/consumerandcarerparticipationpolicy.pdf>
- National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum Operating Guidelines available at:  
<https://nmhccf.org.au/content/nmhccf-operating-guidelines>
- Selection of Mental Health Consumer and Carer Representatives to National Committees, Mental Health Council of Australia (now Mental Health Australia)
- Australian Government Remuneration Tribunal: Consolidated Determination on Remuneration and Allowances for Holders of Part-Time Public Office, available at:  
<http://www.remtribunal.gov.au/offices/part-time-offices>.

## **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.

## Appendix C – Paid Participation Claim form

 <b>Australian Government</b> National Mental Health Commission		Tax Invoice/Claim Form											
ABN: 83 537 016 476 PO Box R1463 Royal Exchange, Sydney NSW 2000 Telephone: (02) 8229 7550, Fax: (02) 8229 7555 Email: enquiries@mentalhealthcommission.gov.au													
Claim made by (name)													
Address													
Phone and Email address													
<b>Please select one of the following options below:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> I have an ABN and provide the National Mental Health Commission with this form as my Tax Invoice to cover reimbursement for meeting attendance. <input type="checkbox"/> I have an ABN but am not registered for GST. I will receive payment based on this claim without GST. <input type="checkbox"/> I do not have an ABN (Note: If this is the case, please also complete an Australian Taxation Office <i>Statement by a supplier</i> )													
ABN (if applicable):													
Bank:	BSB:	Account Number:	Account Name:										
Name of event/project													
Held in (city)		on (date)											
<b>Time and Expenses</b> (Note: if you only want to claim out of pocket expenses just complete part 2)			<b>OFFICE USE ONLY</b>										
(1)	<b>Capacity</b> participating in activity (please tick one)  <input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input type="checkbox"/> Member	<b>Number of Days/Hours</b> (including travel time)  Days Hours											
(2)	<b>Expenses Incurred</b> – e.g. Taxi, parking fees, etc. (attach tax invoice/receipts and return within 2 weeks of meeting/event) (Note: for use of private motor vehicles, you are not entitled to claim mileage using the cent per km rates – please submit fuel receipts)												
		<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 60%;">Name of Expense</th> <th style="width: 40%;">Amount</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Name of Expense	Amount									
Name of Expense	Amount												
Please complete the following declaration:  <input type="checkbox"/> I confirm that I will not receive any other payment or wage for the time spent doing these activities. <input type="checkbox"/> 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.			Total:										
Signature..... Date ..... / ..... / .....													

<b>OFFICE USE ONLY</b>	
AUTHORISATION OF PAYMENT	APPROVED:..... DATE...../...../.....
	Name ..... Position .....

