

Title: Exploring Lived Experience Governance through real-time examples and deep discussion

Panel Discussion: 2024 TheMHS Conference

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Recent calls in mental health and social sectors underscore the need to align governance structures with human rights frameworks and embrace lived experience. Lived experience governance serves as a direct response, by intentionally centring people, their rights, identities, and lived experiences at the heart of systems, structures, policies, processes, practices, programs and services. While the value proposition of lived experience governance is increasingly apparent, most (if not all) organisations are challenged by translating this into practice. Where gaps lie are in knowledge and comprehensive examples on how lived experience governance is implemented and actualised in current sector landscapes.

In response, this roundtable will feature a dynamic discussion between LELAN and representatives from the Queensland Mental Health Commission (the Commission) and Mind Australia. LELAN is walking beside the Commission and Mind as they lead their own organisational change processes to bring lived experience governance to life and effect transformative change.

Drawing on their expertise in lived experience leadership and governance, LELAN will set the scene by discussing the ‘what’, ‘why’, and ‘how’ behind lived experience governance. This will be followed by a detailed exploration of the national lived experience governance framework (<https://www.lelan.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Lived-Experience-Governance-Framework.pdf>), which documents the stepped process for organisations to embed lived experience at all levels and across organisations, and an aligned toolkit (<https://www.lelan.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/A-Toolkit-to-Authentically-Embed-Lived-Experience-Governance.pdf>) to support this process.

The Commission (an independent statutory body) and Mind Australia (a national NGO) will share their journey towards lived experience governance in their respective settings. Both agencies will speak candidly of their motivations/intents and grand visions, while holding the space to discuss their learnings and challenges with this work, specifically regarding their role in engaging stakeholders who may be less receptive to or sceptical of the value of lived experience governance.

We will then open the discussion to questions, before closing with an exploration of future opportunities in lived experience governance, and empowering audience members to consider and play a proactive role in facilitating journeys towards lived experience governance within their respective organisations.