

NEMHSCA and EMHSCA six month report (October 2023 – March 2024)

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Background

North East Mental Health Service Coordination Alliance (NEMHSCA) and Eastern Mental Health Service Coordination Alliance (EMHSCA) are inter-agency mental health and wellbeing partnerships that work together to improve service coordination in the North East and Eastern Metropolitan Regions of Victoria.

NEMHSCA and EMHSCA vision

The communities we serve receive person-centred, timely and flexible mental health and wellbeing support through effective regional service coordination.

NEMHSCA and EMHSCA purpose

To enhance service integration and communication so that communities can access responsive and appropriate mental health, AOD and wellbeing support.

NEMHSCA and EMHSCA aims

- Improve, support and promote safe, recovery-focused, person-centred and collaborative practices across mental health sector.
- Promote structured and coordinated Lived Experience Leadership, and workforce development models.
- Support members to navigate mental health system reforms.
- Provide platform for consultation and information sharing.

NEMHSCA and EMHSCA membership

| NEMHSCA | EMHSCA |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Austin Health • Banyule Community Health • DPV Health • Drummond St • EMPHN • health Ability/Carrington Health • IMHA • Merri Health • Mind Australia • Neami National • Nexus Dual Diagnosis Consultancy Service • Nexus Primary Health • Northern Health • Odyssey House • Orange Door • Services Australia • SHARC/APSU • Uniting ReGen • Wellways • NIFVS • Your Community Health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access Health and Community • Anglicare • Each • Eastern Dual Diagnosis Consumer & Carer Advisory Council • Eastern Health • Edvos • EMPHN • ERMHA 365 • health Ability/Carrington Health • IMHA • Inspiro • Mind Australia • MMIGP • Neami National • Oonah • Salvation Army • St Vincent's Hospital • Wellways • YSAS |

Key activities in the reporting period (October 2023– March 2024)

Review of the Alliances

In April 2023 NEMHSCA and EMHSCA engaged a consultant to:

- Identify strengths, challenges and opportunities.
- Understand current and future mental health landscape.
- Determine future form and function.
- Identify strategic opportunities.

The consultant conducted a range of interviews, surveys and workshops with the members. The outputs of the review were Environmental Scan Report and Review Recommendations Report.

The members agreed that the Alliances were still a valuable platform for agencies to come together. Members felt that Alliances were a good communication platform but could operate on a higher level of collaboration.

The main feedback from the review was to:

- Increase efficiency and effectiveness of the Alliances.
- Review and improve Alliances' governance structure.
- Upgrade communication methods.
- Establish regular engagement with the Interim Regional Body.
- Increase collaboration with the newly established Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals.

Attachments: Final Review Reports and Mental Health Environmental Scan

Governance review

In October 2023 the governance review was conducted to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the Alliances. An independent consultant conducted workshops with the Interim Governance Committee to consider different governance models for the Alliances.

As a result of the review a new governance structure was established. The Mental Health Service Coordination Alliance (MHSCA) Governance Committee was established to lead strategic direction and to provide operations oversight of EMHSCA and NEMHSCA.

The purpose of the MHSCA Governance Committee is to:

- Ensure that EMHSCA and NEMHSCA Alliance and Working Group activities align with the stated purpose and strategic directions.
- Ensure appropriate governance arrangements are in place with respect to funding and budgetary planning.
- Generate and / or endorse MHSCA's positions on issues of relevance to the sector.
- Oversee, review and provide ongoing recommendations for enhancement regarding future MHSCA focus and functioning.

Members on the Governance Committee represent the constituents of EMHSCA and NEMHSCA and are informed by them as well as being responsible for providing direct feedback to them.

The membership of the MHSCA Governance Committee includes:

- Banyule Community Health (funded agency)
- EMPHN (funder)
- EMHSCA Co-chairs
- NEMHSCA Co-chairs
- LE advisor - consumer

- LE advisor – carer
- Interim Regional Body Chair (guest)

On 21 March 2024 Tamsin Short and Kate Lester were nominated for the roles of the Co-chairs of the Governance Committee.

Attachment: MHSCA Governance Committee Terms of Reference

Recruitment of the Mental Health Partnerships Manager

Interim Governance Committee oversaw the recruitment of the Mental Health Partnerships Manager (0.8 EFT) who was appointed in December 2023 for 12 months to coordinate both NEMHSCA and EMHSCA. Having one coordinator was one of the review recommendations to increase efficiency and effectiveness of the Alliances.

Lived experience involvement

Lived experience involvement is an integral part of NEMHSCA and EMHSCA. Both Alliances engage with people with lived experience in the following ways:

- MHSCA Governance Committee - Lived Experience Advisors.
- Eastern Health Dual Diagnosis Consumer and Carer Council.
- Lived Experience representatives at NEMHSCA and EMHSCA meetings.
- Lived Experience Workforce part of the Lived Experience Workforce Development Working Group.

EMHSCA Membership review

During the review the current structure of EMHSCA was deemed to have grown to an unsustainable size. Both the membership and diversity of focus areas have become too broad with the desired level of depth and effectiveness given the fast-changing system. The Alliance commented on the need to adopt a more streamlined and focused approach to address the current size and focus challenges.

In response to the feedback from the Alliance members the MHSCA Governance Committee agreed to adopt a tiered membership approach to provide a small, focused core-group where collaboration and integration activity can occur; and a broader network where communication and connection activity can occur. The membership of the Alliance was restructured into two tiers:

- **Tier 1 members** include agencies that are impacted by the mental health reform and provide mental health and wellbeing services in the eastern region including AOD, homelessness and family violence agencies. Tier 1 members include people who have decision making ability and have influence within the organisations as the focus of the Alliance is more strategic. Tier 1 members will focus on specific action areas that require a collaborative approach and push forward progress toward implementation of the Royal Commission recommendations.
- **Tier 2 members** include the broader services system and cross sector members such as local councils, legal, employment, NDIS, etc. The focus of the Tier 2 membership will be to enable communication and connection between organisations and staff to help to build relationships and networks. Tier 2 members will be part of an email distribution list and will receive regular updates on the ongoing changes in mental health service provision and progress on the priority areas identified by EMHSCA.

Strategic planning

At the start of the year the members of both Alliances reviewed their vision, purpose and objectives to ensure that they still reflect the work of the Alliances. The vision, purpose and aims were updated to provide more alignment between EMHSCA and NEMHSCA.

Through the review a number of priorities have been identified for consideration of future Alliance focus and functioning. During the prioritisation workshop led by the consultant the members identified the following key priority areas:

Priority area 1 Mental health sector reform

- Stay up-to-date and engaged with sector changes, and the new entities.
- Promote the Alliance as the go-to pre-existing integrated network for the sector.
- Discuss the potential impact of changes to mental health service commissioning to ensure continued partnership and integration of the mental health system.
- Advocate for collaborative funding approaches and a collective approach to service commissioning.

Priority area 2 Workforce development

- Support capacity building initiatives to effectively implement the Lived Experience Framework and support the growing Lived Experience workforce and co-design/co-creation processes.
- Identify other workforce development and capacity building opportunities relevant for the Alliance members.


Priority area 3 Collaboration and coordination

- Increased collaboration with the Locals, bringing new Locals into the Alliance to support integration.
- Focus on coordination and collaboration between organisations, addressing workforce challenges, suicide prevention & mental health planning.




During the first meeting in February 2024 both NEMHSCA and EMHSCA members workshopped the three priority areas to identified tangible activities to be conducted in 2024.

Below are the strategic priority area, objectives and key initiatives for NEMHSCA and EMHSCA.

NEMHSCA Strategic Directions 2024

| Strategic priorities | Strategic objectives | Outcomes We aim to achieve | Initiatives We will achieve this by |
|--|---|---|---|
| Mental health sector reform  | We collaborate on joint advocacy activities. | Stronger collective voice that influences decision makers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designing tools and strategies for collaborative advocacy. Creating a platform for information sharing regarding funding opportunities. |
| Lived Experience Workforce development  | We work together to support and build capability of the local Lived Experience Workforce. | Improved capability of the local Lived Experience Workforce and those who support them. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing a local network for the LEW and LE Leadership in the north and east. |
| Collaboration and coordination  | We collaborate on multiple levels and know about available services in the region. | Improved service coordination in the region. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating opportunities for information sharing about available services and developing service agreements. Creating opportunities for collaboration at different levels. |

EMHSCA Strategic Directions 2024

| Strategic priority | Strategic objectives | Outcomes We aim to achieve | Initiatives We will achieve this by |
|--|---|---|--|
| Mental health sector reform  | We communicate with and provide advice to the Interim Regional Board. | Strengthen collective voice that influences decision makers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing communication channels with the Interim Regional Board. Creating a platform for information sharing re future commissioning. |
| Lived Experience Workforce development  | We work together to support and build capability of the local Lived Experience Workforce. | Improved capability of the local Lived Experience Workforce and those who support them. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing a local network for the LEW and LE Leadership in the north and east. |
| Collaboration and coordination  | We collaborate on multiple levels and know about available services in the region. | Improved service coordination in the region. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating opportunities for information sharing about available services and developing partnership agreements. Creating opportunities for Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals to share information about models of care, integration, common referrals and challenges. |

Attachments: Strategic Directions for NEMHSCA and EMHSCA.

Alliance meetings

In the reporting period both Alliances met twice to plan and develop strategic directions as well as the implementation strategy. All meetings were well attended and there was a strong engagement from the members. NEMHSCA had a guest speaker at one of the meetings – Lorelle Zemunik from the Department of Health presenting on Our Workforce Our Future, Capability Framework

implementation. EMHSCA also had a guest speaker at one of the meetings – Malcolm Hopwood, Chair of the North East Metro Interim Regional Body.

There are four more meetings planned for each Alliance before December 2024.

More details about the past meetings can be found in the table below.

| Date | Alliance | Focus of the meeting/guest speaker | Number of attendees | Lived experience representation |
|----------|---------------------|---|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| 20/02/24 | NEMHSCA (in person) | Development of priorities and strategic directions for 2024. | 14 | 1 |
| 28/02/24 | EMHSCA | Development of priorities and strategic directions for 2024. Guest speaker: Malcolm Hopwood, Chair of the North East Metro Interim Regional Body | 19 | 2 |
| 14/03/24 | NEMHSCA (online) | Review of strategic directions and development of the implementation approach. Guest speaker: – Lorelle Zemunik from the Department of Health presenting on Our Workforce Our Future, Capability Framework implementation. | 17 | 2 |
| 26/03/24 | EMHSCA (online) | Review of strategic directions and development of the implementation approach. | 12 (tbc) | 1 |

Working Group establishment

To implement the Lived Experience Workforce Development strategic priority and objectives NEMHSCA and EMHSCA are establishing a joint Working Group.

The Lived Experience Workforce Development Working Group will focus on supporting and building capability of the Local Lived Experience Workforce and Lived Experience Leadership.

The key initiative of the Working Group will be establishment of the Lived Experience Workforce Network.

Broader stakeholder engagement

Apart from the members of the Alliances the Mental Health Partnership Coordinator engaged with the following key stakeholders:

- North East Metro Interim Regional Body
- North East Health Service Partnership Mental Health Reform Stream Committee
- Eastern Regional Coordinators
- Mental Health Victoria
- Centre for Mental Health Learning
- Department of Health – Mental Health Workforce Capability Framework

- Department of Health – Lived Experience Branch
- The Hamilton Centre
- Eastern Peer Support Network Coordinator

Key focus for next six months

- Further stakeholder engagement including the Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing.
- Establishment of a Working Group to implement strategic objectives.
- Establishment of the Lived Experience Workforce Network.
- Planning and delivery of broader workforce development activities for both Alliances.
- Focussed and purposeful Alliance meetings.

Key achievements

- Engagement with the Interim Regional Body.
- Lived experience involvement.
- New members – Whittlesea Local, Drummond Street.
- Engagement with the Department of Health.
- Establishment of MS Teams Channel for both Alliances.
- Updated information re Alliances on the EMPHN website.

Challenges

- Competing priorities for members which impact their ability to attend the meetings.
- Potential duplication with other state-funded initiatives.
- Uncertainty re future funding.

Risks

| Risk/issue | Rating | Mitigation strategy |
|--|--------|--|
| Uncertain funding beyond 2024. | High | Explore alternative funding models with Alliance members. |
| Duplication of activities across NEMHSCA and EMHSCA. | Medium | Mental Health Partnership Manager working across both Alliances aligning the work as much as possible. |
| Lack of engagement from the Alliances members. | Medium | Mental Health Partnership Manager and Co-chairs to actively reach out to providers who don't participate in the Alliance's activities. |
| Duplication of activities with other state-funded initiatives. | Medium | Mental Health Partnership Manager and Co-chairs to foster relationships with the Department of Health to avoid duplication. |

Attachments

Below is a list of the attachments provided with this report.

- Final Review Reports and Mental Health Environmental Scan
- MHSCA Governance Committee Terms of Reference
- Strategic Directions for NEMHSCA and EMHSCA

