

Board Recruitment

Director Applicant Information Pack

This Director Applicant Information Pack contains information for people interested in applying for a position as a Director on the inaugural Board of the new national mental health consumer organisation (NMHCO). It includes pertinent information relating to the nature of the new organisation and links to additional information, attributes of potential Directors, directions for submitting an application, and contact details for further inquiries.

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Exciting opportunity to become a Director on the inaugural Board of the new national mental health consumer organisation

Introduction

An exciting opportunity exists for passionate, dedicated, professional people to become Directors of the inaugural board of the new national mental health consumer organisation. The new organisation will focus on human rights and social justice approaches to mental health consumer issues and interests, and be positioned to influence mental health policy reform and practices in Australia.

The purpose of the new mental health consumer organisation is to bring together the diversity of people with lived experience of mental health issues (*Mental Health Consumers*),¹ and mental health consumer focused organisations and groups, to work collaboratively towards achieving a shared national vision of improved quality of life, social justice and inclusion.

This is a new organisation and we are seeking a passionate, diverse and inclusive Board of Directors with strong governance experience. The new Board will have an opportunity to build a sustainable, viable and accountable national mental health consumer organisation.

Background

(adapt as required) The new organisation (**name**) will be established as a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee.

The NMHCO Establishment Project commenced in June 2012 and was completed in May 2015. The primary purpose of the project was to develop the foundations for a sustainable and credible organisation, supported by good governance and representative of the diversity of people with lived experience of mental illness.

The project was managed by Mental Health Australia, informed by the *Scoping Study to Inform the Establishment of a New Peak National Mental Health Consumer Organisation* and Australian Government response,² advice from the Consumer Reference Group (CRG), and governance, legal, business and communications expertise.

A comprehensive pack, including the Constitution, Corporate Governance Manual and draft operational policies, have been developed by the CRG and Mental Health Australia for the new Board.

For more information about the project please visit <http://mhconsumer.org.au> or <http://mhaustralia.org>.

A vision and mission for the new peak

Possible vision and mission statements for the new mental health consumer peak have been identified by the CRG, following a community consultation process:

¹ **Mental Health Consumer** is a person who identifies as having a current or past lived experience of mental health issues or mental illness, irrespective of whether that person has a diagnosed mental illness and/or has received treatment (NMHCO Constitution Clause 1.1 (u))

² Available at <http://mhconsumer.org.au/resources>

Vision: Inspiring hope and improving lives together

Mission: To inspire hope, improve lives and promote mental health and wellbeing through genuine involvement and cultural change, leadership and advocacy.

The Constitution

The Constitution for the new mental health consumer peak has been developed based on good governance principles. It articulates the governance framework for a transparent and sustainable organisation governed by and for people with lived experience of mental health issues.

The Constitution can be found at: [\(link\)](#)

The role of the Board

The Board will direct its activities to achieve the objects set out in the Constitution. It will be responsible for the governance of the organisation, including providing strategic direction.

The Board will provide leadership and vision to enhance the organisation's success over time.

The Directors of the Board are legally accountable for the organisation and its activities. Directors must exercise their powers with appropriate care and diligence, act in good faith, avoid conflicts of interest, and act in the best interests of the company as a whole.

Board Structure

The Board of the new organisation will have nine Directors. A Nominations Committee will select the nine inaugural Board Directors,³ comprising of:

- *Three Individual Directors* who identify as having a lived experience as a Mental Health Consumer;
- *Three Directors* who identify as having a lived experience as a Mental Health Consumer, **and are *nominated by an organisation*** within the mental health consumer sector;
- *Three Directors* to complement the skills of the other Directors, who can demonstrate an understanding of issues affecting mental health consumers (*having a lived experience as a mental health consumer is not mandatory for these three skills-based positions, but is highly desirable*).

Selecting Directors of the Inaugural Board

A Nominations Committee will select all nine Directors for the inaugural Board. **(details to be added, including who is responsible for final endorsement of Director candidates recommended by the Nominations Committee.)**

³ See also NMHCO Constitution Clause 9 for information about the election and appointment of future Board Directors.

Applying for a Director position

You are invited to submit an expression of interest for a position on the new Board. If eligible, you can apply for each category of Director.⁴

Position requirements

The Nominations Committee is seeking a passionate, diverse and inclusive Board of Directors with strong governance experience, to build a viable and accountable organisation. As a collective, the inaugural Board will have the skills, knowledge and experience to:

- govern the organisation within legal and legislative constraints
- ensure legal accountability and fiduciary requirements are fulfilled
- promote organisational culture and values
- provide leadership of and direction for the organisation
- ensure organisational responsiveness to members and stakeholders

Desired attributes of a Director

Attributes of an effective Director are categorised into four broad themes, these are:

1. Behavioural
2. Technical
3. Governance
4. Diversity

1. Behavioural attributes

Behavioural attributes enable Directors to use their knowledge and skills to function well as part of a team, and to interact effectively with members and stakeholders. Behavioural attributes of Directors on the Board of the new organisation will need to include one or more of the following:

- commitment to understanding and fulfilling the duties of a Director, maintaining knowledge through professional development, working ethically and declaring potential conflicts of interest and maintaining confidentiality.
- strong interpersonal skills, with the ability to listen and participate in discussions and develop convincing viewpoints with a broad range of stakeholders.
- commitment to the purpose of the organisation.
- ability to influence outcomes, engage with and gain stakeholder support, and respect the value and perspective of mental health consumers.
- ability to critically analyse complex and detailed information and develop practical and creative solutions.
- preparedness to ask questions and challenge others in a constructive and appropriate way.
- ability to work as part of a team.
- generosity, humbleness and resilience.

⁴ For example, you could apply for each category of Director if you are a Mental Health Consumer, a mental health consumer organisation is willing to nominate you, and you have governance / legal / financial or other specialist skills and experience.

2. Technical skills

These skills are technical and/or professional skills, and specialist knowledge that assist with ongoing aspects of the Board role. It is expected that Directors will have one or more of the following:

- experience in policy development and identification of key issues for the organisation.
- experience in the use and governance of information management and technology.
- ability to identify risks and the knowledge of monitoring and compliance management frameworks.
- experience in public relations including fundraising, mass media, social media and stakeholder engagement.
- strong leadership skills and with a track record of modelling exemplary behaviour within the mental health sector.

3. Governance knowledge and skills

It is expected that all Directors have sound knowledge and understanding of good corporate governance, specifically:

- demonstrated understanding and knowledge of good governance (ideally within the not-for-profit sector) and/or previous experience as a Board director and/or formal directorship/governance training.
- knowledge of corporate governance structures, ideally within the not-for-profit context.
- understanding of Director roles and responsibilities, including fiduciary obligations.
- understanding of and skills related to strategic thinking, financial performance and business.

4. Diversity

Board diversity is essential and will contribute to the ability of the organisation to meet the needs of the diverse community it serves. This commitment will be reflected in an environment that actively demonstrates, promotes and values diversity.

Eligibility

To be eligible as a Director you must:

- identify as having a current or past lived experience of mental health issues or mental illness.⁵
- understand and value knowledge and perspectives of lived experience of mental illness.
- have knowledge and experience of corporate governance.
- have the ability to participate in at least one Board committee.
- be able to attend meetings according to Board requirements.

⁵ If applying for a skills-based Director position, having lived experience of mental health issues is highly desirable, but not mandatory.

- participate in an induction and attend three or more Board meetings per year **based in xxx** (telecommuting maybe a possibility).

In addition, you must be:

- over 18 years of age
- not insolvent or under administration⁶
- an Australian resident⁷

Submitting an application

Applications can be submitted electronically by following this **link**. Please read all instructions and questions carefully. Be sure that all attachments requested have been included before submitting your application.

For more information contact **.....**

⁶ Requirement of the Corporations Act 2001 (S201B)

⁷ The Corporations Act 2001 requires at least one company Director reside in Australia. The NMHCO Constitution requires voting members to reside in Australia (or in the case of organisations, have a physical presence in Australia). See NMHCO Constitution Clauses 5.2-5.3.