



National Mental Health Commission  
PO Box R1463,  
Royal Exchange,  
NSW 1225

**SUBMISSION**  
**Consultation on the draft**  
**National Workplace Initiative core framework**

Lived Experience Australia (LEA) is the representative organisation for Australian mental health consumers and carers. Our core business is to advocate for systemic change, empowerment of consumers and carers in their own care, promoting engagement and inclusion of consumers and carers within system design, planning and evaluation and most importantly, advocating for consumer choice and family and carer inclusion.

We thank the National Mental Health Commission for the opportunity to provide this Submission and welcome the focus on the development of a nationally consistent framework for workplaces.

## **Consultation Questions**

### **Consultation question 1**

How much do you agree with this approach to what is and is not included in the NWI core framework

#### **What LEA supports**

There are some initiatives and different organisations/companies currently delivering advice and training in how to make workplaces mentally healthy, but LEA fully supports a nationally consistent approach as within a framework to drive consistency, a one place repository, evidence-based resources, with adaptability of the framework to respond to specific needs/businesses etc.

Some of the issues that have been concerning about disclosure of mental ill-health is the attitudes and workplace culture around people affected, needed time off, perhaps on return to work programs, employee assistance schemes or unable to work because of an exasperation in existing mental health conditions or new presentation of mental ill-health. Any framework that works to remove or address stigma associated with mental ill-health which remains mostly in the male driven industries of manufacture, construction, labouring, etc will be a huge advance for Australian workplaces.

COVID-19 will also have either a direct or flow-on effect on business, staffing, recruitment etc. Having this national framework that ties in with the various supports now around COVID-19 will be critical.

LEA agrees with the six concepts that is articulated within the points raised for nationally consistent framework actions.

LEA would like to offer an opinion regarding dot point:

- *A centrepiece for services and supports including a digital platform, an accreditation or benchmarking system and expert advice and implementation support.*

As with all accreditation processes, LEA suggests a recognisable Quality Tick or similar to show employees and industry, that the business has achieved success against the framework. This would be awarded to business which have implemented Framework and achieve successful accreditation. LEA understands that this will take some considerable time, but thinking about this now, we believe is crucial.

**Consultation question 2**

How relevant are the proposed domains of this framework for all Australian businesses?

**Consultation question 3**

Are there important areas that this framework misses out that are relevant to all Australian businesses?

LEA supports the three identified domains, namely:

- Support recovery
- Prevent harm
- Promote wellbeing through positive elements of work

**Consultation question 5**

What are the sub-domains or key considerations that should sit under Domain 1?

LEA would like to propose two additional domains,

- Eliminate stigma
- Change culture

LEA is of the view that these additional two domains go to the heart of a truly welcoming, accepting, and supportive mentally health workplace.

**Consultation question 7**

Is there another term aside from ‘prevent harm’ that would better capture the intent of Domain 2

**Consultation question 9**

Is there another term aside from ‘Promoting wellbeing through positive elements of work’ that would better capture the intent of Domain 3

LEA has proposed the above two additional domains because we believe that one of the main issues in the workplace is bullying. That in our opinion goes to changing the culture within the workplace and within businesses.

If there was a specific domain to address this as the one above proposed by LEA i.e. ‘Change culture’ this would have a direct relation to bullying etc and therefore can be addressed independently.

**Consultation question 12**

Do you have feedback or comments on the ‘action at all levels’ approach

The critical factors of success will be vested firstly in the management of the day. This relates to many areas where change is sought including mentally health workplaces.

Businesses having a dedicated staff member like an HWS Officer to oversee, be accountable for and implement the Framework within a business will be crucial in having a successful workplace.

Noting the Framework is iterative, allows for innovation to adapt to ALL businesses. This will address the male dominated areas as noted previously where the Framework can be adapted to individual business focus and needs.

**Consultation question 13**

Do you agree with the approach of acknowledging but not explicitly including physical and financial health

LEA has some concerns about eliminating these two areas but understand that the need to initially focus on the mental health aspects are important.

However, given the financial impacts relating to COVID-19 and the business and employment issues, it may be worthwhile to consider including an aspect on financial health whilst the Framework is being developed.

As the Consultation Paper refers, there are significant links between financial difficulties and a decline in mental health and wellbeing, including suicide. For this reason, if the object is to have a mentally healthy workplace, then LEA considers this an important consideration.

We thank the Commission for the opportunity to provide input into this consultation from a lived experience perspective and apologise again for this late response.

I would be very happy to further discuss any of this Submission with you. My contact details are: [jmcmahon@livedexperienceaustralia.com.au](mailto:jmcmahon@livedexperienceaustralia.com.au) Phone: 1300 620 042



Janne McMahon OAM  
Chair and Executive Director  
19 August 2020