

# The Centre for Mental Health Workforce Learning and Development – what will it do?

## Bringing mental health workforce development activity together

The Victorian Government invests approximately \$26 million per annum in mental health and related learning and development across Victoria. The Centre for Mental Health Workforce Learning and Development (the Centre) will help to coordinate and leverage mental health investments by partnering with statewide trainers, Mental Health Workforce Learning and Development Clusters, health services, clinical academics and other stakeholders.

The Centre will fill workforce development gaps that currently exist in Victoria's mental health sector as identified through consultation with stakeholders.

### Workforce planning and development

Workforce planning and development is about ensuring a sector and the organisations within it have the right number of people, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right time, with the right attitude, doing the right work, at the right cost, with the right work output. (World Health Organisation, 2010).

Workforce planning and development within the mental health sector is currently focused on capacity building of the sector to undertake local level service delivery. A central mental health workforce development organisation with planning expertise and capacity will analyse and assess mental health learning and development in Victoria, providing a bird's-eye view of all activity, and provide essential advice to government on current and future workforce investments and outcomes, based on evidence, research and data.

### Coordinate existing workforce development activity

There is no single organisation in Victoria that connects, collects, and shares information, tools, resources and expertise amongst mental health services, learning and development providers, peak agencies, professional bodies and others.

Currently, access to information, advice, support and resources is managed through informal and formal networks, which relies on individuals or organisations being well-connected and open to sharing.

A connection function will see the Centre reduce the duplication of effort across training providers and improve access to the significant learning and development resources that have been invested in by the Victorian Government.

There is a need for a central access point for mental health learning and development opportunities for workers, such as:

- Support for identification of learning, development and career pathways.
- Promotion of training and events through a consolidated statewide calendar.
- Mechanisms for facilitating worker to worker connections.
- Access to evidence and other practice support tools and resources.

This will assist workers in specialist mental health services as well as those in other sectors such as health, human services, justice, education and local government.

## Tailored support for organisations

Similar to [Te Pou o te Whakaaro Nui \(Te Pou\)](#) in New Zealand, it is proposed that the Centre provide support to organisations to develop their workforce, rather than simply delivering training and support to individual workers. This will include implementing the mental health organisational capability framework (as described in the *Mental health workforce strategy*) and providing consultancy services in specific areas of need such as supporting lived experience workforce, consumer and carer engagement, trauma-informed practice and managing complexity.

Training alone does not guarantee change. Organisations need to be able to review their readiness for particular interventions and often need support to do this. Through providing advice and support, the Centre will ensure that training and other workforce interventions are delivered in the right format at the right time, to be as effective as possible. Without tailored, strategic advice on workforce development interventions, many organisations will continue to provide training with the hope that change will occur.

## Research and knowledge translation

There is a need to reduce the gap between training and improved practice on the ground. Translation of research and knowledge into practice is an identified gap in mental health in Victoria, and is essential to ensuring that Victorians experience the best possible, most contemporary, mental health care.

The Innovation Reference Group, under the Mental Health Expert Taskforce, is currently developing a Research and Translation Plan for Victoria. The Centre and its partners, including department-funded clinical academics, will be critical enablers for the implementation of this Plan.