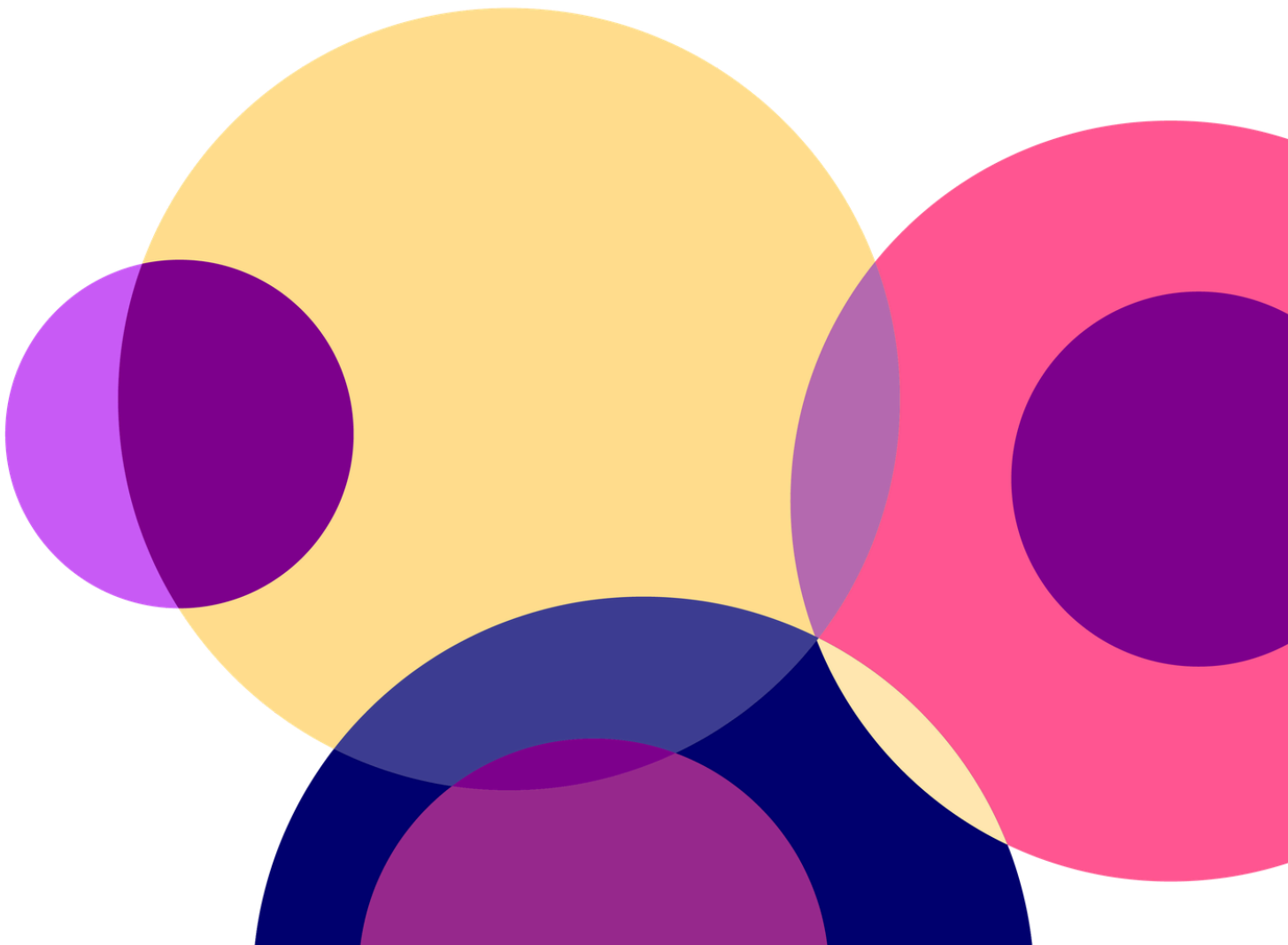




Australian Association
of Peer Workers

Membership Charter





Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Association of Peer Workers acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters across Australia where we live, work, and advocate.

We pay our deepest respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge that First Nations lived experience is inseparable from the impacts of colonisation, dispossession, racism, and structural inequity. These ongoing injustices must be named, understood, and addressed.

The Australian Association of Peer Workers works in solidarity with the Indigenous Australian Lived Experience Centre, recognising the critical leadership of First Nations peoples in truth-telling, healing, and social and emotional wellbeing.





Australian Association of Peer Workers

About Us

The Australian Association of Peer Workers (AAPW) is the national representative and membership body for mental health and suicide prevention peer workers, supporting peer work as a distinct professional practice grounded in lived experience.

Established in May 2026, the AAPW brings together the diverse experiences and collective power of the peer workforce to ensure peer work is embedded, respected, valued and invested in across Australia's mental health system.

The AAPW is built by peer workers, for peer workers, to strengthen our voice, advocate for our interests, and provide the resources and connections needed to navigate the sector and thrive in our roles. Through this work, the Association aims to advance recognition, respect and better outcomes for mental health and suicide prevention peer workers and their work across Australia.

More information is available on the AAPW website:

aapw.org.au



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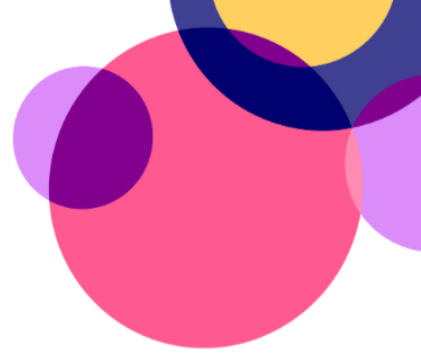
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1. Purpose of this Charter

The Australian Association of Peer Workers (AAPW) Membership Charter outlines the shared commitments between the AAPW and its members.

By becoming a member, you are joining a national community of peer workers committed to strengthening, recognising and advancing the mental health and suicide prevention peer workforce across Australia.

This Charter describes:

- the purpose of the AAPW;
- the shared values that underpin peer work;
- who can become a member;
- membership categories and conditions;
- what members can expect from the AAPW;
- the behaviours and values expected of members; and
- how concerns, complaints or breaches of this Charter will be responded to.

The Charter supports the development of a respectful, inclusive and diverse national peer work community where different perspectives, identities and lived experiences are welcomed and valued.

2. About the Australian Association of Peer Workers

The Australian Association of Peer Workers (AAPW) is the national representative and membership body for the mental health and suicide prevention peer workforce.

The AAPW is built by peer workers, for peer workers, bringing together the diverse experiences and collective strength of the peer workforce to support, connect and represent peer workers across Australia.

The AAPW exists to:

- strengthen recognition and understanding of peer work as a distinct professional discipline grounded in lived experience;

- provide resources, information, connection and support that enable peer workers to thrive in their roles;
- advocate for the rights, safety and working conditions of peer workers;
- strengthen peer work practice, identity and workforce development;
- contribute to national workforce policy that strengthens and develops the mental health and suicide prevention peer workforce;
- advocate for mental health and suicide prevention system reform informed by lived experience; and
- advance the recognition, respect and value of peer workers across Australia.

The AAPW recognises the diversity of the peer workforce, including Consumer, Family/Carer/Kin, First Nations and Suicide Prevention peer workers, and acknowledges the many intersecting identities, experiences and communities represented across the workforce.

3. Our Shared Peer Work Values

Peer work is a distinct discipline grounded in lived experience, human rights, mutuality and connection.

The AAPW recognises that peer work is diverse and practised across many roles, settings and communities. Across this diversity, peer workers are connected by shared values and principles that guide how we work alongside others, influence systems and create change.

The AAPW recognises and upholds the following values that underpin peer work:

Lived experience as a valued source of knowledge

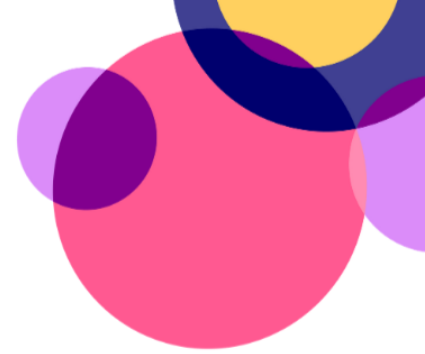
Recognising that personal lived experience, when used intentionally, contributes unique understanding, insight and expertise.

Mutuality and connection

Recognising the value of relationships where people learn from each other, power is shared, and different experiences are respected.

Self-determination and choice

Respecting the right of people to define their own experiences, make decisions about



their own lives and the care they receive and determine what recovery, healing and wellbeing mean for them.

Hope and possibility

Recognising people's strengths, capabilities and potential for growth, change and meaningful lives.

Human rights and social justice

Promoting dignity, equity, inclusion and the rights of people experiencing mental health challenges, distress or suicidality.

Challenging stigma, discrimination and exclusion

Working towards communities, workplaces and systems where people with lived experience are valued and respected.

Authenticity and purposeful use of lived experience

Recognising that peer work involves the intentional and skillful use of lived experience in ways that benefit others, strengthen services and contribute to change.

These values guide the work of the AAPW and the way members engage with each other, the broader workforce and the systems we seek to influence.

4. Membership Eligibility

Membership of the AAPW is open to people who support the purpose and values of the Association and meet the requirements of the relevant membership category.

Members contribute to the AAPW's purpose by being part of a collective national voice that works to:

- advance recognition, rights and working conditions for peer workers;
- strengthen the identity, development and sustainability of the peer workforce;
- build connection and shared learning across the profession;
- influence policy, reform and system change to uphold the human rights of people with lived experience of mental health challenges or suicidality, their families, carers and kin; and
- support a future where peer work is recognised, embedded, valued and invested in across Australia's mental health and suicide prevention systems.

The AAPW recognises peer work as a specialised discipline where people use their lived experience intentionally and skillfully, alongside peer work values, principles and practices, to support others, influence systems, develop services and create change.

Membership Categories

Full Member

Full Membership is available to people who are currently, or have previously been, employed or engaged in a designated mental health or suicide prevention peer work role.

Peer workers contribute their lived experience in many different ways. While some peer workers provide direct support, others use their lived experience in roles focused on leadership, supervision, workforce development, education, advocacy, research, policy, service design and system reform.

This may include peer workers employed or engaged in:

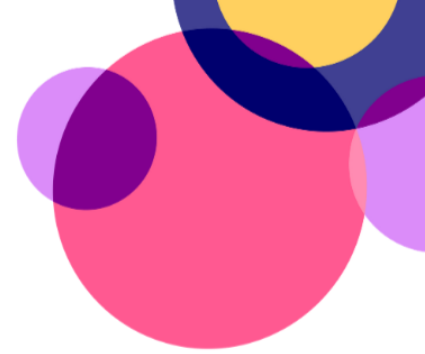
- direct support roles;
- peer leadership and management;
- supervision and workforce development;
- education and training;
- advocacy and systemic change;
- research and evaluation;
- policy and service design; and
- other roles where lived experience is used intentionally as part of peer work practice.

Student Member

Student Membership is available to people who are not currently working in a paid peer work role, but are actively enrolled in and studying to become a peer worker.

Friends of the AAPW

Friends of the AAPW Membership is available to individuals who support the purpose of the Association but do not meet the criteria for Full Membership.



This may include:

- people working alongside peer workers;
 - people from related peer workforces;
 - people engaging in a volunteer peer work capacity;
 - employers, educators, researchers, advocates and allies; and
 - others committed to strengthening and supporting peer work.
-

5. Membership Fees

To support the establishment of the AAPW and ensure membership is accessible, membership will be provided free of charge until 31 August 2027.

Prior to the introduction of any membership fees, members will receive information about future membership options, benefits and costs.

Members will have the choice whether they wish to continue their membership when paid membership arrangements are introduced.

6. Member Commitment and Code of Conduct

The AAPW brings together a diverse national community of peer workers. Members bring different experiences, perspectives, identities, cultures, roles and views.

Diversity of thought and respectful discussion strengthen peer work. Members are encouraged to share ideas, challenge thinking and participate in conversations about the future of the workforce.

Members agree to:

Engage respectfully

Members will:

- communicate with kindness, curiosity and respect;
- recognise that people may hold different experiences, views and perspectives;

- engage in constructive discussion and debate without personal criticism or harm;
- listen to understand, including when there are differences of opinion;
- contribute to a community where people feel valued, respected and able to participate.

Value diversity and inclusion

Members will:

- respect people of all cultures, identities, communities and backgrounds;
- recognise intersectionality and the different ways people experience systems, services and communities;
- actively support inclusion and belonging;
- challenge discrimination, stigma and exclusion.

Uphold peer work values

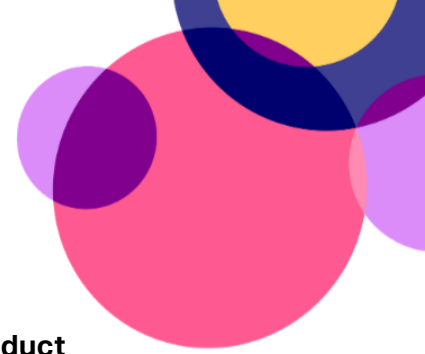
Members will:

- uphold the peer work values outlined in this Charter;
- recognise lived experience as a valued source of knowledge;
- respect the diversity of peer work roles and perspectives across Australia;
- contribute to strengthening the identity, integrity and future of the peer workforce.

Participate safely in AAPW spaces

When participating in AAPW forums, events, consultations, online communities or other engagement activities, members agree not to:

- harass, bully, intimidate or personally attack others;
- use discriminatory, abusive or harmful language;
- deliberately disrupt conversations or prevent others from participating;
- share another person's personal information without consent;
- behave in ways that undermine the safety, inclusion or purpose of AAPW spaces.



7. Responding to Concerns or Breaches of the Member Code of Conduct

The AAPW recognises that respectful disagreement, debate and difference are important parts of learning, advocacy and change. Diverse perspectives strengthen our community when they are shared with respect, curiosity and care.

AAPW members are encouraged to raise concerns if they experience or witness behaviour within AAPW spaces that may not align with this Membership Charter or the Member Code of Conduct.

Reporting a Member Conduct Concern

Members can report concerns about behaviour that occurs within AAPW forums, events, consultations, online communities or other member engagement activities.

This may include concerns relating to:

- behaviour that does not align with the Member Code of Conduct;
- disrespectful, discriminatory or harmful interactions;
- behaviour that impacts the ability of members to safely and respectfully participate in AAPW spaces.

Concerns can be reported by contacting the AAPW at admin@aapw.org.au.

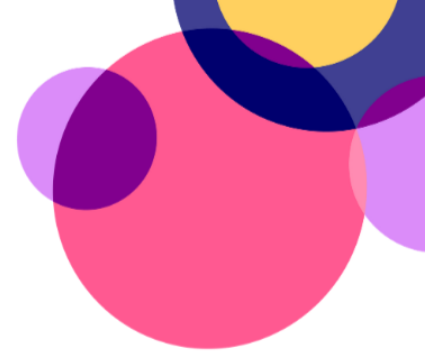
The AAPW will:

- acknowledge receipt of the concern within two business days;
- consider the concern in a fair, respectful and confidential manner;
- provide an initial response within five business days.

Responding to Member Conduct Concerns

Where concerns arise, the AAPW will seek to respond in a way that is fair, transparent, proportionate and aligned with peer work values.

Where possible, the focus will be on understanding, learning, repair and maintaining respectful relationships.



Depending on the nature of the concern, responses may include:

- having a conversation with those involved to understand and resolve the issue;
- providing feedback or clarification about expected behaviours;
- supporting restorative conversations where appropriate;
- limiting participation in specific forums or activities;
- suspending or ending membership where serious or repeated breaches occur.

Immediate action may be taken where behaviour creates a significant risk to the safety, dignity or wellbeing of members, staff or community participants.

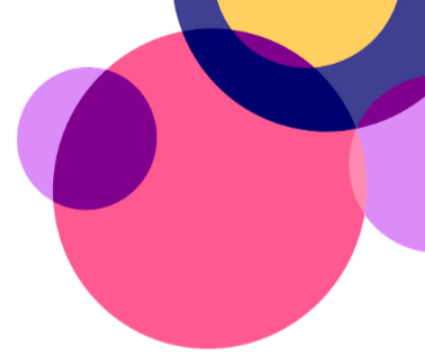
Members will be provided with an opportunity to respond to concerns raised about their behaviour before any decision is made about ongoing membership, except where immediate action is required to maintain safety.

8. What Members Can Expect from the AAPW

The AAPW commits to:

- representing and advocating for the interests of the peer workforce;
- listening to members and creating opportunities for meaningful participation;
- providing resources, information and opportunities that support peer workforce development;
- creating spaces for connection, shared learning and collective advocacy;
- engaging transparently about decisions, priorities and future directions;
- respecting diversity and intersectionality across the peer workforce;
- protecting member privacy and personal information;
- maintaining accessible and inclusive member spaces;
- responding to feedback, concerns and complaints fairly and respectfully.

The AAPW will continue to develop through engagement with members and the broader peer workforce.



9. Feedback and Complaints

The AAPW is committed to being a transparent, accountable and member-led organisation. Feedback, including complaints, helps us learn, improve and ensure we are meeting the needs of members and the broader peer workforce.

Members are encouraged to provide feedback or make a complaint about their experience with the AAPW.

This may include:

- AAPW services, resources, events or activities;
- communication or engagement with the AAPW;
- accessibility, inclusion or participation;
- decisions made by the AAPW;
- interactions with AAPW staff, representatives or volunteers.

Feedback and complaints can be provided by contacting the AAPW at admin@aapw.org.au.

The AAPW will:

- acknowledge receipt of complaints within two business days;
- treat complaints respectfully and without bias;
- protect confidentiality wherever possible;
- provide an initial response within five business days.

Where a complaint identifies opportunities for improvement, the AAPW will consider changes that strengthen our services, member experience and accountability to the peer workforce.

10. Privacy and Confidentiality

The AAPW recognises that members may share personal information, lived experience, workplace experiences and other information through their membership, participation in member activities, or when accessing AAPW services.

The AAPW commits to:

- respecting the privacy and confidentiality of members;
- collecting and using member information only for appropriate purposes, including delivering member services, supporting workforce development and advocacy, and meeting organisational requirements;
- protecting personal and sensitive information from unauthorised access, use or disclosure;
- ensuring individual members are not identified in advocacy, reporting or communications without their consent.

The collection, storage, use and management of personal information is outlined in the AAPW Privacy Policy.

11. Membership Agreement

By joining the Australian Association of Peer Workers, I confirm that:

- the information I have provided about my membership eligibility is accurate;
- I support the purpose, values and objectives of the AAPW;
- I agree to participate in accordance with this Membership Charter;
- I understand my membership is free until 31 August 2027 and that paid membership options will be introduced after this date if I choose to continue my membership;
- I understand my membership may be reviewed if I breach this Charter.

Together, we are building a strong, connected and respected national peer workforce.