

Mind-led Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals Health Justice Project

ARC Justice

commUnity + Legal

South-East Monash Legal Service

Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System"



- Delivered its final report on February 3rd 2021
- In November 2019, the Commission's interim report concluded that the system had catastrophically failed to live up to expectations and was underprepared for current and future challenges, despite the goodwill and hard work of many people
- The final report tabled 65 recommendations to transform the mental health system in Victoria
- The new Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals are being established across the state and are designed to meet the demands of what the Commission termed the missing middle
- At the heart of these services is community-based treatment, care and support, clinical and wellbeing service integration and Lived Experience

Mind-led Locals



In December 2023 Mind commenced service delivery and the establishment of three Locals across four locations:

1. Greater Dandenong (with partners Thorne Harbour Health, Monash Health and Foundation House)
2. Melton (with partners Thorne Harbour Health, Western Health and IPC Health)
3. Greater Bendigo Loddon Campaspe (sites in Bendigo and Echuca) (with partners Thorne Harbour Health, Bendigo Health, Echuca Regional Health, Bendigo District Aboriginal Cooperative, Salvation Army AOD Services)

In August 2025 Mind was commissioned to establish and deliver two new Locals:

1. Cardinia (with partners Monash Health)
2. Mount Alexander, servicing Central Goldfields and Mount Macedon (with partners Thorne Harbour Health, Bendigo Health)

Commitment to System Transformation



- The Leadership Team assembled to spearhead the establishment of the mind-led Locals shared a deep passion for system transformation and building services that honoured the outcomes of the Royal Commission
- Our collective commitment to system transformation was utilised as the driving force to develop deep connections with partners and pave the way for us to be able to navigate a way through the many challenges that lay ahead

Commitment to Lived Experience



The Mind-led Locals centre Lived Experience in Governance, Leadership and Service Delivery

The General Manager role is Lived Experience role

The Team Leaders who coordinate service delivery day-to-day are Lived Expertise roles. There is a Lived Experience Workforce Practice Lead role that supports practice development across the Locals

There is a significant Peer Workforce in each Local. All Peer Workers complete Intentional Peer Support Core training. We hold a deep commitment to maintaining the fidelity of our peer work model

We are currently working in partnership with the Lived Experience Leadership and Advocacy Network (LELAN) in the development and implementation of a Lived Experience Governance Framework for the Locals – our hope is that this has a broader influence across the sector and other Locals. 2026 will herald the implementation phase of this important endeavour

Vision & Culture



- On a day-to-day basis the vision and goals of the Local is held by the staff team and it is acknowledged that their local culture and ways of working are critical in embodying the vision of the service
- The vision recognises the Locals are a key recommendation from the Royal Commission and the cornerstone of system transformation, seeking to elevate the voice of Lived Experience in this new front door to the mental health system
- Uniquely, the Locals integrate practitioners with diverse expertise to offer holistic and integrated treatment, care and support through a multidisciplinary and interprofessional team approach
- The Locals builds a culture that values the perspectives and world views of each discipline

Commitment to Genuine “Partnership”



The Leadership Team at Mind sent clear, unequivocal messages early that our approach to partnership was genuine and built on the following principles:

1. Each partner is held with equal value and their role in the delivery of the Local is always recognised as critical to its overall success
2. We lead with integrity and are transparent in our decision making and communication. We are responsible and accountable to this commitment
3. We hold firmly to that which binds us together: system transformation, elevating and centering the voice of Lived Experience and meeting the needs of the community through a person led, person first paperwork second, and nothing about us without us approach

Commitment to Health Justice in the Mental Health Reform Environment



Through previous Health Justice partnerships, Mind recognises that access to Justice can be a critical part of someone's recovery

Many people we connect with through the work we do have cooccurring mental health, AOD and legal challenges impacting their lives

A lack of access to justice can seriously compromise a person's recovery from mental health distress

The Mind-led Locals held an aspiration to integrate a health justice approach within the service model

Victorian Legal Services Board Grant



- We connected with health justice partners in each region: commUnity + Legal (Melton Local), South-East Monash Legal Service (Dandenong Local), and Justice (GBLC Local). This connection resulted in us applying for a project grant through the VLSB
- We were successful in securing a two-year grant to implement and evaluate a Health Justice approach in each Local. This will see us employ a lawyer to base themselves at the Local, so they integrate into the Team and service model and importantly, have a presence on site
- Our aim is to build the capacity of all disciplines to recognise legal health and access to justice as core to the delivery of integrated mental health and AOD treatment, care and support
- Our hope is that through this partnership, we can demonstrate how Health Justice can embed itself as an integral component of system transformation due to the positive impact this has on consumers accessing the Locals

Where are we at...



- In the lead up to the project commencing, Mind and South-East Monash Legal Service jointly participated in HJA's Partnership Evaluation Program in mid 2025
- This was a positive way to demonstrate our commitment to our emerging Health Justice Partnership. It also helped us confirm the strong alignment with our respective values and aims, goals and vision for the Health Justice approach in the Locals through the completion of activities that were a part of the program
- We also received a Program Logic template and activity to complete with the three Health Justice Partners. We held a workshop to develop the program Logic. This was another positive experience that strengthened the partnerships and demonstrated strong alignment across all aspects of the Health Justice approach
- Project commenced October 17th 2025

Lived Experience in Legal Services



- Mind is a leader in Lived Experience in mental health
- Mind is currently establishing the first Lived Experience led, delivered and governed residential service in Geelong
- Mind has a Lived Experience Division in the Support Hub led by an Executive Director of Lived Experience
- The Locals have implemented the first relational risk assessment approach: Our Safety Together
- Mind's second iteration of its Lived Experience strategy was recently launched
- Our hope is that we can support and influence the ongoing emergence and capacity of Lived Experience approaches in Community Legal Services

In Summary



- Developing and maintaining strong partnerships requires a combined systems approach and a people approach
- Systems approach ensure processes and structures are in place to support the partnership i.e. MoU's, governance meetings, information sharing, operational workflows to support service delivery
- People approach is about connections and relationships. Embedded in this is relational care where there is deep respect, positive regard, curiosity, and a genuine interest at a human level. Relational care goes beyond the transactional relationships. We believe these are more sustainable and meaningful

Time for Questions?