

# Annual Report

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We've been there ●●

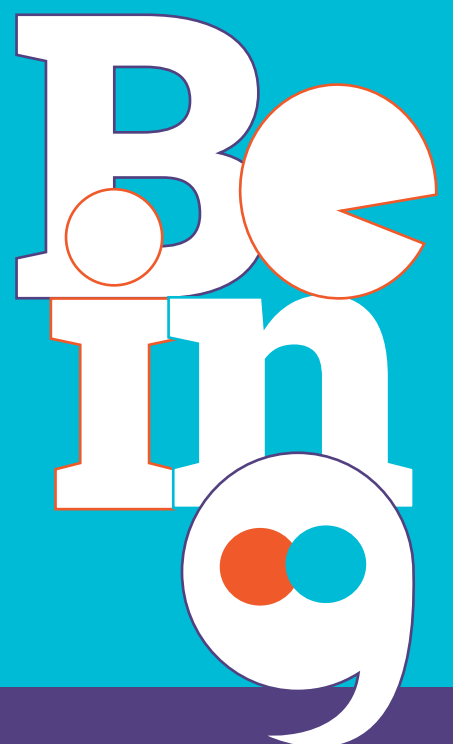
We get it ●●

**Being**  
Mental Health Consumers



BEING – Mental Health Consumers acknowledges Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

BEING – Mental Health Consumers acknowledges all people living with mental health issues and emotional distress, for their strength and courage to challenge and face each day. You are the driving force of the work we do at BEING – Mental Health Consumers. Your voice matters and is greatly valued.



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# Who we are



**BEING – Mental Health Consumers is the independent, state-wide, peak organisation representing the views, perspectives and experiences of people who live with mental health issues in NSW.**

Our primary focus is to ensure the voices of people living with mental health issues are heard by decision makers, service providers, and the community, and recognised for the valuable expertise they bring to system and service reform.

Since its inception in 1994, BEING – Mental Health Consumers (formerly known as NSW Consumer Advisory Group – Mental Health Inc.) has gained recognition and respect as a leader in the consumer/survivor movement.

We have strong working relationships with our members; supporters and community; state and federal government departments including the NSW Ministry of Health, Mental Health Commission of NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet, NSW Minister for Mental Health, NSW Fair Trading; and the broader community-managed sector.

**Based on our 2019-22 Strategic Plan, our four key focus areas are:**



**Leadership**



**Systemic impact  
& influence**



**Innovation &  
building capacity**



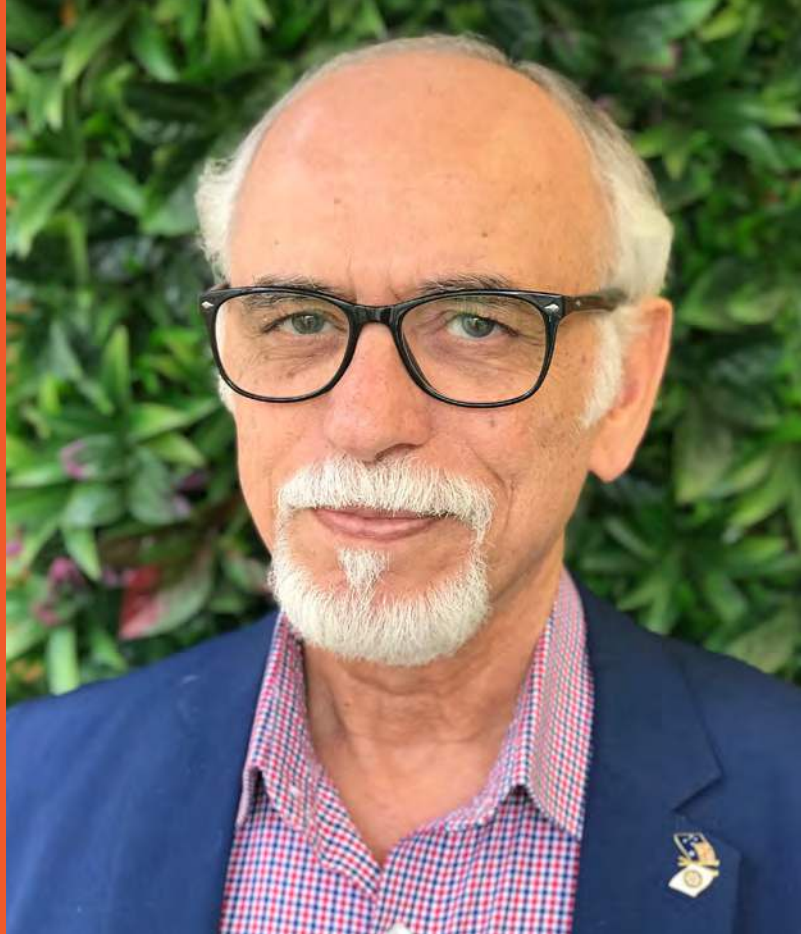
**Sustainability**

# Chair report



**As Chair of BEING – Mental Health Consumers Incorporated, I am pleased to be presenting our Annual Report.**

**Fayez R. Nour Chair**



BEING – Mental Health Consumers (BEING) continues to be a key voice in advocating for the human rights of people living with mental health issues and distress. Our long-standing history of 27 years has shaped our positioning both at state and national levels to ensure the voices, perspectives and experiences of people living with mental health issues are heard and recognised by decision makers.

The 2020-21 year has brought about many changes and challenges for all of us, and this is no different to the work of BEING. Our organisation underwent a significant period of growth amidst the changes and onset of the COVID-19 pandemic which saw our state locked down in March 2020. Despite the multitude of challenges, the Board were grateful for the opportunity to progress with our advocacy work offsite. We were pleased to be able to expand and establish much needed services to our community during this time such as the BEING Leadership Academy – setting a precedent in consumer-led education and training; and the BEING Supported Warmline – which provided a seven day per week, day and evening peer support telephone service, which supported people across Australia during these difficult times.

I am grateful to have the engagement of the Board and thank them for their commitment and energy to provide voluntary services to BEING. My thanks go out to Simon Craddock, Sunny Hemraj, Samantha

Aldridge, Gwen Challenger-Scotman, Rashid Flewellen, Fay Jackson and Jennifer Harris.

I would like to thank our members for their ongoing commitment and investment of time in being involved in our advocacy and committee work, and for their valuable insights and perspectives brought through our programs, forums, and workshops.

The work of the Board will see us taking a healthy stance into the new financial year and beyond. The current BEING – Mental Health Consumers Strategic Plan 2019-2022 demonstrates we are on track with our focus areas of Leadership, Systemic Impact and Influence, Innovation and Building Capacity, and Sustainability.

The sustainability of BEING depends both on being able to employ and provide security to great staff and on being able to source funding from a range of different sources. The constitutional changes that we have been progressing will contribute to these goals. My thanks go to the CEO, Irene Gallagher, for navigating the organisation through the pandemic, transitioning to offsite working arrangements, and the expansion of our scope of working in line with our vision and strategies. My thanks also go to the team at BEING, who have worked alongside our CEO to ensure the perspectives and experiences of people living with mental health issues are seen, heard, and involved in our work.

# CEO report

Irene Gallagher CEO

**It gives me great pleasure to report on the organisation's achievements and highlights for 2020-21. As a leading organisation speaking with and for many consumers/survivors of mental health services, our work has become synonymous with amplifying the consumer voice to lead and influence change to mental health systems.**

Simultaneously, our advocacy has led to a number of new services being provided by BEING over the past year. These have expanded our offering to people living with mental health issues and the broader public to inform on best practice processes and services for people living with mental health issues. This annual report provides a snapshot of key achievements and activities over the 2020-21 reporting period.

Our core activities over 2020-21 have been focused on advocating for changes and improvements in systems of mental health service provision in NSW. The foundation for this systemic advocacy work is always, in the first instance, engagement and co-design processes with people living with mental health issues. Over this financial year we have gained a better

understanding of the challenges faced by people who live with mental health issues, and specifically their experiences when faced with global adversity such as we have seen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Due to the restrictions placed on facilitating in person events, our team connected with people through online groups, peer support groups, and online surveys such as the work capturing NDIS participants' experiences of accessing services, Complex Trauma, Loneliness and Connection, and Lived Experience Research, all of which provided us with a richness of feedback culminating in reports published to our members, supporters, and the broader community. The Loneliness and Connection survey findings were integrated into a report which we completed in late 2020 and shared with key government stakeholders. The Lived Experience Research survey has contributed towards work being carried out by Associate Professor Michelle Banfield at the Australian National University (ANU), and our joint efforts with the Blue Knot Foundation in consulting and researching complex trauma culminated into a spotlight report titled *Living with and Healing from Complex Trauma*. Our work saw BEING staff travel to Southern NSW Local Health District and connect with the local health district





staff and clients to evaluate and contribute to the development of the model of care for the district services.

Through our service provision projects we have been able to provide support as well as hearing from people living with mental health issues as to what have been the greatest challenges during the pandemic period. During 2020-21 we were very pleased to have had the opportunity to develop and implement two key pilot programs including BEING Supported, a fully peer run warmline telephone service, and the BEING Suicide Support and Awareness Program – Peer Support Groups. Both programs were co-designed with the new teams, co-design committees, and feedback from participants of the programs to ensure that the programs aligned with principles of consumer leadership. Complementary to these projects has been the establishment of the BEING Leadership Academy, which provides education and learning courses for people living with mental health issues, their family and carers, and professional development courses for the peer workforce.

We also worked with a wide range of other government and organisational stakeholders in NSW over the course of the year. These included the Mental Health

Commission of NSW, the NSW Ministry of Health, NSW Primary Health Networks, NSW Local Health Districts, and non-government organisations such as those identified previously.

Our work with the National Mental Health Consumer Alliance has continued to grow, and our collaborations with other members of the Alliance saw the collective voice shine through in our advocacy mission. Our collaborative work with Mental Health Carers Australia has seen a strong alliance form in our partnerships in advocacy.

I would like to thank our funding bodies for their support and understanding during these times of change. My thanks go to our members and supporters who have provided us with valuable insights to best practice approaches to mental health services. I would also like to thank the Board for their ongoing support of myself and the team at BEING. And of course, nothing would be possible without the dedication of our staff who have worked tirelessly in pivoting their practices to offsite, while simultaneously ensuring their core work and programs align with the organisation's vision, principles, and strategic direction. It is only through collaborative work that the magic of consumer leadership can happen.

# What we do

## **The core work of BEING is working with people who live with mental health issues to achieve and support systemic change.**

The experiences, views and perspectives of consumers are fundamental to all that BEING does. Our work is underpinned by a commitment to upholding international human rights and the belief that recovery is possible for all people who live with mental health issues and emotional distress.

An essential part of our role is to encourage and support people living with mental health issues to provide input into decision making at all levels concerning the way mental health services are provided.

We gather information through our consultations, surveys, committees, consumer groups, forums, and research about consumers' experiences of mental health services, the improvements they would like to see and what they expect from government. This helps produce the evidence we need to lobby decision makers for changes to legislation and policy.

With a long-standing history of 27 years of operation,

BEING is now developing a service provision portfolio, to support people dealing with the day-to-day impacts of mental health issues, as well as supporting the expansion and growth of the lived experience workforce.

We are a values-based organisation whose work is bolstered by recovery-oriented and trauma-informed principles.

### **Our Values:**

- Respect and dignity for all to enable inclusion
- Social justice and equity to ensure participation
- Belief in recovery to make it possible for every individual to recover
- Integrity to ensure transparency and accountability
- Fidelity to ensure the legitimate representation of the views of consumers





# Systemic advocacy and policy



BEING's core focus is on systemic advocacy. We see our role as advocates as primarily about listening to people who live with mental health issues so that we have a solid and up to date understanding of the 'big issues.' We then take this understanding to state government.

During 2020-21 some of the issues we've heard about include what it's like for people to live with complex mental health issues in rural NSW, how the pandemic impacted consumers' sense of wellbeing, the struggles consumers have gone through to manage loneliness and isolation during lockdown and the challenges of finding a supportive GP. However, we've also heard how people have adapted and coped despite the difficulties life has thrown at them.

The life experiences that people living with mental health issues bravely and generously share with us have informed what we have said when we attended committees and meetings with the NSW Ministry of Health, the Mental Health Commission of NSW and Primary Health Networks. We look forward to continuing this active engagement with both consumers and government over the coming year as well and to doing our bit to improve mental health care in NSW.



# BEING Seen, BEING Heard, BEING Recognised

Your voice matters

During 2020-21, the COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns impacted many aspects of our lives, including how and where we worked and the ways we could connect. Connecting with people who live with mental health issues and maintaining a strong consumer voice was a priority for BEING. We heard from people across NSW on a wide range of topics. The issues raised informed our work, including responses to government enquiries, information sharing, service provision and the development of education programs.

Total number of people we connected with, including our members, subscribers and supporters

**69,352**

Number of events hosted by BEING

**9**

Number of surveys

**7**

Number of internal committee meetings

**17**

Number of participants surveyed

**357**

Number of people we supported to participate in events hosted by BEING and/or others

**220**

Number of people we supported or sponsored to attend/participate in non-BEING committees and other events

**51**

# CONSULTATIONS – Informing our advocacy work

## Eating Disorders Consultation

BEING hosted a consultation inviting people living with eating disorders to review the *NSW Eating Disorders Plan NSW 2020-2024 framework* and provide valuable perspectives on the document and resources.

## Impacts of COVID-19 for People Living with Mental Health Issues

BEING hosted a series of online consultations to better understand the impacts of COVID-19 on people's mental health. Information gathered was shared with the NSW Minister for Mental Health, Ministry of Health, Mental Health Commission of NSW, as well as through key state and national committees. The consultations and survey culminated in a report titled *Many Voices, Many Needs: Consultations with People Living with Mental Health Issues at the Onset of the COVID-19 Crisis*.

## Loneliness and Connection

We wanted to understand how COVID-19 was impacting people living with mental health issues in relation to their experience of loneliness and connection. To find out how people were managing the changed social environment, we hosted two online consultations. Content gathered was shared with key stakeholders such as the NSW Minister for Mental Health, Ministry of Health, Mental Health Commission of NSW, and via other committees and resources.

## Blue Knot Foundation Consultation

BEING invited people who live with complex trauma to participate in two online consultations, in order to gain people's experiences of accessing and receiving services when living with complex trauma. A final report was developed in collaboration between BEING and Blue Knot Foundation to inform the work of the National Mental Health Commission. See [here](#) for more information.

# SURVEYS – Gathering information and perspectives

## Psychosocial Disability under the National Disability Insurance Scheme

BEING asked survey respondents about challenges accessing NDIS funding, the role of peer workers, and people's perspectives on the National Disability Insurance Australia's (NDIA) understanding of the term psychosocial disability.

An internal report was completed and key messages were shared on a number of national and state committees, including the NDIA.

## Pets and Mental Health Survey

Many people advise that pets play an important role for people who live with mental health issues. In this survey, BEING asked respondents about the role of pets and assistance animals in supporting their mental health. A report was compiled and forwarded to the NSW Minister for Mental Health, Ministry of Health, NSW Mental Health Commission, as well as discussed at key state and national meetings.

## Loneliness and Connection Survey

As part of the consultation process outlined above, BEING was keen to explore the impact of loneliness on people's mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. We were particularly interested to hear the impacts for people living with mental health issues as well as peer workers.

A report was finalised and forwarded to the NSW Minister for Mental Health, Ministry of Health, NSW Mental Health Commission, as well as discussed at key stakeholder committees.





## COMMITTEES – Informing our position

### **BEING Co-design Committee**

The BEING Co-design Committee was established in 2020 to assist in co-designing organisational priorities and objectives. Key to this process was to ensure the work we do aligns with our principles and values, and is consumer led in every way.

Integral to our work, the BEING Co-design Committee is an overarching committee to other internal sub-committees and provides a source of knowledge and understanding to assist us with co-designing our advocacy position, policies and procedures, and assist with development of resources such as factsheets.

We are grateful to have this breadth of wisdom on the committee and look forward to the committee leading the drafting and implementation of some key pieces of work, including a Lived Experience Framework, and Paid Participation Policy.

### **BEING Suicide Support and Awareness Committee**

The BEING Suicide Support and Awareness Committee has been an integral part of the establishment of the group peer support program and the research component of phase one of the program.

The committee has assisted in advising on the overall approach to the program, strategies for mitigating risk and ensuring safety, influenced interview guides for recruitment of participants to the program, and contributed to the overall evaluation program in collaboration with BEING's Researcher.

As phase two of the program will commence in November 2021, a new committee will be formed to include previous committee members as well as new members who will be able to bring a fresh perspective to the program.

### **BEING Leadership Academy Co-design Committee**

Taking a co-design approach to our programs, the BEING Leadership Academy Co-design Committee has assisted in the sharing of ideas on the Academy's establishment, course development and implementation, and resources required by the Academy.

So far, the BEING Leadership Academy Co-design Committee has assisted with the identification of gaps within the adult learning space, specifically relating to peer designed and facilitated training, have reviewed resources and courses, made suggestions for course topics, and have participated in sharing their own experiences of living with mental health issues as part of the learning for the Academy.

We look forward to the committee continuing its valuable work in assisting us to share the future of the Academy.

### **BEING Lived Experience Network Co-design Committee**

The BEING Lived Experience Network Co-design Committee has been an integral part of assisting us to shape the scoping of the best approach to establishing a robust network, while ensuring inclusivity of people who live with mental health issues.

The committee has provided a vital perspective on how the network should be shaped, what recruitment into the network may look like, and reinforcing the importance of training and mentoring for people who have not participated in advocacy work previously.

The committee will continue up to December 2021, by which stage we will be sourcing additional funding for the rollout process.



# BEING Seen, BEING Heard, BEING Recognised

Our voice was heard

Number of external  
committees taken  
part in

**46**

Number of external  
committee meetings  
attended

**185**

Number of key state  
government policy  
directives and/or  
legislation reviewed,  
and advice provided

**30**

Number of BEING  
presentations made at  
state and national events

**9**



# Our position on policy and legislation

**Over the course of the 2020-21 financial year, and despite the significant challenges imposed by adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic, BEING has actively contributed to ensuring the voice, perspectives and experiences of people living with mental health issues is heard in mental health policy development in NSW.**

Some of the key activities over the year included being part of a team reviewing non-acute services in Southern NSW Local Health District (SNSWLHD). This included connecting with and speaking directly with consumers in inpatient and community settings as well as working with clinical staff at SNSWLHD to scope and develop a best practice model of care for the service. Other activities included assisting with the following:

## **NSW Ministry of Health**

- HASI Plus – conduct consultation and make recommendations
- Mental Health Triage Policy – review and make recommendations
- NSW Mental Health Community Living Programs – review the Information Report and make recommendations
- NSW Suicide Monitoring System Report – review
- Mental Health Living Longer (MHLL) Program Steering Committee – review and make recommendations
- Information resources for consumers on legislation – participate and make recommendations
- Carer/consumer consultation as part of the baseline evaluation for the Family Focused Recovery Framework – participate and make recommendations
- Older Persons Mental Health Working Group Information Share – review and make recommendations
- Proposed amendments to section 35 and section 81 of the Mental Health Act – review and make recommendations
- Changes to the submission of housing applications – review and distribution
- Initiatives to improve physical health for people in community-based mental health programs – review and make recommendations



- COVID-19 Regulatory evaluation - section 203 Mental Health Act 2007 – review and distribution
- Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Act 2020 – review and make recommendations
- Sections 202 and 203 of the Mental Health Act 2007 – review and distribution
- Consultation for the Evaluation of Police Ambulance and Clinical Early Response (PACER) Program – participation, review and make recommendations
- Electronic monitoring policy for forensic patients on leave and release – conduct consultation and make recommendations
- Revised Absconded Patient form – review and make recommendations
- Alternative approaches for COVID-19 testing for people with disability paper – review and make recommendations
- Interim Report: Evaluation of MH-CLSR – participate, review and make recommendations
- Mental health impacts of COVID-19 on people living with dementia – review and distribution
- Request: Representatives for Mental Health Branch Restrictive Practices working group – distribution and make recommendations
- PHSB Workforce Survey – review and distribution
- Tackling tobacco project – review and make recommendations
- Trauma Informed Care in Practice in NSW mental health services Diagnostic Report – review and

make recommendations

- Peer review of the Consumer and Carer Experiences of NSW mental health services during COVID-19 report, review and make recommendations
- Mental Health Carer Experience survey (YES) – review and make recommendations
- YES CMO working group – review and make recommendations

#### **NSW Mental Health Commission**

- NSW Mental Health Community Collaborative – participate and make recommendations
- Health Literacy – committee, review and make recommendations

#### **NDIS**

- Support for Decision Making and Home and Living Consultations – participate and make recommendations
- NDIS Psychosocial Disability Recovery-Orientated Framework – review and make recommendations
- NDIA/National Mental Health Consumer Alliance quarterly meeting
- NDIS Have Your Say Consultation Sessions – participate and make recommendations
- NDIA Consultation Papers – review, make recommendations, and distribution.

As well as the key advocacy identified above, BEING provided a submission to the Productivity Commission into Mental Health, from both an independent and Alliance perspective.

# Presenting a lived experience view

## SafeWork NSW Mentally Healthy Workplaces Ambassadors Roundtable

**To kick off Mental Health Month in 2020, our CEO, Irene Gallagher, presented a keynote address at the SafeWork NSW Mentally Healthy Workplaces Ambassadors Roundtable, providing a lived experience perspective in workplaces today.**

The CEO was joined by other presenters including the Hon. Kevin Andrews, Minister for Better Regulation and Innovation, and the Hon. Bronnie Taylor, Minister

for Mental Health, regional Youth and Women, as well as twelve CEOs and heads of departments, all of whom provided a perspective of their approach to mentally healthy workplaces. Topics of discussion included: CEOs & Government working together to drive change, what is currently working, what is standing in the way, and how do we implement best practice to create mentally healthy workplaces in NSW?





**Being Supported.**

Free Mental Health Peer Support Line  
beingsupported.org.au  
**1800 151 151**

We are here to listen and support you

**Being Supported.** OPEN  
Mental Health Peer Support Line  
**1800 151 151**

- What is BEING Supported
- FAQ?
- How was BEING Supported promoted?

**Being** Mental Health Consumers

**CHF** 2021 Shifting Gears

**Being** Mental Health Consumers

**CHF** Consumers Health Forum of Australia

## CHF Summit 2021: Shifting Gears

**In March 2021, the Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF) presented CHF Summit 2021: Shifting Gears – the inaugural Australia and New Zealand Consumer Experience and Leadership in Healthcare Summit.**

The virtual event brought together consumers and other leaders from the health sector to explore the latest research and developments set to drive health towards a consumer-centred culture.

BEING CEO, Irene Gallagher, presented a paper titled 'Implementing a peer run and peer delivered mental health warmline service in NSW', which addressed the key conference themes of consumer leadership and consumer-based health care.

The paper outlined the co-design and co-production practices utilised in the development of the BEING Supported – Mental Health Peer Support Line, including key learnings, positive outcomes and challenges to this approach.

## MHCC National NDIS and Psychosocial Disability Quality and Safety Forum – Inclusive Governance Panel

BEING represented its experiences as an organisation with a solid commitment to ensuring the inclusion of lived experience in governance processes. The panel also included the CEO of Flourish Australia and the

CEO of the NSW Council for Intellectual Disability in NSW along with one of their board members. More information can be found [here](#).

# Suicide Prevention Australia Symposium 2021

**In April 2021, BEING made a presentation at the Suicide Prevention Australia Symposium on *Suicide support groups provided by people with lived experience for people with lived experience – a pilot project.***

The presentation highlighted the value of lived experience in context of our pilot Suicide Support and Awareness Program, which was funded by the NSW

Government as part of the Towards Zero Suicides initiative. We shared insights and learnings regarding the pilot peer support groups which were designed by, tailored for, and delivered by people who live with mental health issues and suicidal crisis and/or thoughts. We also emphasised the crucial importance of these groups as a preventative measure – an early intervention to support people before they reach the point of crisis or suicide attempt.

## International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD)

**IDPwD is an important day on the BEING calendar, and this year's theme was pertinent to people living with mental health issues.**

'Invisible Disabilities' invited people to challenge their thinking about disability, broader than a 'physical appearance'. Our CEO, Irene Gallagher, explained that

"if you think about someone who breaks their arm, is in a cast, automatically their friends and family, or even colleagues may say 'what happened to you?' But with invisible disabilities, potentially no one knows. Just because I have an invisible disability, because I have a mental health issue, doesn't mean I should be excluded from that category". To watch the video, check out the link [here](#).

## SIRA Lived Experience Framework

The State Insurance Regulatory Authority (SIRA) invited our CEO, Irene Gallagher, to participate in a panel discussion for the launch of the Lived Experience Framework as a keynote speaker. A key message of the event was how to make workplaces

more mentally healthy. The panel also explored the topic of better support structures in the workplace for people living with mental health issues. More information [here](#).

## Mental Health Month Webinar



Our commitment to human rights underpins all that we do, so with this in mind, as part of Mental Health Month, we hosted an important discussion on a contentious question: "Does the Mental Health Act Help or Hinder Recovery?"

The panel included:

- Catherine Lourey – Commissioner, Mental Health Commission of NSW
- Maria Bisogni – Deputy President, NSW Mental Health Review Tribunal
- Irene Gallagher – CEO, BEING – Mental Health Consumers

All panellists agreed that this was merely the start of a much-needed broader conversation and we are committed to continuing this dialogue.



# Spotlight Report: Living with and Healing from Complex Trauma

## Collaboration with Blue Knot Foundation

**BEING had the opportunity to collaborate with the Blue Knot Foundation to produce a report that investigated what it's like to live with complex trauma and navigate the service system.**

Although our initial plans to carry out on the ground focus groups were interrupted by the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, we were very pleased to be able to hold two online consultations in the second half of

2020 to better understand the consumer perspective. Because of the generosity of consumers who shared their stories and experiences in these consultations we were able to develop a preliminary report outlining key themes and collect quotes. The final report which makes important recommendations to government is now available online. It was a great opportunity to better understand what it's like to live with complex trauma, as well as being an opportunity for BEING to build a collaborative relationship with an important NGO stakeholder in the NSW mental health space.

# Regional Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan

**An important group of stakeholders in the NSW mental health space are the Primary Health Networks (PHNs).**

Among the important committees that BEING has been part of over the past financial year is the CESPNN Regional Plan Implementation Committee. Having already been involved in the development of

the plan, we are pleased to also be part of the ongoing implementation process. We continue to represent voice of people living with mental health issues on this committee. Over the last year the CEO of BEING has also chaired the Communications, Access, Pathways, Partnerships and Promotions (CAPP) Working Group as part of the implementation process.

# Health Literacy Initiative

**During the 2020-21 financial year BEING has once again been part of a major Health Literacy Initiative led by the Mental Health Commission of NSW which includes participants from Swinburne University of Technology, the University of NSW and the University of Newcastle.**

BEING is a member of both the Health Literacy Initiative steering committee and the Health Literacy

Initiative collaborative working group. The primary goal of the Initiative is to develop and promote health literacy resources that will support clinical staff to better understand and support people living with mental health issues across NSW. Pilot projects are being progressed in Primary Health Networks across the state. The high quality of the work carried out so far has been recognised by the World Health Organisation, who have invited the project to become part of its global network of health literacy programs.

## Southern NSW Review of Non-Acute Services

### Working with Local Health Districts (LHDs)

**As part of our ongoing core work listening to and advocating for the voice of people who live with mental health issues, BEING was invited to provide a lived experience representative as part of a review of non-acute mental health services provided by Southern NSW LHD.**

It was a great opportunity to speak with people living with mental health issues in Goulburn and in Bega about some of the issues that impact their wellbeing as well as hearing their suggestions for

improvements.

We learned about the significant impact of the fires on the availability of accommodation and the effect this had on recovery. Others shared with us the importance of having inpatient and non-acute services as close to home as possible, to allow family members and friends to easily visit and provide support. We heard this was particularly important to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People living with mental health issues.

The final report will assist Southern NSW LHD in future with funding allocation and resource planning.



# Supporting the peer workforce

**Being**  
Peer Workforce  
Network.

## Peer Supervision

**As part of our ongoing work to support and develop the mental health peer workforce, BEING was funded by the NSW Ministry of Health to develop a cross-sector peer supervision model.**

While the pilot is still progressing, we are very pleased to have had the opportunity to develop a peer supervision training course as well as recruiting and training ten trainee peer supervisors. After completing the course and job placements the trainee peer supervisors will be accredited by BEING. Reaccreditation will then be required each year. Trainees will be provided with peer supervision by BEING throughout the training and accreditation process. We are looking forward to seeing the first group of BEING accredited peer supervisors graduate next year and we hope this successful pilot program will lead to a continuing service.

**BEING has been fundamental to the establishment and growth of the peer workforce across NSW and has been a keen advocate to ensure peer workers are heard, seen and supported.**

The NSW Government provided funding to BEING to develop a centralised database and network of peer workers across NSW to inform best practices as this valuable workforce grows.

While the intention of the peer supervision program has been to develop a formal model of professional support for peer workers, the Peer Workforce Network will provide more informal supports such as opportunities to build collegiality and problem solve with other peer workers. We envisage that this work will continue into 2021/2022.





## Consumer Peer Workers Forum

**BEING – Mental Health Consumers is proud to have presented the 2021 Consumer Peer Workers Forum. This year's theme was "What Brings Us Together".**

Funded by the NSW Government, we worked closely with a forum planning committee to bring this two-day professional development event to fruition. Peer Workers from the public workforce across NSW came together as a community to connect, learn, share, grow and support each other.

A significant feature of the event was the opportunity for attendees to hear from keynote speakers, learn about projects undertaken by each Local Health District and Specialty Network throughout the past year, and take part in a series of workshops, most of which were facilitated by peer workers themselves. The event took place on 22-23 June, just prior to the stay-at-home restrictions being announced, so all in attendance followed strict COVID safety measures. We were extremely fortunate to have been able to proceed with the in-person event this year, and to have had a number of people attend from rural and remote

Local Health Districts. The feedback we received from attendees was that it was most beneficial to be able to connect with their fellow peer workers in person.

While this particular event was funded specifically for mental health peer workers employed by NSW Health, BEING – Mental Health Consumers recognises the need for and importance of more professional development opportunities for all peer workers across the state. We are exploring opportunities to be able to host similar events for the broader peer workforce and to include the community managed and private sectors.



# Our programs

As the independent, NSW peak body for people living with mental health issues, BEING's core work is embedded in systemic advocacy. This ensures that the perspectives and experiences of mental health consumers are heard by decision makers, service providers and the community to lead and influence change in services and systems.

In the past financial year, BEING has further expanded its scope to include service provision through some exciting and innovative programs. These programs have increased our touchpoints with people living with mental health issues and served to build and engage with the BEING community.

## Being Leadership Academy.

Officially launched in 2021, BEING Leadership Academy takes a collaborative approach to bringing adult education and learning into the mental health sector, through the provision of in person and online training and mentoring resources specifically tailored to the needs of people living with mental health issues, family and carers, and the broader community across Australia.

BEING partnered with the Nottingham Recovery College, UK, to co-design and co-produce courses aligned with our values of consumer leadership and inclusivity, and which are informed by recovery-oriented and trauma-informed practices.

BEING Leadership Academy has three key education streams:

**Speak Up** – includes introductory courses and workshops for people living with mental health issues, their family, and carers to assist in building individual

capacity and confidence for achieving further education and employment opportunities.

**Peer Up** – focuses on a broad and practical range of mental health peer work courses, workshops and professional development skillsets.

**Lead Up** – provides more intensive education, focusing on employment and leadership skills to strengthen the current consumer leaders and develop future new leaders.

Number of training courses co-produced and co-facilitated

17

Number of course enrolments (March 2021 to June 2021)

60



# Being Supported.

## Free Mental Health Peer Support Line

[beingsupported.org.au](https://beingsupported.org.au)

OPEN



**The BEING Supported – Mental Health Peer Support Line (warmline) was a six-month pilot program co-funded by the Mental Health Commission of NSW and the NSW Minister for Mental Health.**

The scope under the program guidelines was to establish and deliver a non-crisis telephone warmline service, specifically to provide non-clinical and non-crisis peer support and referrals to anyone in NSW experiencing distress, particularly resulting from the stress, anxiety, and isolation brought by the COVID-19 pandemic.

One unique factor of BEING Supported was that all warmline staff live with mental health issues, suicidal thoughts, trauma histories and emotional distress, in addition to having extensive skills and expertise in the area of peer work. They undertook further extensive training to upskill them to be proficient in working on the warmline and specialising in telephone and online peer support work.

BEING Supported was officially launched on 14 July 2020 via a live webinar. The panel featured BEING CEO, Irene Gallagher, Hon. Bronnie Taylor MLC, Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women, and Catherine Lourey, Commissioner, Mental Health Commission of NSW.

**In line with our values of diversity and inclusivity, BEING – Mental Health Consumer sought funding to co-design the scoping of a lived experience network. The aim of the BEING Lived Experience Network is to bring together a formal process of developing a lived experience database to support the demands of inclusion of people living with mental health issues in state and national policy reform and sharing lived experience stories.**

Through a co-design process, we were able to define how people want to be involved, and their wishes in

sharing their stories and contributing to such reform. We heard that it was important to not only offer opportunities to people who are already involved in advocacy, but also provide capacity building training and mentoring opportunities to the emergence of people who would like to be involved.

The preliminary work has informed that the BEING Lived Experience Network could be a 'one stop shop' style database to include participation in committee work, education and training, public speaking and presentations, research, across NSW and further to a national level.

We are hoping that the valuable work so far in scoping what the data base would look like and how we can support people to be involved will go a long way to success of a phase 2 funding round.

## Suicide Support and Awareness Program

**During we were very pleased to receive funding support from the NSW Ministry of Health to pilot three fully peer-run suicide support groups.**

The funding was provided as part of the Towards Zero Suicides initiative currently being rolled out by NSW Health, which seeks to provide leading best practice crisis care and support, build on local community resilience and improve systems and practices to reduce the suicide rate in NSW.

BEING provided in-depth training for a number of peer group facilitators, to equip them with effective skills and confidence to facilitate groups successfully. We also produced a co-designed workbook to guide group discussions and provide structure. During the first stage of the pilot, groups were operated in inner Sydney, western Sydney and rural NSW. It was very

gratifying to welcome and bring together people who have experience of living with suicidality to share their lives with each other. As the first series of groups were very successful, we are looking forward to being able to continue the pilot next year. This will provide an opportunity to incorporate our learnings as well as providing support and understanding to a new group of participants.

**Suicide support  
and awareness  
peer support  
groups**

**37**

# BEING Seen and BEING Heard through the media

During 2020-21, BEING continued to inform, engage and connect with the community via our Mad Monday Memo newsletter and social media channels (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn).

We found these digital channels were crucial in maintaining a strong connection with mental health

consumers across NSW during a year primarily known for physical separation associated with COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns.

We used digital ad campaigns and social media to promote opportunities for consumer participation as well as promoting programs such as the BEING Supported Warmline.

## Mad Monday Memo e-newsletter:

**1443**

SUBSCRIBERS AS AT  
JUNE 2021

**73**

E-NEWSLETTERS AND  
SPECIAL BULLETINS  
BROADCAST

**101050**

EMAIL RECIPIENTS

**3657**



**up**

**1469**

FROM  
PREVIOUS  
YEAR

**447**



**up**

**170**

FROM  
PREVIOUS  
YEAR

**2121**



**up**

**157**

FROM  
PREVIOUS  
YEAR

## Social Media Posts

Total Tweets

769

Facebook Posts

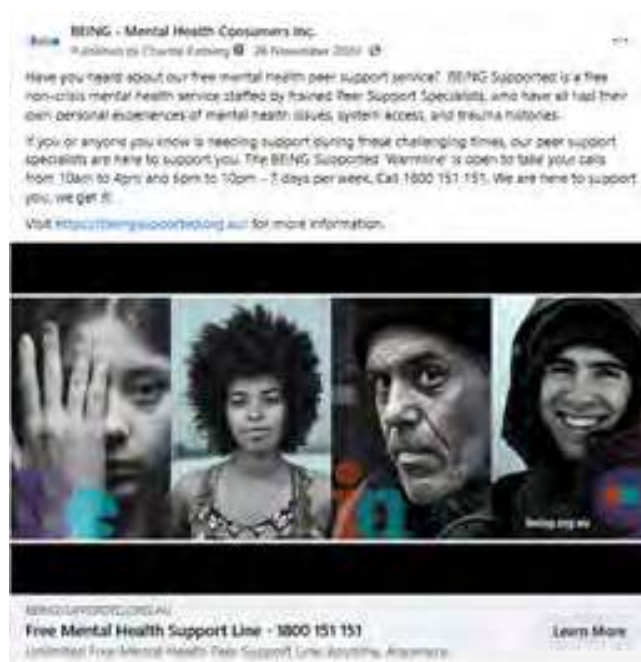
219

LinkedIn Posts

54

Youtube

353



## BEING on the radio

**Radio 2GB 873 invited BEING CEO Irene Gallagher onto their Sydney Talk Radio Summer Drive show after a listener called their open line talking about the BEING Supported – Mental Health Peer Support Line.**

Irene explained that the non-crisis support line is run by those living with mental health issues and how

beneficial that can be for the those calling in and those staffing the line.

“Our slogan is ‘we’ve been there, we get it’. Our trained and skilled Peer Support Specialist staff have all faced their own adversities...for our callers to speak with someone who’s come through the other side, it can be inspiring to so many and instil a sense of hope that tomorrow is another day,” Irene said.





# National Mental Health Consumer Alliance

Our CEO, Irene Gallagher, advocated strongly for the need for a national consumer peak body to take carriage of the many issues faced by people living with mental health issues at a national level. Such issues include a unified national consumer voice, alignment with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to ensure that peoples human rights are not compromised and for people living with mental health issues to be empowered to exercise their rights. The media release can be found [here](#).

## The National Mental Health Consumer Alliance includes the peak bodies:

- BEING – Mental Health Consumers
- Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council (VMIAC)
- Consumers of Mental Health WA (CoMHWa)
- SA Lived Experience Leadership and Advocacy Network (LELAN)





# Financial reports





**THOMAS DAVIS & CO**  
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS  
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**BEING - MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMERS INCORPORATED**  
**ABN 82 549 537 349**

**AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION**

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**Auditor's Independence Declaration to the Board Members of BEING - Mental Health Consumers Incorporation, under section 60-40 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (ACNC Act)**

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, during the year ended 30 June 2021 there have been:

- (a) no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements of section 60-40 of the ACNC Act in relation to the audit; and
- (b) no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

**THOMAS DAVIS & CO.**

**J.G. RYAN      PARTNER**

Chartered Accountants

Sydney

Date: 17 November 2021

A member of



Independent legal & accounting firms

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**CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS**  
AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

**BEING - MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMERS INCORPORATED**  
**ABN 82 549 537 349**

**STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE BOARD**

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The Board has determined that the Association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

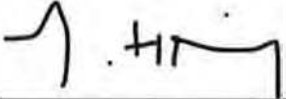
In the opinion of the Board the financial report:

- (a) Is in accordance with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (ACNC Act); and
  - (i) Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of BEING - Mental Health Consumers Incorporated as at 30 June 2021 and its performance for the year ended on that date.
  - (ii) comply with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent outlined in Note 1 and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013;
- (b) At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that BEING - Mental Health Consumers Incorporated will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board and is signed for and on behalf of the Board and in accordance with subsection 60.15(2) of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013.

  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Faye Nour**  
**Chairperson**

  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Sunny Hemraj**  
**Treasurer**

SYDNEY,

Date: 17 November 2021

**BEING - MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMERS INCORPORATED**  
**ABN 82 549 537 349**

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**  
**AS AT 30TH JUNE 2021**

		<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
	<b>Notes</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash assets	5	1,869,226	1,982,174
Receivables	6	34,826	221,869
Other assets	7	113,658	113,192
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>2,017,710</b>	<b>2,317,235</b>
<b>Non-current assets</b>			
Other assets	8	60,500	60,500
Property, plant and equipment	9	83,620	59,681
Intangible assets	10	23,961	23,116
Right of use assets	11	312,705	416,940
<b>Total non-current assets</b>		<b>480,786</b>	<b>560,237</b>
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>2,498,496</b>	<b>2,877,472</b>
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Payables	12	376,451	224,292
Provisions	13	117,150	100,973
Lease liabilities		102,740	94,420
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>596,341</b>	<b>419,685</b>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>			
Lease liabilities		232,603	335,343
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>		<b>232,603</b>	<b>335,343</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>828,944</b>	<b>755,028</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>1,669,552</b>	<b>2,122,444</b>
<b>Members Funds</b>			
Retained funds	16	1,669,552	2,122,444
<b>Total Members Funds</b>		<b>1,669,552</b>	<b>2,122,444</b>

*The Statement of Financial Position should be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.*



**BEING - MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMERS INCORPORATED**  
**ABN 82 549 537 349**

**STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME**  
**FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2021**

	Notes	2021 \$	2020 \$
Revenue from ordinary activities	2	1,831,306	2,792,228
Expenses from ordinary activities:			
Employee expenses	3	(1,366,564)	(536,516)
Depreciation	3	(140,441)	(89,139)
Interest expenses	3	(18,872)	(17,141)
Other expenses from ordinary activities	3	(758,321)	(385,605)
Surplus / (deficit) from ordinary activities before income tax expense		(452,892)	1,763,827
Income tax revenue / (expense) relating to ordinary activities	4	-	-
Surplus / (deficit) from ordinary activities after income tax expense		(452,892)	1,763,827
Other Comprehensive Income		-	-
Total Comprehensive Income for the Year		<u>(452,892)</u>	<u>1,763,827</u>

*The Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income should be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.*

**DETAILED INCOME STATEMENT**  
**FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2021**

	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>Revenue</b>		
Core Funding (NSW) Health	760,015	626,062
Interest Received	-	9
SACS ERO Funding	62,043	53,469
Project Grants	899,257	1,958,555
Other Income	61,454	105,506
Reimbursements / Cost recoveries	48,537	48,627
	<u>1,831,306</u>	<u>2,792,228</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Accounting Fees	55,949	39,058
Advertising & Promotion	59,639	7,630
Audit Fees	6,000	5,800
Bank Charges	1,955	2,868
Board Governance Expenses	-	3,855
Bursaries & Consultation Participation	25,318	-
Conferences, Events & Forums	58,693	62,055
Consultations	4,000	550
Co-location Expenses	6,859	909
Computer Expenses	79,228	26,649
Consultancy/Contractors Fees	-	-
Depreciation Expenses (FF&OE)	36,206	10,963
Depreciation Expenses (Leased Asset)	104,235	78,176
Electricity & Gas	4,363	3,137
Employment Support & Supervision	38,073	15,423
Facilitator Costs	4,570	-
Insurance General (all)	11,706	3,023
Interest Expense - Lease	18,872	17,141
Legal Fees	49,650	11,820
Management Fees	48,537	48,537
Meeting Expenses	443	3,885
Membership Fees Paid	14,519	7,440
Merch&ise	33,158	6,438
Office Setup Costs	-	26,800
Office Cleaning	11,988	6,206
Office Supplies	8,724	-
Postage, Freight & Courier	2,183	-
Printing & Stationery	28,621	24,515
Publication & Inform Resources	-	-
Repairs & Maintenance	1,949	1,312
S&W - Annual Leave Provision	16,177	17,059
S&W - Provision TIL	-	19,823
S&W - Recruitment Expense	90,592	5,796
S&W - Personal/Carers Lve	134	62
S&W - Superannuation Employ Exp	102,788	42,006
S&W - Workers Compensation Ins	1,956	1,956
W&S - Wages & Salaries	1,154,917	449,814
W&S - MHC Secondment	-	-
Staff Amenities	2,096	1,951
Telephone Fax & Internet Charge	23,737	9,623
Training & Development(staff)	52,981	20,330
T&A - Staff & Subsistence	28,893	36,869
T&A - MVA Allowance (payroll)	92	1,322
T&A - Meal Allowance (payroll)	863	964
Sundry Expenses	19,646	6,437
Venue Hire	73,888	199
	<u>2,284,198</u>	<u>1,028,401</u>
	<u>(452,892)</u>	<u>1,763,827</u>

*The Detailed Income & Expenditure Statement should be read in conjunction with the attached disclaimer.*

**BEING - MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMERS INCORPORATED**  
**ABN 82 549 537 349**

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS**  
**FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2021**

	Notes	2021 \$ Inflows (Outflows)	2020 \$ Inflows (Outflows)
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Cash receipts from customers		2,242,965	2,677,735
Cash payments to suppliers and employees		(2,181,631)	(805,665)
Interest received		-	9
Interest paid		(18,872)	(17,141)
<b>Net cash provided by / (used in) operating activities</b>	14(b)	<u>42,462</u>	<u>1,854,938</u>
<b>Cash flow from investing activities</b>			
Payments for property, plant and equipment		(60,990)	(75,019)
<b>Net cash provided by / (used in) investing activities</b>		<u>(60,990)</u>	<u>(75,019)</u>
<b>Cash flow from financing activities</b>			
Repayment of leases		(94,420)	(65,353)
<b>Net cash provided by / (used in) financing activities</b>		<u>(94,420)</u>	<u>(65,353)</u>
Net increase / (decrease) in cash held		(112,948)	1,714,566
Cash at the beginning of the financial year		1,982,174	267,608
<b>Cash at the end of the financial year</b>	14(a)	<u><u>1,869,226</u></u>	<u><u>1,982,174</u></u>

*The Statement of Cash Flows should be read in conjunction with the notes to the financial statements.*



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**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT**

**TO THE MEMBERS OF BEING - MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMERS INCORPORATED**  
**ABN 82 549 537 349**

**Opinion**

We have audited the financial report of BEING - Mental Health Consumers Incorporated, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2021, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in members' funds and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the statement by members of the Board.

In our opinion, the financial report of BEING - Mental Health Consumers Incorporated has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, including;

- (a) giving a true and fair view of BEING - Mental Health Consumers Incorporated's financial position as at 30 June, 2021 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- (b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1 and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013.

**Basis for Opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the association in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110: Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

**Emphasis of Matter - Basis of Accounting and Restriction on Distribution and Use**

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling BEING - Mental Health Consumers Incorporated's financial reporting responsibilities under the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

**Responsibilities of the Members of the Board for the Financial Report**

The members of the Board are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 to the financial report is appropriate to meet the needs of the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and is appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The members of the Board responsibility also includes such internal control as the members of the Board determine is necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the members of the Board are responsible for assessing the association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the members of the committee either intend to liquidate the association or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

A member of



Independent legal & accounting firms

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Sydney 2000      Sydney 2001      F: (02) 9231 6792

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## **Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the association's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the members of the Board.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the members of the Board' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the association's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the association to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the members of the Board regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.



**THOMAS DAVIS & CO.**



**J G RYAN**

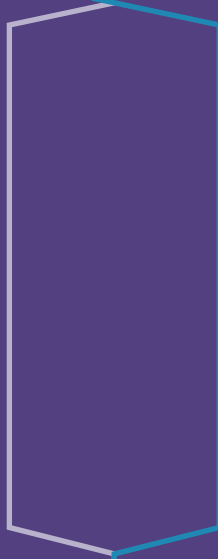
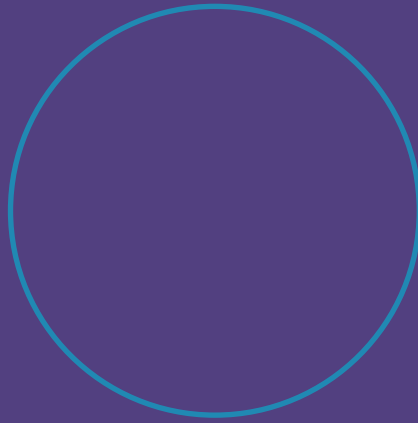
**PARTNER**

**Chartered Accountants**

**SYDNEY,**

**Date: 17 November 2021**

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108 Cathedral St, Woolloomooloo, NSW 2011