

Mental Health Tribunal Strategic Plan 2025-2028

Our Strategic Priorities

1 Ensure fair, consistent and solution-focused hearings

We continually strive to improve our skills and systems to deliver fair and solution-focused hearings that promote the mental health and wellbeing principles.

Over the life of this plan the Tribunal will:

- ▶ Review and refine our continuing professional development program for Tribunal members focused on conducting hearings in the Tribunal's current operating environment.
- ▶ Further embed trauma-informed practice in the conduct of hearings.
- ▶ Work with representative bodies to identify and implement practices to make hearings more culturally safe and appropriate for First Nations consumers.
- ▶ Undertake further surveys of consumers, carers and treating teams to understand their experience of Tribunal hearings.

2 Continue to refine our hearing processes, with a focus on operating flexibly and sustainably

We will work with stakeholders to design and implement process reforms that provide high-quality hearings that are responsive to the needs of hearing participants.

Over the life of this plan the Tribunal will:

- ▶ Collaborate with stakeholders and other entities on the development of standards for engagement with Tribunal hearings.
- ▶ Work with the Mental Health Legal Rights Service to optimise legal representation in hearings.
- ▶ Undertake a pilot to confirm the systems and resources needed to conduct some hearings in-person.

3 Support the wellbeing of Tribunal members and staff

We are committed to maintaining an ongoing focus on the wellbeing of our members and staff, especially in the context of sustained and significant increases in the Tribunal's caseload.

Over the life of this plan the Tribunal will:

- ▶ Develop a broader wellbeing strategy for members and staff that responds to the challenges associated with online remote work, and the Tribunal's increasingly complex operating environment.
- ▶ Elevate and embed lived experience in the Tribunal and create a safe and supportive environment for members and staff with lived experience as consumers and carers.
- ▶ Review our suite of member resources and performance supports including our extranet, principles of conduct, competency framework and performance feedback process.
- ▶ Review our approach to managing the professional development of Tribunal staff, including by developing a competency framework.
- ▶ Revisit and update the internal review of the Tribunal's structure to assess whether the Tribunal is positioned to respond to fluctuating demand and able to optimise member engagement.

4 Implement the reforms for approval of forensic leave under the *Crimes (Mental Impairment and Unfitness to be Tried) Act 1997*

From 1 September 2026, applications relating to forensic leave under the *Crimes (Mental Impairment and Unfitness to be Tried) Act 1997* will be heard and determined by the Tribunal.

Over the life of this plan the Tribunal will:

- ▶ Work with stakeholders to ensure that robust and efficient processes are in place for applications to be heard by the Tribunal upon commencement of the reforms.
- ▶ Following commencement, collaborate with stakeholders to refine and enhance procedures for forensic leave hearings.
- ▶ Undertake targeted work to ensure processes, including information products, meet the distinct needs of forensic residents.

Our Mission

The Mental Health Tribunal decides whether a person receives compulsory treatment under Victoria's mental health legislation. Our hearings focus on human rights, recovery, least restrictive treatment and the participation of consumers, carers and clinicians.

Our Vision

That the principles and objectives of Victoria's mental health legislation are reflected in the experience of consumers and carers.

Our Values

We seek to elevate lived experience and the voices of consumers and carers and are:

- Fair
- Respectful
- Collaborative.

