

Position Description



Position Title:	Advocate
Reports to:	Advocacy Lead
Department:	Advocacy
Position Type:	0.8 FTE Contract 3 years to 30/6/2025
Classification:	Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010 Community Development Worker SCHADS Level 4.1

About VMIAC

VMIAC is the peak Victorian non-government organisation for people with lived experience of mental health issues or emotional distress. We work from a rights-based perspective.

Our vision is a world where all mental health consumers stand proud, live a life with choices honoured, rights upheld, and these principles are embedded in all aspects of society.

We undertake individual, group and systemic advocacy and our work includes research and evaluation, education and training, information provision and resource development, as well as limited specialist support programs. We have a strong and continuous focus on engagement with members, and on informing and supporting them in becoming empowered and having their voices heard.

VMIAC is owned, governed, managed and staffed by people with a lived experience. We aim to be an organisation in which the diversity of people with a lived experience can meaningfully and powerfully contribute and the employer of choice for the mental health lived experience workforce. We know that by working well together we become a true force for systems change and reshaping consumer experience.

www.vmiac.org.au

Position overview

To provide face to face, phone-based advocacy and 3-way calls with other services for VMIAC consumers who have a lived experience with mental illness, enabling them to make their own choices and have their rights and interests respected, giving consumers a voice. Creation and execution of advocacy plans, supporting people to have their choices honoured and their rights upheld. This position also supports the development work needed to ensure rural and regional access.

Support and development

VMIAC will provide regular supervision and mentoring to the person in this role. All VMIAC roles include training and development opportunities, which can include the development of leadership and other required skills and attendance at conferences.

THIS IS A LIVED EXPERIENCE, CONSUMER POSITION

Applicants must have lived experience of mental health issues or emotional distress and of being a consumer of mental health services. Applicants will receive supervision and support but must be work ready and able to fulfil all requirements of the role.

Working Relationships

Internal	External
CEO	Consumers and consumer groups
Deputy CEO	Mental Health Services – Clinical and Community
Advocacy Lead	Medical Practitioners
The Advocacy Team	Department of Health and Human Services
	Mental Health Complaints Commissioner
	IMHA
	Family Members and Carers

Specific Responsibilities

Self-Advocacy

- Talk with consumers to identify if and how their rights have been breached, providing advice on the correct course of action and steps that need to be taken.
- Gain a thorough understanding of the requirements of each consumer to ensure the best advocacy option is offered and the appropriate course of action is available to support the needs of the consumer.
- Encourage consumers to be involved in their own care, treatment, or rehabilitation program.
- Where appropriate, refer consumers to services that may be better equipped to meet their needs.
- Provide information to consumers who wish to self-advocate, ensuring they understand their rights and responsibilities and how to voice their concerns in an appropriate manner, so that their issues are heard and addressed.
- Ensure knowledge of legislation and policy is current to ensure accurate information, resource provision and representation.

Individual Advocacy

- Where consumers are not able to self-advocate, provide assistance in representing them over the telephone and electronically to ensure their issues and concerns are raised and addressed.
- Consult with consumers to identify and contact the appropriate specialists or organisations and advocate on their behalf, raising concerns, addressing their needs, initiating actions, and proposing acceptable outcomes.
- Assist and support consumers in a range of correspondence to self-advocate with requests such as information for freedom of information and referrals to relevant agencies
- Follow up with consumers, keeping them up to date with the status of their short-term advocacy issues.

Systemic Advocacy

- Use information and examples gleaned from consumer groups and individuals to identify key systemic issues to enable VMIAC to advocate for changes to relevant legislation, policies, and practices.

Administration

- Review of incoming emails, responding to consumer enquiries and referring any other requests to the relevant team member.
- Keep clear and accurate notes and advocacy plans in accordance with VMIAC policy and procedure and relevant legal obligations.
- Monthly project planning to set advocacy activities for the period.
- Formal reporting of program activity including statistics for the month, advocacy activities, status of workload and any areas requiring support or assistance.
- Ensure that accurate consumer information is documented and stored confidentially, within the VMIAC database and adhere to DSS NDAP partnership and SCORE input practices.

Teamwork and Communication

- Attendance and representation of VMIAC at identified education, training, and information workshops and forums.
- Attend Advocacy Team Meetings, contributing to the growth and development of the team by providing feedback, information, raising issues to discuss and identifying training needs, unless required elsewhere as a priority.
- Attend monthly staff meetings
- Providing peer support to colleagues where possible and when it's safe to do so, working towards creating a safe and happy workplace.
- Actively contribute to Workplace Health and Safety by taking reasonable care for personal health and safety and that of others in the workplace, raising suggestions and concerns as they arise to ensure a safe work environment for employees, consumers, and visitors.

Quality and Safety Support

- Provide administrative support to accreditation activities
- Update policy & procedures as required

Teamwork

- Support the Implementation of strategic projects as directed
- Attend monthly staff meetings
- Contribute to the team meetings and other forums as appropriate providing information and feedback
- Embrace the Code of Conduct working to create a safe, supportive, and happy workplace
- Contribute to Workplace Health and Safety by taking reasonable care for personal health and safety and that of others in the workplace; raising suggestions and concerns as they arise to ensure a safe work environment for employees, consumers, and visitors.
- Complete tasks as assigned and requested by management.

Summary of Key Result Areas

Key Result Areas	Key Performance Indicators
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All materials produced meet legal and ethical requirements and VMIAC standards• Required reporting meets designated timeframes
Administrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create and execute any advocacy plans in a timely manner• Maintain confidentiality and privacy• Uphold the rights and choices of consumers
Teamwork and Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reflect VMIAC values in supporting a collaborative work environment• Maintain open communication and active support in achieving shared goals

Skills, Competencies, Behaviours and Requirements

Essential licence, qualification, or registration requirements

1. A lived experience of mental health issues is essential for this role.
2. Knowledge or experience of the issues facing consumers of mental health services.
3. A current Victorian Driver's Licence and is prepared to travel for work purposes in metropolitan and rural, regional areas of Victoria
4. Current Police Check and Working with Children Check

Essential skills, competencies, and behaviours

- Knowledge or experience of mental health issues is essential for this role.
- Tertiary education in community services, community development or other relevant areas or an equivalent combination of experience, education, or training.
- Demonstrated experience delivering advocacy services within community development programs, in Mental Health.
- Demonstrates a commitment to consumer participation at an individual, group, and organisation level.
- Experience communicating, collaborating with, and representing a diverse range of people in both an individual and a group setting.
- Demonstrated ability to understand and apply legislation and policies, including the ability to identify issues, problem solve and negotiate.
- Strong organisational skills with an ability to effectively plan work to meet objectives and manage the needs of consumers.
- Demonstrated written communications skills with experience writing letters, reports, case notes and submissions.
- Sound verbal communications skills and professional presentation.
- Intermediate skill in Microsoft Office and experience working with a client database is essential.

Non-essential requirements

- Relevant certificate or degree qualifications, e.g., in management, health, education or community

development

Equipment

- Use of company vehicle for business purposes

Special Conditions

- Regional and Rural travel outside core business hours is inherent in VMIAC roles and is required state-wide to meet with service providers, agencies, and communities.

Support and development

VMIAC will provide regular supervision and mentoring to the person in this role. All VMIAC roles include training and development opportunities, which can include the development of leadership and other required skills and attendance at conferences.

Employee Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

CEO Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____