

## **A new era begins with family, carers and supporters at the 'core' of reform**

Marie Piu MAPS  
Chief Executive Officer Tandem





## Tandem – a short history

- 1994 - Victorian Mental Health Carers Network began with the support of Carers Victoria, the Schizophrenia Fellowship (now Wellways), SANE Australia and ARAFEMI (now part of Mind Australia)
- 2000 - membership of the Network was widened to include different types of organisations working with carers, as well as expanding the number of carer representatives
- 2003 – the Network’s activities had expanded significantly, proving difficult to sustain based on the then volunteer workforce
- 2009 – the Network became incorporated (auspiced by ARAFMI until then)
- 2014 – the Network was re-launched as Tandem, the peak body for Mental Health Carers in Victoria
- 2020 – the release of the Final Report by the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System
- The Report spoke of an increase to family and carer involvement in the mental health and wellbeing system and confirmed Tandem’s role as the peak body for Family and Friends in Mental Health
- To support Tandem’s critical role as the peak body, the Commission recommended that service agreements between the Department of Health and Tandem should be extended to at least 5 years.

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The trusted voice of family  
and friends in mental health



## Tandem Team Members





## Tandem is the Victorian peak body and trusted voice of family, carers and supporters in mental health

### Tandem:

- Provides systemic and non-legal advocacy, support with system navigation and referral and the NDIS via the [Tandem Support and Referral Line](#) on **1800 314 325**
- Administers the Carer Support Fund – **in 2020 -21, 5548 family/supporters were assisted**
- **Auspices CLEW**
- Administers the Tandem Register, join at: <https://tandemcarers.org.au/Web/Policy/Join-the-Tandem-Participation-Register-.aspx>

### Tandem is a member of:

- The Lived Experience Advisory Group reporting to the Mental Health Ministerial Advisory Group alongside VMIAC
- The Mental Health Ministerial Advisory Group
- State, National and stakeholder expert, technical advisory & steering groups
- Victorian Mental Health Policy Network
- Women's Health Alliance
- Mental Health Carers Australia – unfunded national peak



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### **Benefits of joining Tandem:**

- You become part of a ‘family’ where everyone understands your unique experience as someone who loves, supports and walks alongside someone with mental health challenges
- Access to regular Enews
- Members Updates
- Opportunity to participate in shaping the future of mental health and wellbeing services from a family, carer or supporter perspective
- Invitation to participate in paid register activities and consultations or public forums recognising your lived experience expertise from a family perspective
- **You can access these benefits by joining Tandem for free [here](#).**

Tandem Campaigned for a  
Safe, Inclusive, Fair and Funded  
mental health system  
One that considers the  
Whole of Self  
Whole of Family and  
Whole of Life

## What did the final report of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System say?

- 'The Commission makes a number of recommendations to elevate the experiences, expertise and perspectives of consumers, families, carers and supporters, so that together, they are at the centre of the mental health and wellbeing system's governance and leadership structures.' 19.8 p.94
- 'Consumers, family, carer and supporter inclusion will also be a routine aspect of the commissioning of mental health and wellbeing services, and of workforce development and training.' P.4
- 'As the peak body, and in light of the Commission's recommendations to increase family and carer involvement, the Commission envisages a substantial role for Tandem in a future mental health and wellbeing system that is more responsive to and inclusive of families, carers and supporters'
- 'new system-level governance outlines the Commission's expectation that the Department of Health will continue to fund Tandem to fulfil functions such as advocacy and participation in engagement activities run by government agencies'. p.57 Chap 27
- **Recommendations 30, 31 and 32 specifically address the needs identified for family, friends and supporters**

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**Rebalancing system**

**Information sharing**

**Family and carer leadership**

**Most recovery occurs at home**

**Mental Health and Wellbeing Act**

**From individualistic to collective**

**Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission**

**Regional Mental Health and Wellbeing Boards**

**Consumer and Carer lived experience workforces**

**Family central to Multicultural and refugee community**

**Role in commissioning**

**Family/carer led centres**

**Human rights approach**

**System accountable to family friends and supporters**

**Aboriginal Social Emotional Wellbeing model**

**Performance monitoring for family inclusion**

**Family inclusion = 'core business' Safe**

**Family in system level governance**

**Young people with support roles**

**Whole of life investment**

**Family Commissioner**

**Whole of family**

**Whole of self**

**Inclusive**

**Compassion**

**Relational recovery**

**Tandem**

**Collaborative Centre**

**VMIAAC**

**Two distinct disciplines**

**Fair**

**Funded**



## Tandem Reform Activities 2022

Participation Register – Opportunities promoted in eNews/ socials/ website and reported in our Members reports (Mental Health and Wellbeing Branch and Office of the Chief Psychiatrist)

Lead Role Family and Carer Led Centres

Workforce Lead

Outcome Measures

Mental Health/AOD integration

Women's Mental Health Initiative

Office of the Chief Psychiatrist

Safer Care Victoria

## Family and Carer Led Centres Update

- 26 focus groups have been run across Victoria, both face to face and online, with staff visiting all regions from Mildura to Bairnsdale
- Focus groups have also been held with CLEW, the Statewide Network & Young Carers, and Service Providers
- Satellite is running a focus group for us to connect with their membership
- Codesign group established, this group having approved our [survey which is now live](#)
- A total of 31 organisations represented across a broad range of interest groups / disciplines
- Planning is underway on writing up the rich data we have gathered.

## Emerging Themes

- Stark and profound need for Family Carer-led Centres
- Families / supporters and allies feel largely forgotten about
- The power of being heard and sharing stories can not be overstated
- Genuine, but tempered, optimism that authentic and enduring change may be achieved
- Expectations of government are low
- Crisis and post crisis support are key issues
- Stigma and discrimination persist
- Accountability – how do we safeguard the fidelity of the model?
- **The need for and importance of kindness.**

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## Tandem Support and Referral Line

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**Join Tandem for free**

**[tandemcarers.org.au/join](https://tandemcarers.org.au/join)**



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