



The Victorian  
Collaborative Centre  
For Mental Health & Wellbeing

# 2026

# Collaborative Centre Workforce Development Forum

The Learning Workforce: Inspiring  
Practice Development in Mental Health

Thursday 11 June 2026

9.00am - 4.30pm

Pullman on the Park,  
East Melbourne



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# Program

TIME	FOYER	BREAKOUT ROOM 1	BREAKOUT ROOM 2	PLENARY
8:15am	Registration & Exhibitor Area Opens			
9:00 - 9:15am				<b>Welcome to Country</b> Wurundjeri Council
9:15 - 9:30am				<b>Conference Opening &amp; Housekeeping</b> Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health & Wellbeing
9:30 - 9:45am				<b>Opening Address</b> <b>Sarah Wilson</b> , Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health & Wellbeing
9:45 - 10:30am				<b>Keynote:</b> Decolonising Workforce Development <b>Shibs Sharpe</b> , Royal Melbourne Hospital
10:30 - 11:00am	<b>Morning Tea</b>			
11:00 - 11:35am		<b>Centring Lived Experience</b> <b>11:00 - 11:23am</b> <b>Presentation:</b> Developing a Framework for supporting employment of Lived Experience Educators into Health Professions Education <b>Kirsty Morgan &amp; Stuart Wall</b> , Bayside Peninsula <b>11:25 - 11:48am</b> <b>Presentation:</b> Understanding Family Carer Lived Experience Discipline Work Using DF Fact Sheets <b>Annette Mercuri &amp; Anna Epifanio</b> , Tandem	<b>Skills for Workforce Development Professionals</b> <b>Presentation:</b> From Clinical Expertise to Educational Excellence: Embedding Instructional Design in Mental Health Workforce Education <b>Carolyn Porter &amp; Amanpreet Kaur</b> , Monash Health	<b>Leadership for Workforce Development Professionals</b> <b>Presentation:</b> Leading without Authority: Power Mapping & Communication Strategies for Victorian Clinical Educators <b>Kathy Maggs</b> , Austin Health
11:35 - 11:40am	<b>Session Change over</b>			
11:40 - 12:15pm		<b>Centring Lived Experience</b> <b>11:50 - 12:15pm</b> <b>Presentation:</b> Coproducing Workforce Education: the New Perspectives College Model <b>Andrew Foster &amp; John Vokuan</b> , Bayside Alfred	<b>Skills for Workforce Development Professionals</b> <b>11:40 - 11:57am</b> <b>Presentation:</b> Considering Evaluations First, not Last <b>Ivana Vargovic</b> , Monash Health <b>11:57 - 12:15pm</b> <b>Panel Discussion:</b> Evaluating Workforce Development for Impact <b>Panel Members:</b> <b>Rachael Unwin, Leanna Azoury &amp; Justine Fletcher</b> , Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health & Wellbeing <b>Ivana Vargovic, Kirsty Rosie &amp; Joanne Sheedy</b> , Monash Health	<b>Leadership for Workforce Development Professionals</b> <b>Presentation:</b> AI & Ethics in Health & Workforce Development <b>Shaminka Mangelsdorf</b> , Orygen
12:15 - 1:15pm	<b>Lunch</b>			
1:15 - 2:15pm		<b>Centring Lived Experience</b> <b>Panel Discussion:</b> Rethinking Culture and Diversity in Education <b>Facilitators:</b> <b>Leanna Azoury</b> , Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health & Wellbeing <b>Panel Members:</b> <b>Manal Shehab</b> , SHARC <b>Malitha Perera</b> , Wellways <b>Avalon Tissue</b> , Foundation House <b>Moisis Moisis</b> , Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health & Wellbeing	<b>Skills for Workforce Development Professionals</b> <b>Presentation:</b> From Idea to Impact: A Statewide Snapshot of Research Capacity and Priorities Among Victoria's Mental Health Workforce Educators <b>Alex Kearney, Lisa Romanin, Eleanor Takin &amp; Philippa Hemus</b> , Royal Melbourne Hospital	<b>Leadership for Workforce Development Professionals</b> <b>Presentation:</b> Strengthening Our Educator Workforce: A Framework Driven Approach to Capability and Growth <b>Stuart Wall</b> , Bayside Peninsula
2:15 - 2:45pm	<b>Afternoon Tea</b>			
2:45 - 4:00pm				<b>Powerful Education through Storytelling – featuring 3Sides of the Coin Gambling Harm Project</b> – Three Sides of the Coin, Self Help Addiction Resource Centre (SHARC) <b>Discussion Facilitators:</b> <b>Karen McKnight</b> , Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health & Wellbeing <b>Kerrie Clarke</b> , Mercy Health
4:00 - 4:15pm				<b>Closing Remarks</b> Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health & Wellbeing
4:15 - 5:15pm	<b>Networking &amp; Refreshments</b>			

# Presenters



**Shibs Sharpe**

Royal Melbourne Hospital

Shibs Sharpe is a proud Wulgurukaba and Gunggandji woman, lived experience leader, educator, and advocate working at the intersection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social and Emotional Wellbeing, mental health reform, and workforce development. Through her roles in public mental health and academia, she champions culturally grounded, relational approaches that centre lived expertise, self-determination, and community connection. Drawing on both personal and professional experience, Shibs is passionate about decolonising systems, reclaiming space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices, and creating environments where culture, lived experience, and authentic leadership can thrive.

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**Keynote: Decolonising Workforce Development**



**Stuart Wall**

Bayside Peninsula

Stuart Wall currently works as the Education Stream Lead for the Mental Health and AOD Learning Hub at Peninsula Health. Stuart leads a team of Mental Health, AOD, and Lived Experience Educators and oversees learning programs for the Mental Health, Wellbeing and AOD Services. Stuart is passionate about providing learning opportunities that are work-integrated and easily transferable into practice. His team prides itself on supporting safe and effective care through the development of high-quality learning programs, designed in line with clinical needs and evidence-based practice.

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**Developing a Framework for supporting employment of Lived Experience Educators into Health Professions Education**

**Strengthening Our Educator Workforce: A Framework Driven Approach to Capability and Growth**



**Kirsty Morgan**

Bayside Peninsula

Kirsty Morgan is public health practitioner with over 25 years' experience working in community and hospital settings in roles dedicated to improving health and social outcomes for people who use drugs. She is currently an Alcohol & other Drugs Educator at Bayside Health (Peninsula). She is also an Adjunct Research Associate at Monash University's Addiction Research Centre. Her professional focus spans AOD education, workforce capacity building, qualitative research, harm reduction and co-production frameworks. She is committed to reducing stigma towards people who use drugs.

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**Developing a Framework for supporting employment of Lived Experience Educators into Health Professions Education**



**Annette Mercuri**

Tandem

Annette Mercuri has extensive personal and professional experience supporting people experiencing mental health distress.

For more than 17 years, she has worked as a carer consultant in the Victorian Clinical Mental Health System, championing inclusive, relational practice and better support for carers and families.

With a counselling background and experience as a sole carer lived-experience worker, Annette understands the challenges of the role and has strongly advocated for relational practice and family carer support in mental health service delivery.

She has co-developed and implemented a family carer peer support model in an inpatient unit, supervised family carer peer workers, and is a co content developer of the Carer Perspective Supervision Framework and a facilitator of its training programs.

Annette has presented at conferences, contributed to the FCLE discipline framework, and co-authored publications on the development of carer peer support work, carer experiences in public mental health services and carer-inclusive service delivery. She has co-facilitated the Carer Consultant and CPS supervision communities of practice, runs a family carer consultancy and supervision practice, and currently works as a family carer lived experience advisor at Tandem.

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**Understanding Family Carer Lived Experience Discipline Work Using DF Fact Sheets**

# Presenters



**Anna Epifanio**

Tandem

Anna began as a Carer Peer Support Worker 12 years ago and later moved into Carer Peer Support Coordinator/Consultant roles.

She was the inaugural Carer Lived Experience Manager and later became Deputy Director of the Carer Lived Experience Workforce at Royal Melbourne Hospital Mental Health Services. In these roles, she built expertise in the Carer Lived Experience workforce, led carer peer support teams, worked with clinical staff across the service, and mentored other carer lived experience workers.

She co-authored the papers "Carer Lived Experience Development and Implementation of Carer Peer Support Model into an Adult Clinical Mental Health Service: The Model, Challenges, Benefits and Learnings" and "Understanding Carer Experiences in Public Adult Mental Health Services Using Carer Peer Support Data."

Anna has been part of CLEW (Carer Lived Experience Workforce) Leadership for the past five years and is committed to advancing training, support, and advocacy for the Carer Lived Experience workforce. She is also a trained Carer Lived Experience Supervisor.

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## Understanding Family Carer Lived Experience Discipline Work Using DF Fact Sheets



**Andrew Foster**

Bayside Alfred

Andrew has worked in Recovery Colleges since 2015, first at 'The Mind Recovery College', then at Alfred Care Group's 'discovery college' and now at Alfred Care Group's 'New Perspectives College'. He brings together a lived experience of mental health challenges, addiction recovery and 30 years experience in the education profession. Andrew has been a key part of the creation and establishment of each of these 3 different recovery colleges and is passionate about partnering lived experience expertise alongside clinical expertise to reshape and reimagine education, service delivery and service user experience.

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## Coproducing Workforce Education: the New Perspectives College Model



**John Vokuan**

Bayside Alfred

John is a clinical nurse educator within a Community based setting and Co-lead (by Profession) with the New Perspectives College where 'co' is demonstrated in College Leadership, course design, course facilitation and course attendance. My experience with co-production has shown me how a richer understanding can be had when all voices are being heard.

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## Coproducing Workforce Education: the New Perspectives College Model



**Manal Shehab**

SHARC

Manal Shehab is a faith-based counsellor, working with migrant and refugee communities through the MYAF program (Muslim Youth Adult & Family Services), of which SHARC is a partner. She runs psychoeducation programs on behalf of SHARC to various marginalised communities, as well as being a passionate national intentional peer support trainer. She has extensive public speaking experiences on issues such as supporting families with loved one's impacted by AOD use; family violence; intersectionality and the dismantling of systemic and institutional barriers faces by marginalised communities. She runs women's self growth workshops and is a consultant on various projects across the community services sector.

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## Rethinking Culture and Diversity in Education

# Presenters



**Malitha Perera**

Wellways

Malitha Perera is an occupational therapist with extensive experience in operational, clinical, policy and strategic leadership roles across clinical and community services in the mental health and wellbeing sector. He has worked across government and non-government sectors, including disability services, and previously served as Clinical Adviser at the Victorian Department of Health and the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist.

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## Rethinking Culture and Diversity in Education



**Avalon Tissue**

Foundation House

Avalon Tissue is the Manager of Practice Development at Foundation House, where she oversees workforce development, clinical training, and supervision programs within Foundation House and across Victoria with a focus on culturally responsive and trauma informed care for survivors of torture and forced displacement. A Clinical Psychologist by background, she brings clinical leadership, practice development, and training experience across research, hospital, tertiary education, and community-based settings. Avalon holds a Masters in Clinical Psychology from the University of Sydney and a Graduate Diploma in Healthcare Redesign from the University of Tasmania.

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## Rethinking Culture and Diversity in Education



**Amanpreet Kaur**

Monash Health

Amanpreet is a Clinical Nurse Educator with a strong background in mental health and has extensive experience in clinical education, graduate nurse support, and workforce development.

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## From Clinical Expertise to Educational Excellence: Embedding Instructional Design in Mental Health Workforce Education



**Ivana Vargovic**

Monash Health

Ivana is an experienced Mental Health Nurse working just over 20 years at Monash Health. She currently works as a Clinical Education Coordinator and leads the Mental Health Graduate Nurse Program. Ivana is deeply committed to developing the nursing workforce, especially supporting novice clinicians. She is passionate about equipping nurses with the knowledge, skills, and confidence required to provide compassionate, person-centred care to consumers, as well as to their families, carers, and supporters. Through her work, Ivana strives to foster a sustainable and fulfilling career pathway in mental health nursing, inspiring lifelong learning and professional growth within the workforce.

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## Evaluating Workforce Development for Impact Considering Evaluations First, not Last



**Moisis Moisis**

Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health & Wellbeing

Moisis Moisis is the Statewide Mental Health Social Work Educator at the Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing.

Since commencing his career in public mental health in 1997, Moisis has worked across a range of clinical, leadership, and education roles, including transcultural psychiatry, adult mental health, youth early psychosis, and clinical case management. His professional experience spans senior clinician, team leader, SECU Liaison Coordinator, supervisor, and educator positions.

Moisis is committed to advancing inclusive and culturally responsive mental health education. He has a particular interest in how educators and systems can better recognise diverse ways of knowing, being, and experiencing mental health, while supporting equitable access to learning and workforce participation.

Through his current statewide role, Moisis works collaboratively with services, educators, students, and practitioners to strengthen mental health social work capability and contribute to the development of a skilled, reflective, and responsive mental health workforce across Victoria.

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## Rethinking Culture and Diversity in Education

# Presenters



**Carolyn Porter**

Monash Health

Carolyn Porter is a senior mental health nurse with over 30 years of nursing experience across public and private healthcare, including mental health, aged care and general nursing. She holds a Master of Nursing (Mental Health), a Master of Health Management, and a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

Carolyn is passionate about supporting and developing the mental health nursing workforce across all levels of practice. Her current work focuses on education governance, workforce capability, translating evidence into practice, evaluation and co-design within public mental health services. She values authentic connection, lifelong learning and collaborative approaches to workforce development.

**From Clinical Expertise to Educational Excellence: Embedding Instructional Design in Mental Health Workforce Education**



**Eleanor Takin**

Royal Melbourne Hospital

Eleanor is an occupational therapist, researcher and clinical educator, with extensive experience working in Australian public mental health services across multiple clinical, leadership, and quality improvement roles since 2012. In her current position as Occupational Therapy Research and Translation Lead, Eleanor seeks to help bridge the research to practice gap, supporting clinicians to translate research findings into evidence-based practice, helping them build their research skills and confidence, and leading and supporting research projects that benefit service users, and incorporate real-world lived experience and clinical knowledge. Her key research areas include co-design, mental health, and neurodiversity-affirming mental health practice.

**From Idea to Impact: A Statewide Snapshot of Research Capacity and Priorities Among Victoria's Mental Health Workforce Educators**



**Philippa Hemus**

Royal Melbourne Hospital

**From Idea to Impact: A Statewide Snapshot of Research Capacity and Priorities Among Victoria's Mental Health Workforce Educators**



**Alex Kearney**

Royal Melbourne Hospital

Alex is an Occupational Therapist with over a decade of clinical experience across Australian mental health settings. Passionate about research grounded in real-world practice, Alex leads and contributes to work aimed at improving services and outcomes for people with severe and enduring mental illness. Her research is shaped by the lived experiences of service users and the practical needs of frontline clinicians. She is committed to applied, translational research that enhances occupational engagement and psychosocial wellbeing, particularly for people at risk of social and functional marginalisation. Alex's work is distinguished by its integration of frontline practice with implementable evidence.

**From Idea to Impact: A Statewide Snapshot of Research Capacity and Priorities Among Victoria's Mental Health Workforce Educators**



**Lisa Romanin**

Royal Melbourne Hospital

**From Idea to Impact: A Statewide Snapshot of Research Capacity and Priorities Among Victoria's Mental Health Workforce Educators**



**Kathy Maggs**

Austin Health

Kathy Maggs is the Allied Health Education Lead at Austin Health in Melbourne, Victoria. With more than 35 years' experience in the public health sector, Kathy began her career as an Occupational Therapist and has since held senior clinical education leadership roles with a strong focus on student and workforce education. She holds a Master of Health Sciences, a Graduate Certificate in Clinical Education, and a Graduate Diploma in Clinical Education. Kathy has been involved with the Allied Health Clinical Educators Network for eight years, chairing the network for the past six, and has a strong interest in building educator capability and providing strategic statewide education leadership.

**Leading without Authority: Power Mapping & Communication Strategies for Victorian Clinical Educators**

# Presenters



**Shaminka Mangelsdorf**

Orygen

Dr Shaminka Mangelsdorf is a Clinical Psychologist and Research Fellow at Orygen Digital and the Centre for Youth Mental Health, University of Melbourne. With clinical experience across youth and adult services, Dr Mangelsdorf specialises in integrating digital and face-to-face care (blended models). She leads research and clinical implementation for Moderated Online Social Therapy (MOST), supporting over 20,000 young people nationally. Mangelsdorf also trains clinicians across multiple NHMRC-funded trials targeting suicide risk and common mental health conditions and has led several high-quality systematic reviews on digital mental health interventions, ensuring her work is grounded in both clinical practice and robust evidence.

## AI & Ethics in Health & Workforce Development



**Leanna Azoury**

Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health & Wellbeing

Leanna is a Lived and Living Experience and workforce development leader committed to promoting socio-economic and health equity. Previously a forensic accountant, she changed careers and worked across various roles in the mental health system including peer work, research, training, and education and leadership. She is now the at the Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing working to ensure consumer and carer perspectives are embedded in whole-of-workforce development initiatives.

## Evaluating Workforce Development for Impact Rethinking Culture and Diversity in Education



**Karen McKnight**

Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing

Karen McKnight is a Senior Workforce Development Facilitator - Lived Experience Family/Carer at the Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing, with extensive experience designing and delivering workforce development initiatives across the mental health and alcohol and other drug (AOD) sectors. Drawing on both professional and lived experience expertise, Karen is committed to centring Lived and Living Experience (LLE) voices, including family, carer, and consumer perspectives, across education, co-design, reflective practice, and service improvement. Her work focuses on creating engaging, evidence-informed learning that strengthens empathy, inclusion, and collaborative practice while supporting more human-centred approaches to care and workforce development.

## Three Sides of the Coin, Self Help Addiction Resource Centre (SHARC)



**Dr. Kerrie Clarke**

Mercy Health

Dr. Kerrie Clarke is a Principal Psychology Educator at Mercy Health, with over 15 years' experience in public mental health. She has previously worked as the Statewide Psychology Educator at the Victorian Collaborative Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing. Kerrie is passionate about workforce development and creating meaningful education that supports people to grow and thrive in their roles. Her work focuses on strengthening workforce capability towards a more effective, compassionate, and recovery-oriented mental health system.

## Three Sides of the Coin, Self Help Addiction Resource Centre (SHARC)



**Judy Avisar**

Self Help Addiction Resource Centre SHARC

Three Sides of the Coin lived experience storytelling project disrupts the normalisation of gambling, reduces stigma, humanizes the people behind the addiction, highlights the links with drugs, alcohol, mental health and family violence, and frames gambling as a public health issue. <https://threesidesofthecoin.org.au/>

## Three Sides of the Coin, Self Help Addiction Resource Centre (SHARC)

# FAQs and Housekeeping

## **What is the 2026 Collaborative Centre Workforce Development Forum - 'The Learning Workforce: Inspiring Practice Development in Mental Health'?**

The Learning Workforce: Inspiring Practice Development in Mental Health, is a one-day forum bringing together educators and workforce development leaders, from all disciplines across Victoria's mental health and wellbeing system.

This year's forum explores some of the biggest questions facing workforce development right now, including decolonising workforce development, AI and ethics in health and workforce development, rethinking culture and diversity in education, and the power of storytelling to create meaningful workforce change. The forum will explore how workforce development can better embed lived experience perspectives, challenge traditional power dynamics and strengthen recovery-oriented practice across the system.

## **When is the event, what time is it, and where will it be held?**

The Forum will be held in-person on Thursday 11 June 2026 from 9:00am to 4:15pm. The event will be held at Pullman on the Park – 192 Wellington Parade, East Melbourne.

Please note this is an in-person event only, and there is no online attendance available.

## **Who will be attending?**

This event is open to educators and workforce development leaders across the public mental health sector in Victoria.

## **How do I get there? Will there be parking?**

Pullman on the Park can be found at 192 Wellington Parade, East Melbourne. We recommend arriving by public transport where and if you can.

The venue is accessible via the following tram lines along Flinders Street and Wellington Parade: 48, 75. Jolimont railway station is approximately a 5 to 7-minute walk from the venue.

For event guests, Pullman on the Park offers a discounted self-park rate of \$35 per vehicle, per day between 8am – 5:30pm. Attendees requiring overnight parking will be charged at a rate of \$50 per vehicle, per night. Please visit the concierge or reception desk at the hotel to let them know you are attending the 2026 Collaborative Centre Workforce Development Forum to receive the discounted car parking rate. Parking within the onsite car park is subject to availability.

## **Is there a program or agenda available for me to look at?**

Yes, the full agenda and program is now available. The full program can be found on the Collaborative Centre website [here](#).

## **Will sessions be recorded?**

There will be no recordings for any sessions on the day.

## **Can I transfer my ticket to someone else?**

Yes, you can manage your registration via the Humanitix platform and your confirmation email. Should you have any technical difficulties, please contact [training@vccmhw.vic.gov.au](mailto:training@vccmhw.vic.gov.au) and we can assist you.

# FAQs and Housekeeping

## **Do I need to print my ticket, or can I show it on my phone?**

You will not be required to have a printed version of your ticket on the day but please have this ready on your phone should we have difficulty locating your registration. You will receive a lanyard with your name and organisation on it upon check-in on the day.

## **What time does registration open?**

Registration opens at 8:15am. The program will begin promptly at 9am. If you are early, you may get yourself a tea or coffee and check out our exhibition area.

## **Do you have an exhibitors area?**

Yes, we will have several training organisations, peak bodies and the Department of Health onsite on the day with materials and information on their work. The exhibitor area will remain open throughout the day.

## **Will all attendees attend the same sessions?**

At selected times throughout the day, the conference will split into three concurrent streams, allowing attendees to choose the sessions most relevant to their interests.

## **Will food and drink be provided?**

Morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and tea and coffee will be provided on the day, as well as light refreshments post-event. Please note no alcohol will be provided post-event during networking, however, a cash bar will be available to attendees to purchase alcohol if they choose.

## **Is the event accessible?**

The event will be held on the first floor of the hotel and is accessible by both lift and stair access.

For those requiring some time out, or a quiet space to retreat, there will be a sensory room onsite throughout the event. The room will be staffed by a team of wonderful Occupational Therapists from the sector and will be located on the first floor.

A small Prayer (multi-faith) Room will be available on the first floor.

A Parents room is available on the ground floor – this is also a gender-neutral accessible bathroom.

A small number of face masks will be available onsite for those who wish to wear them, and we encourage attendees to bring their own.

## **Will photos or videos be taken during the day?**

Yes, there will be a photographer at the event capturing still images only.

## **Can I opt out of being photographed?**

Yes, you may ask for a red-coloured dot to be placed on your name tag upon check-in to identify yourself to the photographers and ensure you are not included in any final images.

## **What if I am unwell on the day?**

If you are feeling unwell on the day, we kindly ask that you do not attend the event, to reduce the risk of infection to other attendees. Please cancel your registration via Humanitix or let us know at [training@vccmhw.vic.gov.au](mailto:training@vccmhw.vic.gov.au).