LIVED EXPERIENCE CHANGE MAKER AWARD NOMINATION ENTRY

PART B TEMPLATE

CATEGORY: LIVED EXPERIENCE CHANGE MAKER

NAME OF NOMINEE: Keir Saltmarsh

NAME OF SUBMITTER: Douglas Holmes O.A.M.

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Additional Information (up to 1 x A4 page) Additional to the brief description given in Part A.

Keir Saltmarsh's contribution as a lived-experience change maker is distinguished by the rare integration of systemic reform, governance expertise, and cultural transformation. Over more than four decades, Keir has applied lived experience knowledge across legal advocacy, forensic mental health, statutory decision-making, policy development, national leadership, and creative public engagement—consistently advancing the rights, dignity and voice of people with lived experience.

Keir's influence is grounded in deep system knowledge developed through roles with the Victorian Mental Health Legal Centre, the Thomas Embling Hospital, the Mental Health Review Tribunal, and the Mental Health Complaints Commissioner, where he worked directly on issues of procedural fairness, restrictive practices, and accountability. His subsequent leadership within the Victorian Department of Health and Safer Care Victoria positioned lived experience at the centre of statewide reform, safety, and quality initiatives, contributing to workforce development and embedding consumer perspectives within policy and service design.

Nationally, Keir has represented Victoria through the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum and COAG safety and quality partnerships, ensuring lived-experience expertise informed national standards, safety frameworks, and reform agendas. His work has consistently strengthened consumer participation in systems traditionally dominated by clinical and bureaucratic authority.

What sets Keir apart is his innovative use of culture, creativity, and media as mechanisms for social change. With an early career in Australian film and ongoing creative practice, Keir has translated complex mental health concepts into accessible public narratives. His award-winning "Consumer Man – National Standards for Mental Health Services" video exemplifies his ability to communicate rights, safety, and recovery through engaging creative forms that reach beyond the sector.

Keir's leadership within the Mad Pride movement further demonstrates this approach. As Executive Producer and performer of Australia's first Mad Pride event within the Melbourne International Comedy Festival in 2019, he helped establish a major public platform for lived-experience voices, pride, and identity. This work expanded paid opportunities for lived-experience artists, challenged stigma on a national stage, and embedded consumer-led arts activism within a mainstream cultural institution. His ongoing support of Mad Pride initiatives, including the 21st Anniversary Festival in 2024, reflects sustained commitment to consumer-led cultural change.

Across all roles, Keir's practice is characterised by ethical leadership, transparency, and collaboration. He bridges grassroots lived-experience movements with government systems, demonstrating how personal knowledge, policy expertise, and creative expression can operate together to produce durable reform. Keir's work has influenced legislation, policy, service culture, and public understanding—leaving a legacy of strengthened consumer voice and reimagined possibilities for system change.

Criteria (up to 10 x A4 pages)
Judges allocate marks to each criterion:

1. Evidence of significant influence and impact that has led to change and making a difference within the mental health sector and/or broader community. This impact may be relative to individual opportunity and influence.

Keir Saltmarsh is a lived-experience leader whose influence has contributed to measurable and sustained change across Victoria's mental health system and at national levels. Over more than four decades, Keir has applied lived experience knowledge to some of the most complex, risk-averse, and historically clinical-dominated environments in the sector. His impact is evident in the strengthening of consumer rights, improved accountability and procedural fairness, the embedding of lived experience into policy and reform structures, and the expansion of public and cultural narratives that challenge stigma and promote dignity.

Keir's change-making influence is distinguished by its breadth and durability. He has operated across legal advocacy, forensic settings, statutory decision-making bodies, government policy divisions, national safety and quality frameworks, and public cultural platforms. In each context, Keir has used individual opportunity strategically, leveraging credibility and trust to create pathways for lived-experience voices to influence decisions previously made without them.

Influence within Legal, Forensic and Statutory Mental Health Systems

Keir's early formal advocacy work with the Victorian Mental Health Legal Centre (1998–2002) contributed directly to the protection and advancement of consumer rights within mental health services. This work focused on access to justice, rights awareness, and supporting individuals navigating complex legal and clinical processes. Through this role, Keir contributed to raising awareness of systemic issues affecting consumers, including involuntary treatment, rights to information, and procedural fairness, influencing how advocacy was conducted and how services were held to account.

From 2003 to 2008, Keir worked within the Thomas Embling Hospital, a high-security forensic mental health environment. His presence as a lived-experience advocate in this context was itself a significant act of system influence. Forensic environments are among the most restrictive and risk-averse in the mental health system and lived-experience perspectives have traditionally been marginalised. Keir's work within this setting contributed to improved sensitivity to consumer rights, dignity, and participation, and strengthened understanding of how restrictive practices and security considerations intersect with recovery, human rights, and therapeutic outcomes.

Keir's influence was further consolidated through his role with the Victorian Mental Health Review Board (2008–2012). The Review Board (Tribunal)following legislative name change in 2014 is a key statutory body responsible for reviewing involuntary treatment orders, directly affecting the liberty and rights of people receiving mental health services. As a lived-experience leader working within this decision-making framework, Keir brought consumer knowledge into formal deliberative processes, reinforcing the importance of procedural fairness, transparency, and respect for consumer voice. His work contributed to strengthening the culture of accountability within tribunal processes and normalising the presence of lived-experience expertise in statutory oversight functions.

System Accountability and Complaints Reform

Keir's work with the Mental Health Complaints Commissioner (MHCC) further expanded his system influence by contributing to improvements in how consumer complaints are received, understood, and acted upon. Within this environment, Keir's lived experience informed analysis of complaint trends, systemic issues, and service culture, particularly in relation to restrictive practices, communication failures, and respect for consumer autonomy.

Through this role, Keir helped shift complaints handling from a narrow focus on individual incidents toward a broader understanding of systemic patterns and opportunities for service improvement. His influence supported improved sector awareness of consumer perspectives and reinforced the role of complaints data as a critical driver of quality, safety, and reform. The impact of this work extends beyond individual cases, shaping how services reflect on practice and respond to consumer feedback.

Statewide Mental Health Reform and Policy Influence

Keir's most sustained systemic impact occurred through his leadership within the Victorian Department of Health, where he spent six years as a Lived Experience Advisor within the Mental Health Division. In this role, Keir contributed to major statewide mental health reform initiatives, embedding lived-experience perspectives into policy development, reform planning, and implementation processes.

Operating within a central policy environment, Keir influenced how reform priorities were framed, ensuring that policy responses were informed by real-world consumer experience rather than abstract or solely clinical perspectives. His contribution supported the development of more inclusive, rights-based, and recovery-oriented approaches to mental health reform, including workforce development and consumer participation at multiple levels of the system.

Keir's policy influence extended beyond advice to active cultural change within government. His presence and leadership helped normalise lived-experience roles within policy teams, demonstrating that consumer expertise could operate effectively alongside clinical, legal, and bureaucratic knowledge. This contributed to lasting shifts in how lived-experience roles are understood and valued within government mental health structures.

Safety, Quality, and Statewide Governance Impact

Building on this work, Keir later held a Senior Consumer Advisor role with Safer Care Victoria, a statewide agency responsible for safety and quality across the health and mental health systems. In this context, Keir contributed to safety and quality initiatives through a lived-experience lens, influencing how risk, harm, and improvement are conceptualised and addressed.

Keir's influence supported the integration of consumer perspectives into safety frameworks, ensuring that lived experience was recognised as essential to understanding harm, preventing adverse events, and improving service culture. This work contributed to broader recognition of the role lived-experience knowledge plays in systemic safety and quality improvement, extending its influence beyond mental health into the wider health system.

National Influence and Standards Development

Keir's impact has also been felt at a national level through his representation of Victoria as a Consumer Representative with the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum (NMHCCF)

from 2016 to 2020, and through his membership of the COAG Safety and Quality Partnerships Standing Committee.

Through these roles, Keir contributed to national policy discussions, standards development, and safety and quality frameworks. His lived-experience perspective informed deliberations on national reform priorities, ensuring that consumer rights, participation, and safety concerns were embedded within national agendas. This work provided a conduit for Victorian lived-experience knowledge to influence national frameworks, amplifying its impact beyond state boundaries.

Keir's influence on national standards is also demonstrated through his earlier creative contribution to the promotion of the National Standards for Mental Health Services. His award-winning "Consumer Man – National Standards for Mental Health Services" video translated complex policy concepts into an accessible, consumer-centred narrative, significantly increasing awareness and understanding of the standards among both consumers and services. This work exemplifies Keir's capacity to achieve national impact through innovative communication methods.

Cultural and Community-Level Impact through Mad Pride

A defining feature of Keir's influence is his ability to extend mental health reform beyond institutional settings into the broader community and public culture. His leadership within the Australian Mad Pride movement represents a significant contribution to stigma reduction, consumer identity, and cultural change.

In 2019, Keir served as Executive Producer and performer in Australia's first Mad Pride event presented within the Melbourne International Comedy Festival. This was a landmark achievement, bringing lived-experience narratives and identities into one of Australia's largest mainstream cultural platforms. Keir's leadership was critical to navigating the financial, organisational, and cultural barriers that typically exclude consumer-led work from major festivals.

The impact of this work was multi-layered: it created paid professional opportunities for lived-experience performers, expanded public exposure to consumer voices, and challenged dominant narratives about mental illness through humour, performance, and pride. By positioning lived-experience stories within a respected entertainment context, Keir helped disrupt stigma and reshape public perceptions in ways that traditional policy work cannot.

Keir's continued support of Mad Pride initiatives, including the 21st Anniversary Mad Pride Festival in 2024, demonstrates sustained influence in consumer-led cultural activism. This work contributes to community connection, identity affirmation, and public education, extending the impact of mental health reform into everyday cultural spaces.

Cumulative Impact and Significance

Across all roles and contexts, Keir Saltmarsh has consistently used his individual opportunity to generate broader system and cultural change. His influence has improved rights protections, strengthened accountability mechanisms, embedded lived-experience leadership in policy and governance, and expanded public narratives around mental health.

What distinguishes Keir's impact is not only scale, but coherence. His work across statutory systems, government reform, national frameworks, and cultural platforms reflects a unified commitment to dignity, justice, and meaningful consumer participation. Collectively, these contributions have shaped practice, policy, and perception, making an enduring difference to the mental health sector and the broader community.

2. Evidence of innovation and creativity in approach and action.

Keir Saltmarsh's change-making impact is distinguished by his innovative integration of lived experience, systems reform, and creative practice. His work consistently demonstrates that meaningful mental health reform requires not only policy and governance change, but also transformation of culture, communication, and public narrative. Across his career, Keir has applied creativity strategically—using media, performance, humour, and storytelling to complement formal system reform and reach audiences beyond traditional mental health settings.

Innovation in Translating Lived Experience into System Reform

Keir's approach is innovative in how he positions lived experience as a form of expertise capable of operating across legal, forensic, policy, safety, and quality domains. Rather than confining lived experience to consultation or storytelling roles, Keir has embedded it within decision-making, oversight, and reform processes. This repositioning represents a significant shift from conventional models of consumer involvement.

By operating effectively within tribunals, government departments, complaints bodies, and safety agencies, Keir demonstrated that lived-experience knowledge can strengthen rigor, fairness, and accountability. His work challenged entrenched assumptions that consumer perspectives were incompatible with complex statutory or policy environments. This approach has influenced how lived-experience leadership roles are conceptualised and legitimised across the mental health sector.

Creative Communication as a Reform Tool

A hallmark of Keir's innovation is his use of creative media to communicate complex mental health concepts in accessible, engaging ways. Drawing on his background in Australian film and media, Keir recognised that policy frameworks, rights-based standards, and reform principles often fail to achieve impact because they are inaccessible to the people most affected by them.

His award-winning "Consumer Man – National Standards for Mental Health Services" video exemplifies this approach. By transforming national standards into an engaging narrative delivered through humour and character-based storytelling, Keir increased awareness and understanding of rights, participation, and recovery-oriented practice among consumers and services alike. This work demonstrated an innovative method for bridging the gap between policy intent and lived reality, and provided a model for consumer-led public education that remains relevant to the sector.

Innovation through Arts-Based Cultural Change

Keir's leadership within the Mad Pride movement represents a highly innovative approach to stigma reduction and lived-experience advocacy. Rather than relying solely on educational or clinical narratives, Mad Pride uses performance, comedy, and cultural expression as tools for social change. Keir recognised the power of these methods to reach new audiences and to reframe mental health from a deficit-based model to one of identity, pride, and community.

As Executive Producer of Australia's first Mad Pride event within the Melbourne International Comedy Festival in 2019, Keir applied entrepreneurial, creative, and organisational innovation. Establishing a consumer-led event within a major international festival required navigating financial risk, compliance requirements, and institutional barriers not designed for lived-experience initiatives. Keir's leadership enabled lived-experience performers to access a mainstream cultural platform, creating paid professional opportunities and significantly expanding public exposure to consumer narratives.

This approach was innovative because it deliberately positioned lived-experience voices within a respected cultural institution rather than on the margins of advocacy spaces. The result was not only stigma reduction, but a reframing of consumer identity as creative, capable, and professionally competent. Keir's ongoing involvement in Mad Pride initiatives, including the 21st Anniversary Mad Pride Festival in 2024, demonstrates sustained commitment to arts-based reform models.

Ethical and Relational Innovation

Keir's innovation is also evident in his ethical approach to leadership and collaboration. Throughout his work, he has modelled transparency, trust-building, and shared power—particularly in contexts involving vulnerable communities and complex systems. His leadership within Mad Pride, government advisory roles, and complaints and reform settings demonstrates an ability to balance organisational demands with consumer safety, wellbeing, and integrity.

This relational approach represents a shift from tokenistic engagement toward meaningful partnership. Keir consistently ensures that lived-experience contributions are supported, safe, and professionally recognised. This has contributed to stronger participation, better outcomes, and increased confidence among lived-experience contributors across systems.

Transferable Innovation and Sector Impact

Importantly, Keir's innovative methods are transferable. His work demonstrates models that can be adopted by governments, services, advocacy organisations, and cultural institutions, including:

- Embedding lived-experience roles within policy and safety frameworks
- Using creative media to communicate standards and rights
- Leveraging arts and culture to challenge stigma and shift public narratives
- Bridging grassroots lived-experience movements with formal institutions

This capacity to innovate across contexts has amplified Keir's impact, enabling change at multiple levels simultaneously. His work shows that creativity is not peripheral to reform, but central to achieving durable, human-centred change.

Summary of Innovation and Creative Contribution

Across his career, Keir Saltmarsh has demonstrated innovation not as an isolated activity, but as a sustained practice. By combining lived-experience leadership with creative communication and cultural activism, he has expanded the tools available to the mental health sector for reform and engagement. His work challenges traditional boundaries between policy, culture, and community, offering a powerful model for future change makers seeking to transform both systems and society.

3. Conclusion (up to 1/2 x A4 page)

Keir Saltmarsh exemplifies the core intent of the Lived Experience Change Maker Award through sustained, demonstrable influence and innovative practice that has reshaped mental health systems and public understanding over more than four decades. His impact is evident across statutory decision-making, policy reform, safety and quality governance, national standards development, and community-level cultural change, delivering outcomes that extend well beyond the scope of individual roles.

Keir's leadership is distinguished by his ability to operate within complex and traditionally exclusionary systems, using lived experience as a source of authority to strengthen rights, accountability, and procedural fairness. His contributions have embedded lived-experience perspectives within government, tribunal, complaints, and reform structures, creating durable change that continues beyond his direct involvement. This influence is proportionate to opportunity yet exceptional in breadth, depth, and longevity.

Equally, Keir's innovative and creative approaches have expanded how mental health reform is imagined and delivered. Through award-winning media, arts-based advocacy, and the establishment of Mad Pride within a major cultural institution, he has transformed public narratives, reduced stigma, and opened new pathways for consumer participation and leadership. His work demonstrates that creativity is not ancillary to reform, but essential to its success.

Collectively, Keir's system-level influence, creative innovation, and ethical leadership reflect outstanding achievement in lived-experience change making. His contribution has strengthened mental health systems, elevated consumer voice, and reshaped cultural understanding—embodying the values and outcomes this award seeks to recognise.

4. Referees

5. Appendix of Support Material (up to 8 x A4 pages)

6. Appendix of Support Material – Overview

This Appendix provides supporting material evidencing the significant influence, impact, innovation, and cultural change described in Parts A and B of this nomination. The materials included verify Keir Saltmarsh's lived-experience leadership across statutory systems, government reform, national policy and standards, and community-level cultural platforms. No new claims are introduced; all materials substantiate evidence presented against the award criteria.

1. Evidence Map

Appendix Section	Evidence Provided	Criteria Supported
Appendix Page 2–3: Mad Pride MICF	Public cultural platform, mainstream festival inclusion, paid lived-experience performance, stigma reduction	Criteria 1 & Criteria 2
Appendix Page 4: National Standards – Consumer Man	Award-winning media innovation translating national standards into accessible public communication	Criteria 1 & Criteria 2
Appendix Page 5: Statutory & Government Roles	Verification of trusted roles within tribunals, government, safety and quality systems	Criteria 1
Appendix Page 6: SUPER CRO Platform	Ongoing national, consumer-led public platform evidencing continuity and reach	Criteria 1
Appendix Page 7: Validation & Endorsement	Independent institutional and sector validation of impact and leadership	All criteria
Appendix Page 8: Legacy Summary	Synthesis of sustained system and cultural impact over time	All criteria

2. Mad Pride at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival (2019)



Mad Pride logo used for Australia's first Mad Pride event presented within the Melbourne International Comedy Festival (MICF), 2019.

In 2019, Mad Pride was presented for the first time within the Melbourne International Comedy Festival, Australia's largest and most recognisable comedy and performance platform. Keir Saltmarsh served as Executive Producer and performer, playing a central leadership role in establishing this consumer-led event within a mainstream cultural institution.

Inclusion within MICF required formal festival registration, insurance, financial management, and adherence to professional performance standards. Mad Pride's presence within this context represented a significant structural shift, positioning lived-experience voices not at the margins of advocacy spaces, but within a respected public cultural forum.

The event created paid professional opportunities for lived-experience artists and enabled consumer narratives to reach general festival audiences. By presenting lived-experience stories through humor, creativity, and performance, Mad Pride contributed to stigma reduction and strengthened public understanding of mental health beyond clinical or policy settings.

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3. Mad Pride MICF – Public Cultural Impact



Audience and performer at Mad Pride comedy events presented in 2019, demonstrating lived-experience-led performance delivered to mainstream comedy audiences.

Mad Pride performances presented in 2019 demonstrate the movement's capacity to engage general audiences through humor, storytelling, and live performance. The image shows a full audience within a mainstream comedy venue, highlighting the public and accessible nature of this cultural intervention.

By situating lived-experience narratives within professional entertainment contexts, Mad Pride challenges stigma and expands public understanding of mental distress beyond clinical and policy frameworks. This approach complements system-level reform by reshaping cultural narratives, normalising lived-experience leadership and creating authentic points of connection with broader communities.

4. Innovation in National Standards Communication – "Consumer Man"



Selected stills from "Consumer Man – National Standards for Mental Health Services", an award-winning consumer-led video that uses humor, character, and lived-experience storytelling to communicate national mental health standards to public and sector audiences.

"Consumer Man – National Standards for Mental Health Services" was produced as part of a nationally coordinated initiative to promote awareness and understanding of the revised National Standards for Mental Health Services. The video demonstrates an innovative approach to reform communication, translating complex policy and standards into accessible and engaging content through lived-experience-led storytelling and satire.

By adopting creative media rather than traditional policy dissemination methods, this work expanded the reach of national standards to consumers, workers, and the broader community. The project illustrates Keir Saltmarsh's ability to combine lived-experience expertise with creative practice to achieve national-level impact and to promote rights, recovery-oriented practice, and meaningful consumer participation.

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5. Statutory, Government, and National Roles – Verification Snapshot

This page provides verification of Keir Saltmarsh's sustained influence within statutory, government, and national mental health systems. The roles outlined below required high levels of professional trust, responsibility, and accountability, and demonstrate the integration of lived-experience expertise into environments traditionally dominated by clinical and bureaucratic authority.

Across these roles, Keir contributed to strengthening consumer rights, improving procedural fairness, embedding lived-experience perspectives in policy and governance, and supporting system accountability at state and national levels.

- Victorian Mental Health Legal Centre – Rights-based legal advocacy supporting people navigating the mental health system.
- Thomas Embling Hospital – Lived-experience engagement within a high-security forensic mental health environment.
- Victorian Mental Health Review Tribunal – Statutory oversight and decision-making affecting involuntary treatment and consumer rights.
- Victorian Department of Health (Mental Health Division) – Lived Experience Advisor contributing to statewide reform, policy development, and workforce initiatives.
- Mental Health Complaints Commissioner – System-level complaints analysis and accountability focused on service culture, restrictive practices, and consumer experience.
- Safer Care Victoria – Senior Consumer Advisor supporting statewide safety and quality initiatives across health and mental health systems.
- National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum – Victorian Consumer Representative contributing to national policy and reform discussions.
- COAG Safety and Quality Partnerships Standing Committee – National-level influence on safety, quality, and standards frameworks.

Collectively, these roles substantiate Keir Saltmarsh's significant system-level impact and demonstrate the breadth and durability of his lived-experience leadership across legislative, policy, governance, and safety frameworks.

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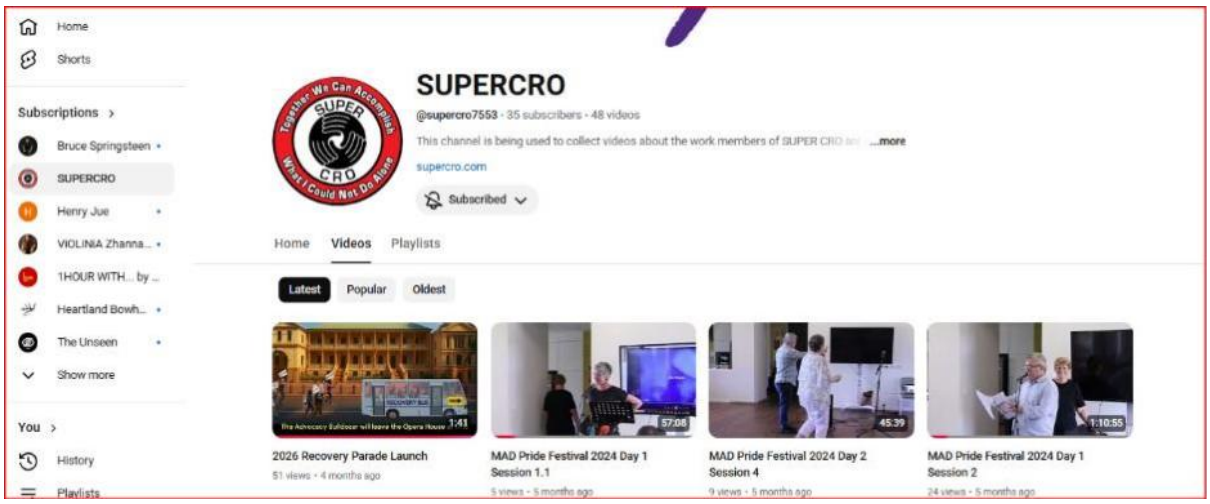
6. SUPER CRO – National Consumer-Led Platform



Screenshot of the SUPER CRO YouTube channel, a national consumer-led platform supporting lived-experience storytelling, arts-based advocacy, and public education.

SUPER CRO is a consumer-led platform that supports arts, storytelling, public education, and community connection for people with lived experience of mental distress or trauma. The platform provides an ongoing national presence for lived-experience voices through video documentation, performance, and cultural storytelling. The publicly accessible YouTube channel demonstrates continuity of output and reach, complementing system-level reform work by shaping public narratives, identity, and understanding beyond traditional mental health settings.

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7. Validation and Endorsement – Independent Confirmation of Impact

This page provides independent validation of the influence, credibility, and impact described throughout the nomination. The organisations and contexts listed below represent external confirmation of Keir Saltmarsh's leadership across cultural, community, government, and national platforms.

These validations demonstrate trust in Keir's lived-experience expertise and professional conduct, and confirm the legitimacy of the platforms through which change has been achieved.

- Melbourne International Comedy Festival – Registration and presentation of Mad Pride events within a mainstream national cultural institution.
- Victorian Department of Health – Employment and advisory roles embedding lived-experience leadership within statewide mental health reform.
- Safer Care Victoria – Senior Consumer Advisor role contributing to safety and quality initiatives across the health and mental health systems.
- Mental Health Complaints Commissioner – System-level work influencing accountability, service culture, and consumer rights.
- National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum – Formal representation of Victorian consumer perspectives within national reform discussions.
- COAG Safety and Quality Partnerships Standing Committee – Participation in national safety, quality, and standards governance structures.
- SUPER CRO – Consumer-led national platform supporting arts-based advocacy, public education, and community engagement.
- Mad Pride collaborators and artists – Ongoing partnerships demonstrating ethical leadership, transparency, and trust within lived-experience communities.

Formal referees listed in the main submission are available to further substantiate Keir Saltmarsh's contribution, leadership style, and sustained impact across systems and communities.

Collectively, these validations provide independent assurance of the impact claimed in this nomination and demonstrate broad confidence in Keir Saltmarsh's capacity to lead, innovate, and effect meaningful lived-experience-led change.

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8. Legacy and Sustained Impact – Evidence Summary



Mad Pride logo representing a consumer-led cultural movement that has culminated in sustained public, policy, and community impact.

- Embedded lived-experience leadership within statutory, policy, safety, and quality mental health systems at state and national levels.
- Strengthened consumer rights, procedural fairness, and accountability through work in tribunals, complaints mechanisms, and government reform.
- Achieved national influence through representation on peak consumer bodies, safety and quality partnerships, and standards promotion.
- Demonstrated innovation in reform by translating complex policy and standards into accessible, engaging public communication.
- Expanded public understanding of mental distress through arts-based advocacy, performance, and mainstream cultural platforms.
- Created and sustained pathways for consumer participation, paid creative work, and ethical lived-experience leadership.

Taken together, the materials presented across this Appendix demonstrate the scale, depth, and durability of Keir Saltmarsh's contribution as a lived-experience change maker. His influence spans systems and culture, policy and practice, community and government, leaving a lasting legacy that continues to shape mental health reform, public narratives, and consumer leadership in Australia.