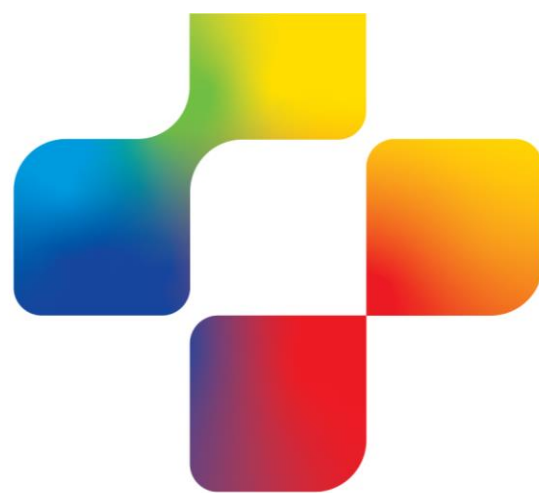


ESF IMPACT

newsletter

ISSUE 31, 15 SEPTEMBER 2022



New ESF Mental Health Advisory Group

ESF has established a new Mental Health Advisory Group (MHAG) which recently met for the first time. The purpose of the MHAG is to provide the CEO with a range of expert perspectives concerning the development of ESFs strategy and program of work to improve mental health outcomes across the Victorian emergency management sector.

Chaired by ESF Board member Kate Connors the MHAG consists of seven members plus the CEO. They each bring a deep understanding of mental health issues as they apply to the emergency services/management sector. The Group includes:

- **Kate Connors**, Chief Mental Health Officer at PWC
- **Prof David Lawrence**, School of Population Health Curtin University and lead researcher of Beyond Blue's Answering the Call research.
- **Amanda Smillie**, General Manager No to Violence with a policing and clinical background and direct oversight of mental health projects over four years at VicPol.
- **Lisa Dell**, Associate Professor and Director Military Mental Health at Phoenix Australia. Lisa undertook a study for ESF to understand stigma.
- **Erin Smith**, CEO Dart Centre Asia Pacific and Honorary Enterprise Professor at Melbourne University. Erin has undertaken research with people affected by the 9/11 tragedy and Black Summer.



better together

- **David Younger**, Clinical and consultant psychologist with special interest in recovery from trauma associated with disasters.
- **Sophie Barrett**, Senior Manager Victorian Ambulance Counselling Unit and ESF Learning Network member. Sophie has a background with Beyond Blue, SANE and the Melbourne Clinic.

RESPONSE

I am delighted to Chair this group and see it making an enormously valuable contribution to ESF's work by bringing diverse expert perspectives to the development of programs. In the first instance the Group will be considering issues related to a proposed Residential Wellbeing Program Pilot.



Kate Connors Chair ESF Mental Health Advisory Group

Research has confirmed the high risk of emergency services work for mental health issues and identified the substantial issues that stand in the way of better supporting personnel involved. ESF is at the forefront nationally and internationally in developing and implementing programs to improve mental health and wellbeing across the emergency services sector. It is exciting to be part of the MHAG which will contribute towards programs and strategies to improve mental health outcomes across the emergency management sector.

Prof David Lawrence

I am delighted to be able to bring my thinking and experience to this unique Mental Health Advisory Group which will help inform how the sector collaboratively supports Victoria's broader emergency management sector.

Amanda Smillie