

***A world where we are equally well:
Mind and Body Care Navigators Project:
Co-design in Practice
(NHMRC Grant No 2025179)***

**This poster was created on unceded Indigenous land*

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To begin:

- Acknowledgement of Country

- Acknowledgement of Lived Experience

Origins of this project

In 2022, the **Equally Well Roadmap**, a collaboration between academics, clinicians and lived experience experts was released.

<https://equallywell.org.au/being-equally-well-roadmap-report/>

The **Mind & Body Care Navigators Project** originated from the **Consumer & Carer Working Group for the Roadmap**, which prioritised **navigation** and **lived experience** involvement to **improve front line care** and ultimately physical health care.

The **Mind and Body Care Navigators Project** is a multi-stage project, culminating in a six-month regional trial comparing the **effectiveness of peer workers, carers & clinicians** as navigators to improve access to preventive health care for people with mental health conditions.

People with mental health conditions

People with mental health conditions are 3 to 5x more likely to die from influenza and pneumonia.

Risk of dying from cancer
4x higher-colon cancer
5x higher-prostate cancer
6x higher-breast cancer
though completion of free screenings such as for breast and bowel cancer remain low

Diabetes causes over 680 premature deaths a year with over 380 of these potentially preventable.

2 x more likely to die prematurely from cerebrovascular disease, such as a stroke

<https://www.equallywell.org.au/media/>

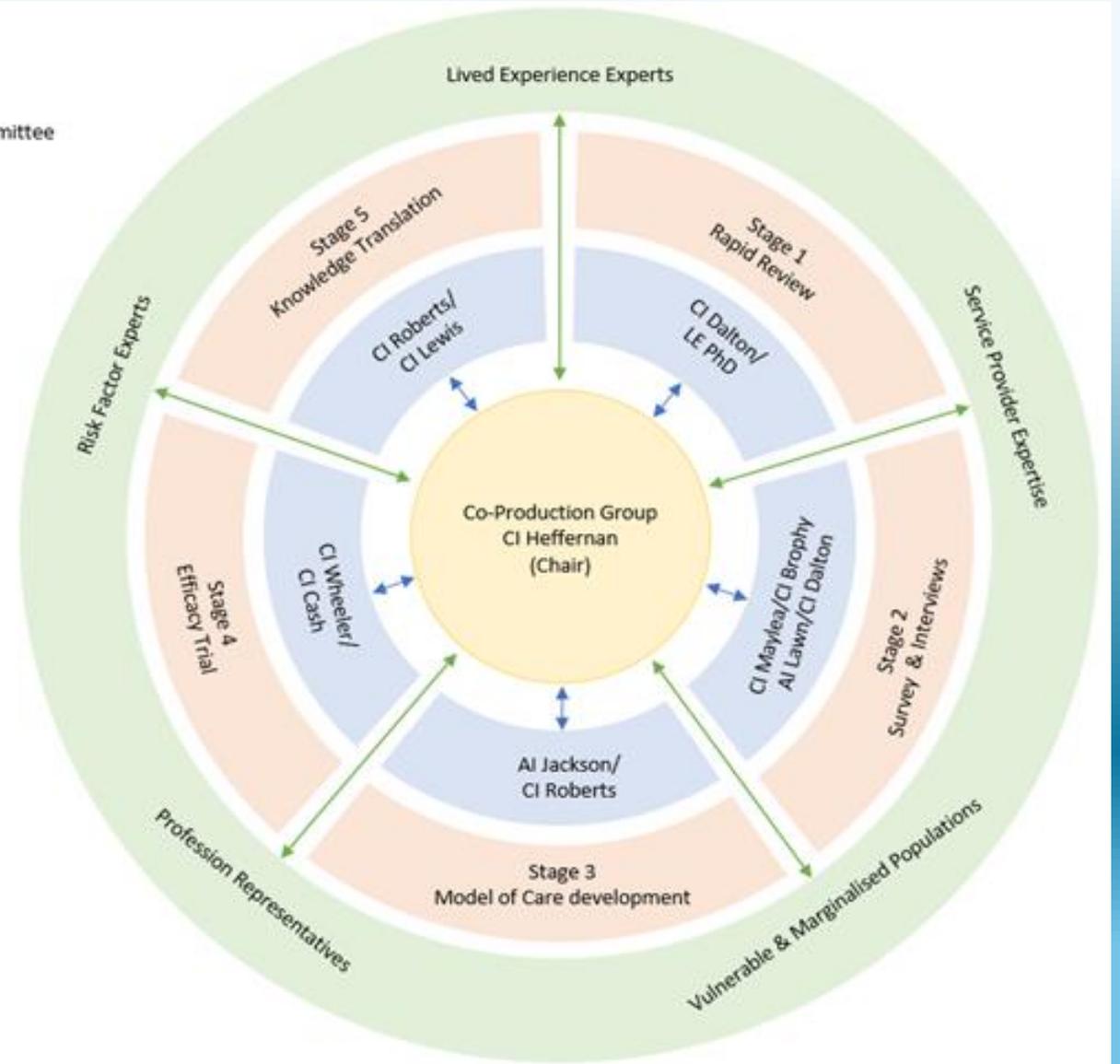
This trial could be a game-changer for people with mental health conditions, who have long faced **systemic barriers to preventative healthcare**—leading to avoidable deaths from conditions like cancer, diabetes & heart disease.

Lived Experience Expertise and Leadership have been at the heart of this project



Project Governance Structure

- Co-Production Group (CI Heffernan Chair)
- Project Implementation Committee (CI Roberts Chair)
- Research Component
- Expert Advisory Panel



Co-design and Co-production in this project has been dynamic and at times challenging. The focus has been on progress, not perfection. It has been a learning process for both the Lived Experience Leadership Team and our partner academic investigators.

CHALLENGES

A number of factors have challenged fidelity to true co-design principles at different stages of the project.

Time – tight project timeline has impacted on Lived Experience participation

Budget – budget constraints have impacted Lived Experience participation as well.

Logistical issues – variations in staffing support and managing a large and diverse lived experience leadership team has also raised limitations

However, there has been a concerted effort to **problem solve** and **address these challenges** as much as possible. The project successes demonstrate the collaborative effort between the academic investigators and the Lived Experience Leadership Team to overcome project limitations.

SUCCESSSES

Achievements of note include:

The LELT implemented a ***shared leadership model*** – allowing diverse LELT members to lead project stages as Chairs and provide lived experience expertise to the crucial work of the project.

Timeline and Outline of Lived Experience Involvement

Nov 23 – March 24

Stage 1: Rapid Literature Review
The **LELT contributed resources and ideas** to the literature review, and two lived experience researchers (both on the leadership team) are part of the review process in partnership with the academic researchers.

March 24 – Feb 25

Stage 2: Surveys, Interviews and Focus Groups: **LE-led and Chaired Co-Design Group**, to oversee the development of survey and qualitative consultations, with two LELT members involved in leading focus groups. There was significant collaboration between the LELT and the academics involved.

Feb 24 – Sept 25

Stage 3: Co-design a **model of care** based on the Stage 1 literature review, Stage 2 research and Model of Care workshop. This group was **chaired by a LELT member with three other LELT members involved**. The LE Chair has also been involved in direct communications and relationship-building with the trial sites.

Sept 25 – July 26

Stage 4: Trial Implementation Advisory Group **chaired by a LELT member with two LELT Co-Chairs**. This group oversees the implementation of the Model of Care and guides its application to 2 public mental health sites and 2 community-based mental health sites.

July 26 – Dec 26

Stage 5: Dissemination of trial outcomes and project learnings and translation of findings into new models of practice. **LELT members have been involved in promoting the project, co-authoring papers, with more to come in the future**, and presenting on the project to varied audiences.

Other Achievements of note include

Development of an **out-of-session work policy** which invites LET members to undertake work crucial to the project outside of scheduled meetings. This work is remunerated according to the **National Mental Health Commission's Paid Participation Policy**.

Examples of this work include:

- Place-based engagement & relationship building with trial sites
- Conference presentations
- LE authorship of research papers

Recruitment of a Lived Experience Research Assistant

This person transitioned from the Lived Experience Leadership Team to this designated employed role and is supported by External Lived Experience supervision

Lived Experience-led Change of the Project Name

This reflects the duality of both mind (mental health) and body (physical health) - a key value of the LET - from Physical Health Care Navigator to

Mind and Body Care Navigator

Ultimately this project aims to **empower individuals in their own choices and decisions regarding physical health.**

We need to be at the forefront of making physical health a priority for ourselves.

Lived experience expertise should lead the way, as has been modelled through this project, and hopefully will ensure that it is embedded within the design of the mind and body care navigator model and its success.

Thank You and Acknowledgements

Navigators Project Lived Experience Leadership Team

Project Implementation Committee and Academic Researchers

Acknowledging the work of the whole project team including the Equally Well staff team

*For further information or updates, please email:
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