

# The Melbourne Hearing Voices

## Declaration

Thursday 21st November 2013



### The evidence indicates that

- Hearing voices is a common human experience.
- Some people experience voices as distressing and overwhelming while others integrate voices as a normal part of their lives. In the former case hearing voices can lead to a diagnosis of a mental illness.
- Recovery doesn't necessarily mean getting rid of voices. It is more often about reducing the distress that can be associated with voices, and learning to live with voices so one can get on with leading a meaningful and contributing life.

### We believe

- Everyone can recover and the systemic holding of this hope is central to people's recovery.

### We acknowledge that

- There are a range of myths about hearing voices that leave people isolated and imprisoned in their experience.
- People have different beliefs about where voices come from, and the right to hold those beliefs.

- The experience of hearing voices is meaningful and is often related to difficult emotions and life experiences, including past trauma.
- What is sometimes referred to as 'lack of insight' may also be considered as 'diversity' or 'unusual beliefs'. People are able to reduce their distress and get on with recovery without necessarily changing these beliefs.
- Through the leadership of those with lived experience, people have been able to come out from this isolation, learn to live with their voices and lead meaningful and contributing lives.
- Family, friends and carers can also experience profound isolation as a result of their loved one experiencing voices and they too can benefit profoundly from their loved one's recovery.
- Significant changes can be made to the systems designed to support people to recover through partnership between leaders with lived experience of voice hearing, their family, friends and carers, mental health practitioners, researchers and policy makers.

### We are committed to:

1. Ensuring it feels safe for people to talk about voices and other unusual experiences
2. Working to enable increased hope, control and opportunity for people who hear voices and their families
3. Listening to the experience of voice hearers
4. Working with, rather than against, voices

5. Asking about and supporting people to address past trauma
6. Tackling myths and stigma about hearing voices
7. Supporting people to build skills that empower them to change their relationship with voices
8. As appropriate, building this declaration into our planning processes



On behalf of the Co Founders of the Hearing Voices Movement Prof. Marius Ramme MD, Dr Sandra Escher PhD and Patsy Hage

On behalf of Adults Surviving Child Abuse

On behalf of Alfred Psychiatry

On behalf of Dousta Galla Community Health

On behalf of EACH

On behalf of Eastern Health

On behalf of ERMHA

On behalf of Fintry Community Inc

On behalf of Health Services Union National

On behalf of Health and Community Services Union Victoria

On behalf of Hearing Voices Network Australia

On behalf of Hearing Voices Network WA

On behalf of Impact Support Services Inc

On behalf of Intervoice

On behalf of Intensive Trauma Therapy Inc

On behalf of Inner South Community Health Service

On behalf of ISPS Australia

On behalf of ISPS International

On behalf of ISPS United States

On behalf of Kildonan UnitingCare

On behalf of Mental Health Coordinating Council

On behalf of Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand

On behalf of Mental Illness Fellowship Australia

On behalf of Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria

On behalf of Merri Community Health Service

On behalf of Mind

On behalf of National Mental Health Commission

On behalf of Neami National

On behalf of North Western Mental Health

On behalf of North Yarra Community Health

On behalf of Peninsula Health

On behalf of Peninsula Support Services

On behalf of People Measures

On behalf of Recovery Devon

On behalf of Richmond Fellowship WA

On behalf of Sacred Heart Mission

On behalf of Snap Gippsland

On behalf of South Port UnitingCare

On behalf of St Vincent's Mental Health

On behalf of The Crowded House

On behalf of The Salvation Army Adult Services

On behalf of Uniting Church in Australia

On behalf of UnitingCare Australia

On behalf of UnitingCare Ballarat

On behalf of UnitingCare Community Options

On behalf of UnitingCare Connections

On behalf of UnitingCare Gippsland

On behalf of UnitingCare Lentara

On behalf of UnitingCare Mental Health—Parramatta Mission

On behalf of UnitingCare Prahran Mission

On behalf of UnitingCare RoGen

On behalf of UnitingCare Wesley Port Adelaide

On behalf of VICESERV

On behalf of Wesley Mission Victoria

On behalf of Western Region Health Centre

On behalf of Wimmera UnitingCare

On behalf of Working Towards Recovery

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