

# **REGIONAL & RURAL PEER WORK**

**A UNIQUE & CHALLENGING ROLE**

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2013

# SUPPORT

- Being the only peer worker at each site, we experience isolation when requiring support
  - Debriefing on peer related issues is difficult – distance prevents debriefing in person: debriefing is usually conducted via phone contact.
  - Systemic structure of the organisation does not allow for on-site peer supervision
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# DISTANCE

## Mental Health Service Area Rural Victoria



**Need to travel long distances to see clients**

Original: Mental health areas metro.WOR  
Produced by Paula Morrissey, Metro Health & Aged Care, 23/7/3  
Areas derived from: Local Government Areas, Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) 2003  
with exceptions at Barwon's border with Glenelg & Grampians; Loddon/Northern Mallee borders;  
Goulburn/North East Hume borders  
UPDATED: 11/11/03

# **DISTANCE**

- Peer support workers may experience difficulties driving long distances due to medication and its side effects
  - Drowsiness
  - Concentration
  - Sleep issues

# DISTANCE

- Lack of opportunity for networking. There are few services with peer workers in regional and rural areas.
- Bendigo Health employs a .5 consumer advocate to service the acute, SECU units and PARC facilities. This worker is the only other paid peer worker in the Loddon Campaspe region

# DISTANCE

- Lack of training opportunities due to distances to travel to Training venues [where training is available and held]
- Returning to a hotel to review work or return travel home (3 hours per day ) can extend to a 10 hour day for the duration of the training

# SERVICES

- Limited services increase the likelihood of a worker's admission to an acute care hospital where your client is also an inpatient, is much greater – having to reside in the same facility for days at a time can be difficult
- Limited GP's, psychiatrists and psychologists can result in sharing the same waiting rooms as/with clients (not very private if you are sitting in the waiting room together)

# SERVICES

- Residing in an area where you [also] work increases the likelihood of being involved in the community
- You may know clients and families that you work with. This can sometimes cause a conflict of interest

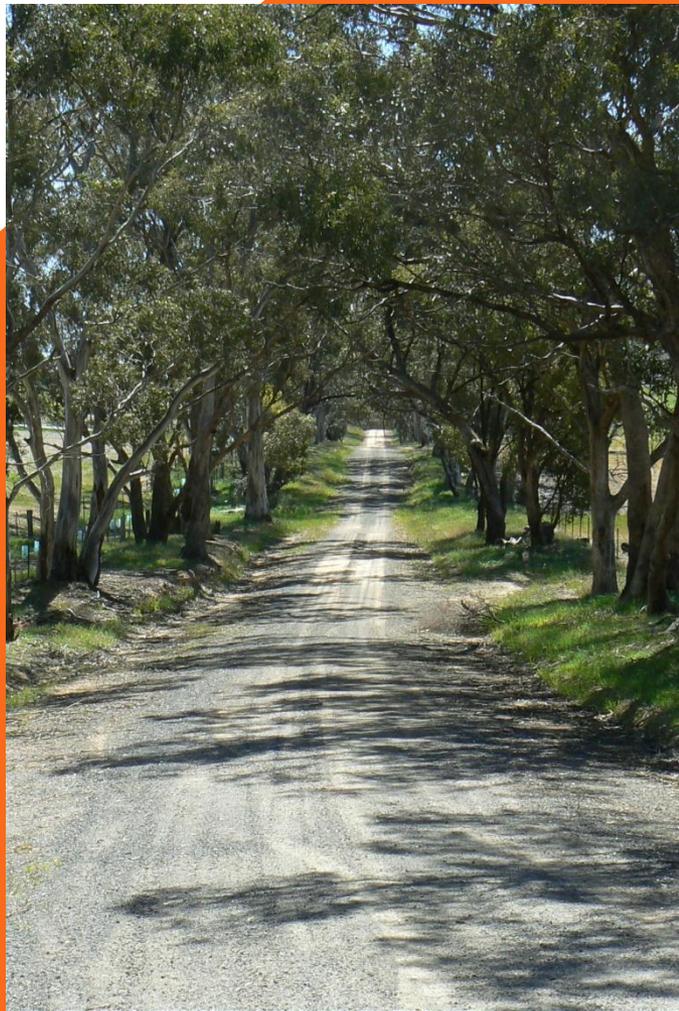
# PEER SUPPORT ROLE

- Shortage of peer workers in rural Victoria  
St Luke's Anglicare Victoria is a not for profit community organisation which employs approximately 56 staff in the mental health & housing area
- There are 3 peer workers covering a very large area. Staff often work in more than one mental health team across locations

# PEER SUPPORT ROLE

- Less awareness, knowledge and acceptance of what “peer support” is in clinical services, due to fewer peer workers in rural areas
  - Shortage of peer workers therefore peer workers are required to wear more than one hat (eg. Consumer consultant, peer worker, peer advocate, peer educator, group facilitator, secondary consultant for team members)
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**A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A RURAL  
PEER WORKER**





# ROAD HAZARDS



# ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS



**TOTAL  
FIRE BAN  
TODAY**



Down  
the  
Rabbit  
Hole

# OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES



# CAR TROUBLE!!!



# GETTING LOST



# IN A HURRY



# Thank you



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& Mentors Program

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