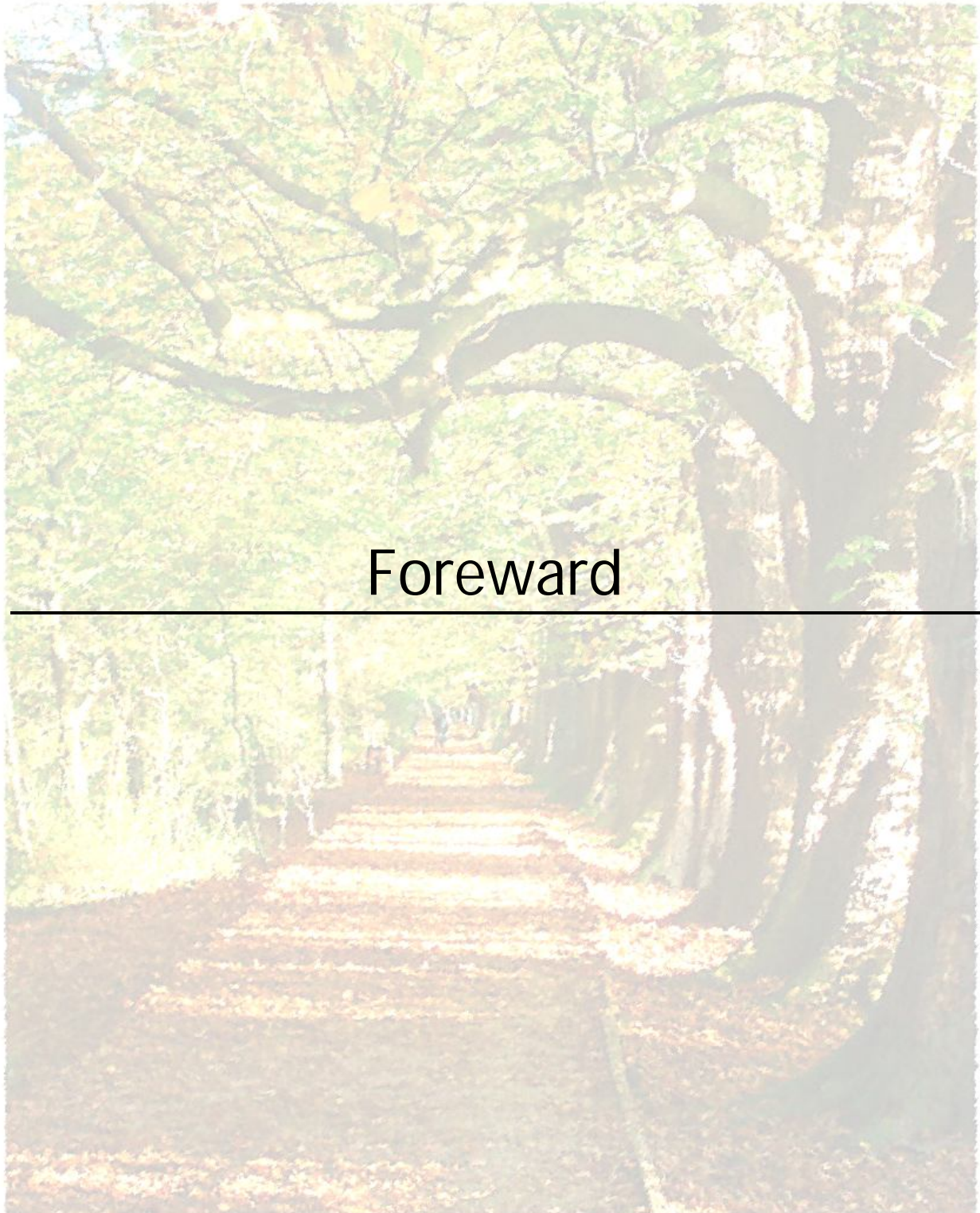




Psychiatric Disability Services
of Victoria (VICSERV)





The VICSERV propositions: Pathways to Social Inclusion

About VICSERV

'... a world of opportunity for people with a psychiatric disability' is our vision.

Psychiatric Disability Services of Victoria (VICSERV) Inc. is the peak body for Psychiatric Disability Rehabilitation and Support Services in Victoria, Australia.

Our member agencies provide housing support, home-based outreach, psychosocial and pre-vocational day programs, residential rehabilitation, mutual support and self help, employment, training and support, carer education, respite and advocacy.

What is the *Pathways to Social Inclusion*?

A commitment to human rights and good practice evidence combine to underscore the importance of adopting social inclusion as a driver for mental health reform and a shared framework for measuring and monitoring outcomes.

Better outcomes for people living with serious mental illness will not be achieved simply by doing 'more of the same'. VICSERV intends to work with a range of stakeholders to ensure that the mental health reform agenda recognises this fact. Our systems must be redesigned around the person, not the illness; the community, not the institutions or providers.

The current emphasis on clinical intervention in the absence of adequate social infrastructure and supports in relation to health, housing, employment, education, and community strengthening has not achieved the outcomes intended by de-institutionalisation. It is time to take a more balanced approach – one that makes economic sense and offers dignified solutions to consumers, carers, families and communities.

In order to demonstrate the value of this approach, contribute to and promote useful debate, VICSERV has developed four propositional papers, together constituting the *Pathways to Social Inclusion*. The papers are:

Social Inclusion: an outcome measure for the mental health service system – the first in the series and a conceptual introduction to the others

Health Inequalities: policy and practice failure

Housing and Support: a platform for recovery

Economic Participation: employment and education – changing outcomes

The VICSERV focus and target groups

The focus of the four propositional papers is on:

- People living with low-prevalence mental disorders. This includes younger people and others with recent onset, those experiencing single episode illness, and those with longer-term experiences of illness.
- Carers and families of people with severe mental illness.
- Communities in which people with severe mental illness live and seek to participate.
- The full range of services that provide treatment and supports.

Design of the papers

Each paper is written in two parts. The first part summarises the relevant evidence for change including current outcomes, systemic weakness and barriers, and good practice knowledge. These summaries also detail the VICSERV propositions for action, research, linkage and investment. The second part of each paper provides a more in depth analysis of the issues and is extensively referenced to relevant literature.

Whilst each paper has been written as a 'standalone' document, the set of documents when read together builds the most compelling case for change. Care has been taken to limit repetition across the papers; however, there is some cross-referencing to allow for each paper to be used independently.

Whilst the *Pathways to Social Inclusion* considers and responds to issues currently being raised and discussed in broader forums at both Commonwealth and State levels—including Victoria's *Because Mental Health Matters* Consultation Paper—it has not been prepared as a specific policy response.

The *Pathways to Social Inclusion* intends to contribute and add value to a range of policy debates within the mental health sector and in other critically linked areas including community strengthening, health, housing, employment and education.

An incomplete process

VICSERV is aware that the work is incomplete:

- The propositions offered do not represent all the viable and valuable options for changes – but they do reflect important opportunities and urgent need.
- Evidence and information is continuously emerging and must be incorporated into thinking and discussion.
- The papers reflect a selected and prioritised focus. However, there are a number of other critical issues that directly relate to mental health outcomes and a social inclusion agenda.
- Additional themes that VICSERV is committed to exploring over time include diversity, carers, and mental illness and the criminal justice system.

An invitation

In developing and promoting these propositional papers, VICSERV is not simply responding to debate. We are inviting the diversity of stakeholders, who have a role in making a difference to mental health outcomes for people living with a severe mental illness, to engage with our sector in joint work to create new solutions. We are concerned to see the development of broadly integrated and aligned ways of working that will achieve inclusive communities and support people living with a mental illness to reach their full potential.

Papers can be accessed after February at www.vicserv.org.au or telephone (03) 9519 7000.

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