Taking consumer engagement to the next level

Melissa Fox¹, Evelyn Edwards², Sarah Larkins³, Julie Mayer⁴, Anne Curtis¹
¹Health Consumers Queensland, ²North and West Remote Health, ³James Cook University, ⁴Western Queensland Primary Health Network

This session focused on practical health consumer engagement based on real experiences in rural and remote Queensland. It considered examples of consumer engagement, and the issues and considerations with each approach. The workshop considered how we take consumer engagement to the next level—beyond the provision of information to consumers, to meaningful consultation and, ideally, on to genuine collaboration and partnership with consumers—and the particular issues that arise in a rural and remote context.

The session concluded with a practical workshop from Anne Curtis, Project Manager Health Consumers Queensland demonstrating how it assists service providers, professionals and others who wish to undertake quality engagement and collaboration with rural and remote health consumers.

Key points made in the session included:

- Why partner with consumers
- Identifying the barriers and enablers of consumer and community engagement
- Introduction to Health Consumers Queensland’s revised Consumer and Community Engagement Framework—a tool for effective engagement

Recommendation

Consumer insights can help shape health services and systems for the better. Health consumers urge Primary Health Networks, Local Hospital Networks, service providers and health professionals throughout rural and remote Australia to take consumer engagement to the next level—beyond provision of information to consumers to meaningful consultation and involvement in service commissioning and development through genuine collaboration and partnership with consumers.

Presenter

Melissa Fox is a Brisbane health consumer and mother of 2 daughters, aged 9 and 12. Having worked in documentary and reality television, Melissa now works to improve the safety, quality and consumer-centredness of health services through her positions as Chief Executive Officer of Queensland’s peak health consumer organisation Health Consumers Queensland (HCQ), a Board Member of the national peak health consumer organisation Consumers Health Forum (CHF), Independent Chair of Logan Together’s Community Maternity Hubs Governance Group and as a consumer representative on the Queensland Clinical Senate, Children’s Health Queensland’s Neurodevelopmental Disorders Steering Committee and the ACHS Qld/NT State Advisory Committee.