

Transforming Health Consumer and Community Engagement Committee

Communiqué 17 – September 2017

The Transforming Health Consumer and Community Engagement Committee (the Committee) was established in July 2015 following recommendations from a consumer and community workshop held in May 2015.

The September 2017 meeting of the Committee was our final meeting. The Committee thanked the SA Health staff for their commitment and support, and for the respectful, honest relationships that have developed since the Committee's first meeting in July 2015. The Committee also thanked HCA staff for their work with the Committee and for implementing the work plans. The participation of consumers and community members who supported the work of the Committee was also acknowledged.

An activities report is being prepared to document the work of the Committee, its challenges and achievements. This report will be provided to the Minister, Health and Ageing, and will also be available on HCA's website.

The Committee clearly identified that its biggest challenge was that consumers were not engaged right from the beginning of Transforming Health, and that it took twelve months to clarify the Committee's role and purpose.

The Committee found that the opportunity to sit around the table with some of the decision makers in SA Health was integral to its success. One of the key impacts of the Committee was the change in the relationship between consumers and SA Health at the strategic level. The robust, challenging and respectful relationships that have developed through this Committee has flowed on to increase consumer engagement in other areas of SA Health.

One demonstration of this increased engagement was the report provided by Dean Fyfe on a co-design research project on the design of rehabilitation facilities. The research is being led by Professor Maria Crotty, and includes two Committee members who participated in the Rehabilitation model of care working groups and have supported implementation in their Local Health Networks. Early findings of the research with rehabilitation patients and staff have identified the importance of using the model of care to drive the design of rehab wards. Single rooms with ensuites are preferred over shared wards, but must be balanced with ample space for socialising with other patients and family. Patients also identified the importance of feeling safe, and having a sense of control and connection that comes from having access to wifi and telephones, fridges and microwaves and spaces to be independently active.

This Committee draws to a close as Transforming Health comes to an end, however health reform will continue and the voices of consumers must continue to influence health strategy and reform. HCA will be submitting a proposal to the Minister on what consumer engagement in health policy in SA should look like into the future. This proposal will be developed based on the experiences of this Committee.

If you have any questions or comments about this communiqué, please contact HCA on email info@hcasn.asn.au or telephone 08 8231 4169. The HCA website also has a page on Health Reform and you can subscribe to HCA's eNews at www.hcasn.asn.au.