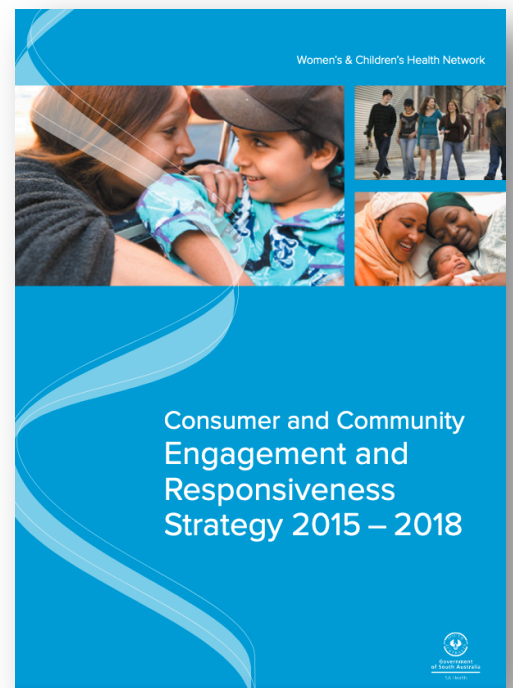




Women's & Children's Local Health Network Consumer Engagement Project

In 2015 HCASA worked in partnership with the Women's & Children's Local Health Network (WCHN) to undertake a consumer engagement strategy project, the first LHN to implement such a framework. This project would become the sentinel process for patterning with Local Health Networks and other health and community organisations to codesign, develop and implement consumer engagement models across SA. As the Acting Manager, Engagement and Partnerships, this work was led by Mark Loughhead.

The Strategy sought to strengthen WCHN organisational capacity, culture and systems for achieving high quality and consumer centred health care. It worked to ensure practices which enabled WCHN to exceed requirements established under National Standards for Safety and Quality in Health Care, in particular, Standard 2: Partnering with Consumers. It recognised that successful implementation would position HCASA and WCHN to be national leaders in engagement and in achieving policy outcomes associated with consumer centred care, public participation, health literacy and working with vulnerable communities and children.



The appointment of a Director of Consumer Engagement at WCHN, Allan Ball, to work directly with Mark Loughhead ensured a focused process driven by codesign. IN 2016 the first WCHN Consumer Engagement Framework was released and in 2019 WCHN delivered its second Consumer Engagement Strategy.

Objectives

- Examine the evidence on innovation in consumer and community engagement in health services, and its relation to health service engagement strategy development.
- Consult with WCHN staff and identify existing WCHN engagement strategies and structures.

- To model the practice of collaboration and consumer engagement and to ensure the project is conducted in a participatory way to ensure relevant stakeholders (internal and external) are consulted and engaged in the process where possible and appropriate.
- Ensure effective communication strategies are implemented throughout the project to ensure WCHN staff and stakeholders are aware of project aims, strategies, progress and outcomes.
- Develop a Consumer and Community Engagement Strategy and Implementation Plan for WCHN.
- Build the capacity of staff by preparing and implementing staff education programs on the Consumer and Community Education Strategy.

Overview of Strategies

- Engage with a range of stakeholders (internal and external) throughout the project.
- Conduct a review of the literature to identifying innovating and leading practices and strategies in consumer and community engagement in health services and strategy development.
- Consult with WCHN stakeholders (internal and external) on options and models of consumer and community engagement in health services. An iterative approach will be taken, including key informant interviews, broader consultation with stakeholders and a Consensus Conference.
- Draft a project report and an agreed Consumer and Community Engagement Strategy that is innovative, identifies multiple strategies, harmonises with the WCHN strategic planning, is reflective of community diversity and inclusive of the consumers and communities most vulnerable to or affected by health conditions.
- The final report and Consumer and Community Engagement Strategy to be forwarded to the Executive Leadership Committee and Governing Council for final endorsement.
- Design and undertake staff and consumer education to enhance the knowledge, skills and capacity of these stakeholders to achieve the aims of the Strategy.

This work went on to be replicated by HCASA working in partnership with the metropolitan LHNs over a number of years with SALHN undertaking the process next and in 2018-19 NALHN and CALHN the final LHNs to undertake this work.

HCASA was mindful of the need to work with the then single Country LHN however HCASA funding did not provide resources to undertake this work. HCASA recognised a failing in its funding and service agreement model that meant direct support to the rural and regional health network was not feasible. Ironically HCASA worked to address this with SA Health just prior to hearing the news that it had been defunded in 2019.