
Chairperson's 2011 Report

Health Consumers' Council has completed another 12 months of consumer based activity, advocacy and lobbying.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank my fellow Board members for their commitment, diligence and support over 11 Board meetings in the past 12 months and in particular acknowledge the outstanding support that I have received from the Deputy Chair Lorraine Powell.

In Oct 2010 the Board agreed to introduce HIG (Health issues Group) Community Forums to encourage greater consumer knowledge and understanding of a range of health system challenges. Since July 2010 we have held the following Community Forums:

- Environmental health
- Good health: disease prevention and health promotion
- Health Workforce 2020
- Oral Health
- eHealth

A total of 220 people attended these events.

A more detailed account of the Council's activities is reported in this Annual Report. You can be confident that we have continued promoting consumer participation and consumer rights across the State, working with Aboriginal consumers and their families, our HCC members, our Consumer Representatives, the Community Advisory Councils and members of District Health Advisory Councils.

I would like to acknowledge the funding by Lotterywest for our Speakers Bureau programme to promote consumer rights and improve understanding of the health system. We have trained 13 public speakers and made 4 presentations since February 2011 when the programme started

In addition I would like to acknowledge the continual support of WA Health, WA Country Health and Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health for their investment and faith in the Council.

It must be acknowledged that the Council could not achieve its purpose without the extraordinary effort and contribution of our HCC members and I would like to warmly thank each and everyone of you for your contribution.

I would like also to thank Michele and the staff for their hard work and commitment to the Council - your contribution to the organisation is much appreciated. This year we farewelled long time staff member Bill Fox and I commend Bill for his excellent advocacy for consumers over the years. In addition thank you to Heather Taylor who joined the Council for 8 months, before following her heart to the Pilbarra.

Finally I would like to publicly acknowledge the contribution and commitment of Senior Advocate Maxine Drake who finished her role at Health Consumers' Council in July 2010, but who has remained a HCC member passionately committed to consumer rights.

In the past 12 months, HCC has increased activity and outputs for consumers in all parts of WA. That is the reason why this

organisation exists, for the good of the whole of Western Australia. Let us all maintain our loyalty and commitment to this unique organisation by ensuring that we do everything we can to support this organisation to continue its good work.

Anne McKenzie
Chairperson

The Health Consumers' Council is an independent community based organisation, representing the consumers' 'voice' in health policy, planning, research and service delivery.

The Council advocates on behalf of consumers to government, doctors, other health professionals, hospitals and the wider health system.

Our Purpose

To raise awareness of and advocate for health consumers rights in Western Australia.

Our Vision

To be an independent, authoritative and effective voice of and for health consumers in Western Australia.

Our Values

The Health Consumers' Council believes that all people are entitled to:

- Be treated with respect, dignity and understanding
- Be informed about their rights and have those rights protected and enhanced

- Receive safe evidenced based care
- Be informed about their condition and any proposed treatment
- Have equitable access to health services
- Have access to information about themselves held by health professionals and the right to correct anomalies.

Objectives

The Health Consumers' Council's objectives are:

1. To educate consumers about health issues and the health system in WA to assist them to obtain health care most appropriate to their needs.
2. To provide an advocacy service for any consumer or group of consumers experiencing problems with the health system, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds who may experience difficulties accessing health services.
3. To provide training and support to consumers to enable them to initiate changes in the health system for the benefit of all members of the community.
4. To provide an information service to consumers and groups of consumers to enable them to develop the consumer perspective on health issues.
5. To maximise consumer participation in decision making in the health system of Western Australia.

Outcomes

- To increase health consumer and provider knowledge of consumer rights and responsibilities.
- To develop a partnership approach between doctors and patients for more effective health care.
- To facilitate the development of consumer oriented health care, policy, planning and practice.

Board Members

Anne McKenzie	Chairperson
Lorraine Powell	Deputy Chair
Glenn Pearson	Secretary
Alan King	Treasurer
Ann Banks	Chair HIG Co Opted
Sergio Cooper	Co-opted
Madeleine Cox (resigned Feb 2011)	Individual
Anne Cordingley	Individual
Jess Braithwaite	Individual
Mitch Messer	Individual
Phillip Gleeson	Co-opted March 2011

Staff

Michele Kosky
Executive Director

Heather Taylor
Resigned April 2011

Bill Fox
Resigned June 30, 2011

Gio Terni
Advocate

Cheryl Rugdee
Resigned April 2011)

Caroline Rugdee
Speakers Bureau

Natalie Del Borrello

Resigned July 2011

Laura Elkin

Aboriginal Consumer Participation Project

William Trott

Aboriginal Consumer Participation Project

Christine Ryan

Advocate

Pieter Di Marco

Advocate

Rosemary Caithness

Office Manager

A Snapshot of the Year

- 11 public forums were held
- 914 consumers obtained information, referral and advice
- 68 consumer representatives are currently placed on decision-making bodies
- 188 consumers are listed on the Health Consumers' Council database, ready and willing to participate in health policy and planning+
- The Health Issues Group has 36 active members and addressed 15 health issues
- 117 consumer perspective submissions and consultations were prepared and submitted
- 2998 brochures were distributed throughout Western Australia
- 597 health consumers were assisted with complex health complaints
- 13 small consumer research projects were contributed to or undertaken by the Health Consumers' Council
- Media comments were made by Health Consumers' Council on radio, print media and television on 43 occasions.

- The Health Consumers' Council produced and printed four issues and distributed 3202 copies of *Health Matters*.

Objective 1

Enhancing Community Understanding of Health Issues

1.1 Brochures/Pamphlets

Developed *Picture Book Guide to Patient First*.

Revised and updated *Making a Complaint*

1.2 Health Consumer forums

Forums on health issues that are relevant and of interest to health consumers in metropolitan and rural areas are held. The forums also represent a unique opportunity for community consultation on health issues.

During the last 12 months 11 forums were held and 301 people participated in the forums in the metropolitan area on the following topics:

Dental Services/Oral Health Community Forum

eHealth Community Forum

Multiple Chemical Sensitivity Taskforce

Australian Commission on Safety and

Quality on Healthcare - Draft

National Safety and Quality

Healthcare Standards - Workshop

Home & Community Care Assessment

Proposed Changes

Fiona Stanley Hospital and Midland

Campus - Contracting out of

services at hospitals

Combined Community Advisory Councils

and District Health Advisory Council

Workshop

Environmental Health Forum

Good Health: Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

Community Advisory Council Conference

Health Professionals Roundtable

1.3 Education Program

The Council organised and/or contributed to 28 education/community development sessions on health consumer issues and 1109 people participated.

1.4 Health Information and Referral Service

This service which includes a toll free 1800 number for people from rural and remote areas of Western Australia provides statewide information and referral regarding the health care system. It also represents a mechanism for gathering feedback about the health system from the consumer's point of view.

The Council provided information, referral and advice to 914 consumers through this service.

1.5 Newsletters

The Council's newsletter '*Health Matters*' provides information on current health issues of concern to consumers and keeps people up to date with the Council's activities and changes to the health system in Western Australia.

The Council produced 4 issues, totalling 3202 copies of Health Matters over the last 12 months.

9 issues of Health Consumers' Council ENews were sent to HCC members.

Objective 2

Maximising Community Participation in Health Service Decision-making.

2.1 Consumer Representatives on Committees

The Council promotes/recruits consumer representatives who provide a consumer perspective on various government and non-government committees, working parties, and boards.

Over the last 12 months, there were 24 Consumer Representatives placed on committees. There are 68 Consumer Representatives on 100 decision-making committees.

2.2 Consumer Representative Training and Support

The Council provides training, briefing and support to consumer representatives on committees.

5 consumer representative training courses were run in the past 12 months and 50 people participated.

The Council organised 5 Consumer Representative Network meetings and 51 members attended.

5 Community Advisory Council Roundtables were organised and 39 members participated.

2 Health Professional Roundtables were held and a total of 30 people participated.

2.3 Database of Consumers

The Council maintains a database of consumers with health expertise who are

willing and able to participate in health policy and planning activities.

The Council has 378 health consumer representatives on the database available for participation on health care decision-making bodies. This database is referred to on a daily basis.

2.4 Mentoring

The Council conducts a mentoring programme with community organisations, agencies and self help groups, assisting them to develop skills and ensure larger agencies are sensitive to consumer needs, thus maximising the full potential of both.

The Council provided mentoring on 16 occasions to organisations including self-help groups and non-government agencies.

2.5 Rural Consumer Issues

- Access to interpreters
- Access to dental services
- Treatment
- Redress
(opportunity to complain)
- Patient Travel and
Accommodation (PATs)

In addition Health Consumers' Council circulated 6 issues of E-News to District Health Advisory Councils (DHAC).

6 Issues were circulated to DHAC members

2.6 Health Issues Group

This is a standing committee of members from the Council and from the public who meet to discuss and make recommendations on consumer issues that are brought to the attention of the Council.

The Health Issues Group has 36 active members and addressed the following health issues over the last 12 months:

- *Have A Go Day*
- *Chemical Poisoning*
- *Information re proportion of health money spent on the areas of 'hospital or medical services' and 'preventative services and health promotion initiatives'*
- *Effects on health of Fly-In; Fly-Out employment*
- *Home Based Community Care and Meeting*
- *Breast Screen*
- *Lack of Public Transport*
- *Taking Responsibility for One's Own Health*
- *The drug and pharmaceutical industry*
- *Mental health and consumer representation*
- *Kath French Secure Care Centre*
- *HACC fees*
- *Environmental health actions discussion*
- *Carbon footprint of hospitals discussion and development of questions for Community Advisory Councils*
- *St John's Ambulance and Silver Chain consumer representative*

2.7 Membership

Current membership of Health Consumers' Council:

Individuals	671
Organisations	121
Associates	41

2.8 Consultation

The Council provides consumer consultation on health issues.

The Health Consumers' Council participated in 102 meetings and made 15 written submissions to government and non-government agencies, hospitals and other organisations.

2.9 Working Groups

The Council established or maintained the following Working Groups:

- *Consumer Representative Network*
- *Kularri Health Issue Group Broome*
- *CAC Chairpersons' Roundtable*
- *Constitution Working Group*

Objective 3

Strengthening the Accountability of the Health Care System

3.1 Initiatives and Health Issues raised by Health Consumers' Council

The following organisations were consulted on issues promoted by the Council in relation to health service policy:

- *Letter to Hon Max Trenorden MLC regarding Michael Moodie*
- *Department of Health and Ageing - Consumer feedback mechanisms to improve health system deliver and performance*
- *Minister for Health and Ageing - eligibility through PBS or free pneumococcal and seasonal vaccines*
- *Interpreting/Language Service*
- *Heatwave Conditions and Older People*
- *Medicare Locals and WA Health*

- *Local Hospital Networks and Consumer Involvement*
- *Environmental Chemicals in Breast Milk*

3.3 Individual Consumer Advocacy

The Council assists individuals who have difficulties and problems with the health system and health care providers.

The Council assisted 597 health consumers with complex complaints and advocated on their behalf.

Also 12 legal clinics were held where consumers receive expert legal information at no cost.

3.4 Public Comment

Contributions to the media to increase consumers' knowledge of health issues and the health system.

The Council contributed to print media discussion 24 times, contributed to radio discussion/comment on health matters 13 times, and contributed to television coverage of health matters 6 times.

Objective 4

Maximising the Information Base on Health Consumer Issues

4.1 Networks

Networks with local, national and international consumer organisations assist the Council in information sharing, programme ideas and policy development.

The Council has maintained networks with the following organisations:

- Aboriginal Health Council of WA

- Advocare
- Alzheimer's Australia WA
- Australian Medical Association
- Cancer Council of WA
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Community Physiotherapy Services
- Consumer Health Forum
- Consumers' Association of WA
- Department of Consumer & Employment Protection
- Derbarl Yerrigan Aboriginal Health Service
- ECU School of Nursing, Midwifery and Postgraduate Medicine
- Ethnic Communities Council of Western Australia
- Family Inclusion Network (WA)
- Geraldton Indigenous Women's Cancer Support Group
- HBF
- Healthcare Consumers' Association ACT
- Health Consumers' Queensland
- Health Consumers' Alliance of South Australia
- Health Issues Group, Victoria
- International Alliance Patients' Organization
- Institute of Child Health Research
- ISHAR Multicultural Centre for Women's Health
- Keedac Aboriginal Corporation
- Kidney Health Australia
- Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Council
- Launch of Hand Hygiene campaign
- Maamba Aboriginal Corporation
- Mamabulanjin Aboriginal Resource Centre
- Marr Mooditj Aboriginal Health Worker Training College

- Mawarnkarra Health Service Aboriginal Corporation
- McKesson Health Info
- Mental Health Law Centre
- Moora Yorga's Corporation
- National Call Centre
- Office of Aboriginal Health
- Office of Health Review
- Office of Safety & Quality
- Ongoing contact with Cochrane Collaboration
- Ord Valley Aboriginal Health Service
- People with Disabilities (WA) Inc
- Public Interest Advocacy Centre
- Southern Aboriginal Corporation
- The University of Western Australia - Institute of Advance Studies
- The University of Western Australia - School of Population Health
- Volunteering WA
- WA Country Health Service
- WACOSS
- WA GP Network
- WHO - Patients for Patient Safety WAIKATO, New Zealand
- Yorgum Aboriginal Corporation
- Yura Yungi Aboriginal Health Service

4.2 Policy Information Provided from the Website

The Council accessed the website to provide assistance with policy making.

Information for and number of times the website was accessed to assist with the development of the following policies:

Information accessed	Number
Consumer, Carer, community Engagement Framework	12

Health Reports to the Community	7
Grievance Policy	2

4.3 Brochures

The following pamphlets were distributed by the Council:

Brochure	Number
• Health Consumers' Council generic brochure	200
• Making a Complaint	220
• Consumer Representation	100
• Patients of Psychiatrists	10
• Your Discharge from Hospital	20
• Posters: Aboriginal consumer Representative manual; Pamphlets; flyers and DVDs	51
• Consent to Medical Treatment - Your Rights	300
• Consumers and Dental Services	97
• Public Patients Hospital Charter	160
• Advance Health Directive Brochures & Forms	52
• Older Persons Statement of Rights	120
• Treatment of Rare Conditions	61
• Cerebral Palsy	25
• Patient First Booklet	28
• Health Direct Magnet	132
• 10 tips for Safe Health Care	80

- Medication List 102
- Advocacy Brochure 87
- WA Public Patients Hospital Charter 21
- Medication Line Magnets 132
- Aboriginal Participation Programme brochures 1000

4.4 Research

The Council undertakes small research projects on consumer issues. It also promotes and encourages consumer research by other government and non-government agencies.

The Council undertook and/or contributed to 13 small research projects.

4.5 Health Consumers' Council Website Access

The World Wide Website had an average of 5440 visitors per month and is updated regularly. The address of the website is www.hconc.org.au

Consumer Representatives

The Health Consumers' Council has representatives on the following committees, Boards and working parties:

- Activity Based Funding/Management Steering Committee
- Advisory Group Admission Re admission Discharge and Transfer Policy
- Advocare Board
- Aged Care Clinical Care Advisory Group
- Aged Care Standards & Accreditation Agency - WA Liaison Group
- Alcohol and Pregnancy: Health Promotion Messages that Work

- Ambulatory Care - Heart Failure Joint Consultative Committee
- Ambulatory Care Service NMAHS
- Anaphylaxis Working Group
- Anaphylaxis Project Advisory Group
- Armadale Health Service Community Advisory Council
- Australian College of Midwives Consumer Advisory Committee
- Australian College of Midwives WA Branch
- Bethesda Hospital Safety and Quality Committee
- Bentley Health Service Community Advisory Council
- Bio Safety Committee Royal Perth Hospital
- BreastScreen WA Consumer Reference Group
- Cancer Council Aboriginal Reference Group
- Cancer Voices
- CACH Executive Committee
- CACH Publications Working Party Committee
- Chemotherapy Credentialing Committee
- Child and Adolescent Health Service Aboriginal Health Action and Advisory Committee
- Chiropractors Board Australia
- Clinical Reference Group
- Concerns and Responses to Elder Abuse in CALD Communities Research Group
- Consumer and Community Research Advisory Committee
- Cross Jurisdictional Data Linkage Steering Committee
- Curtin University: First Year Curriculum Steering Group
- Curtin University of Technology Human Research Ethics Committee
- Curtin University of Technology Nursing Advisory Committee
- Curtin University's School of Physiotherapy's Advisory Board

Data Linkage Advisory Board
Diabetes & Endocrine Health Network -
Executive Advisory Group
Edith Cowan University: School of
Nursing Midwifery Advisory Council
Edith Cowan University: Paramedic
Project
Falls Health Networks Executive
Advisory Council
Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
Working Group (Health Network Model
of Care)
Fiona Stanley Hospital - Patient Services
Reference Group
Fremantle Hospital Community Advisory
Council
Health Complaints Co-ordinators Network
Health Department WA Nurse Pap Smear
Provider Credentialing Committee
Hepatitis C Council Sexual Transmitted
Diseases
Infectious Diseases & Immunology Health
Network Executive Advisory Group
Injury and Trauma Health Network
Executive Advisory Group
KEMH Community Advisory Council
Managing Adverse Events - Project
Implementation Committee
Medical Board of WA
Medicare Local Transition Advisory Group
Mentally Healthy WA Steering
Committee
Mount Private Hospital for Quality and
Risk Management
Musculoskeletal Health Network - Spinal
Pain Working Group
Neurosciences & the Senses Clinical
Network Executive Group
Neurosciences and the Senses Health
Consumer Advisory Group CAG
New Children's Hospital (NCH) Child and
Youth Participation Reference Group
NMAHS Community Advisory Council
NMAHS Reconciliation Action Plan Group
Office of Chief Nurse Excellence Awards

Committee
Oral Health Centre WA Quality
Improvement Committee
Osborne Park Hospital Community
Advisory Council
Physiotherapists Registration Board of
Australia
Primary Health Network
Princess Margaret Hospital Consumer
Advisory Committee
Refugee Health Advisory Council
Renal Medicine and Urology Health
Network Executive Advisory Group
Reproductive Technology Council
Counselling Committee
Reproductive Technology Council Embryo
Storage Committee WA
Respiratory Health Network Advisory
Committee
Rockingham Kwinana Health Service
Community Advisory Council
RPH Animal Ethics Committee
RPH Community Advisory Council
RPH Reconciliation Plan Group
RPH - Telehealth Steering Committee
St John's Ambulance Safety & Quality
Committee
St John of God Ambulance Research
Group
Silver Chain Medical Safety and Quality
Committee
Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital Community
Advisory Committee
Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital Human
Research Ethics Committee
Sir Charles Gairdner Reconciliation
Action Group
State Wide Telehealth Advisory Group
Swan Kalamunda Health Service -
Aboriginal Health Reference Group
Swan Kalamunda Health Service
Community Advisory Council
Telethon Institute for Child health
(TICHR) Research Consumer and
Community Advisory Council

Telethon Institute for Child Health
 Research Aboriginal Collaborative
 Council Advising Research & Evaluation
 UWA Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry
 Advisory Committee
 UWA School of Population Health
 Consumer and Community Research
 Advisory Committee
 WA Ambulance Service Clinical Quality
 Review Committee
 WA Child and Youth Health Network
 Advisory Group
 WA Council for Safety & Quality in
 Health Care
 WA Drug Evaluation Panel
 WAGER & DNA Bank
 WA eHealth Committee
 WA Health - Health Research Ethics
 Committee
 WA Leads Health Leads Health Forum
 WA Organ, Eye and Tissue Donation
 Community Advisory Panel
 WA Reproductive Technology Council
 Wheatbelt Chronic Disease Steering
 Committee Patient Safety Video
 Production Working Group
 Western Australian Association of
 Mental Health (WAAMH) Board
 Western Australian Aged Care Advisory
 Council
 Working Group of Western Australian
 Healthcare associated Infection data

Aboriginal Consumer Participation Programme

1. Development and distribution of:

- HCC Complaints Management Guide for Aboriginal Community Controlled Services

- HCC Consumer Participation Guide for Community Controlled Services
- We participated in 50 community meetings and forums promoting Consumer Health Rights to Aboriginal people
- We spoke to a total of 700 people, regarding Consumer Health Rights for Aboriginal people
- We distributed:
 - 800 HCC carry bags
 - 35 Mary G DVDs
 - 1700 brochures
 - 550 posters
- We held Health Rights Workshop at Derbarl Yerrigan
- We promoted our Complaints Management Workshop to 19 Community Controlled Health Services
- We provided Cultural Security Training to HCC Board Staff Members
- We undertook 60 cases of Advocacy

2. Consumer Issues for Aboriginal Medical Services

- Need to improve community health literacy
- Need to improve consumer understanding of medication management
- Need for the sector to respond to complaints

- Access to Interpreting services
3. Aboriginal Consumer Issues for Mainstream Health
- Patient transport
 - PATS
 - Lack of Cultural Security
 - Lack of accommodation for long term patients from country WA
 - Lack of access to mental health services
 - Paying bond for hotel room
 - Lack of access to dental services
 - Need for support services for country patients outside Mon - Fri, 9.00-5.00pm
 - Need for co-ordinated services
 - Need for comprehensive Interpreting services
 - Need for a guide/pathfinder to assist people navigate the complexity of health services

WA Country Health Consumer Programme

We held:

- Combined DHAC/CAC Conference July 2010 with focus on:
 - Patient Safety
 - eHealth
 - Adverse Events
 - Aboriginal consumer issues
 - Complaints management

We produced:

- 6 copies of DHAC ENews

- 1 Rural copy of *Health Matters*

We promoted:

- Patient First Ambassador Programme
- Speakers Bureau training

We dedicated:

- Page on our website to DHAC Issues and information about DHACs

We organised:

- Scholarship for country consumers to attend National Rural Health Conference

We undertook:

- Video conferencing with Broome DHAC

We reported:

- Aboriginal Consumer issues to District Health Advisory Councils

We assisted:

- 22 country people with complex advocacy matters

We provided:

- Scholarships for travel and accommodation to Speakers Bureau country consumers

We contributed to:

- Speak out for Patients Safety Forum in Albany and Katanning

We developed:

- *Picture Book Guide to Patient First*

Speakers Bureau Programme

The programme funded by Lotterywest started in February 2011.

- Up to 30 June 2011 we have had 1 Public Speaking training course.
- We trained 13 people.
- We provided 4 presentations.

For additional copies of
Health Consumers' Council
Annual Report
please contact the Council on
(08) 9221 3422

