

Consumer Participation Strategy

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background

In 2007, the DHS and the Health Issues Centre published "A Guide to Enhancing Consumer and Carer Participation in Victoria's Integrated Cancer Services" to assist the ICS in engaging consumers in their activities.

WCMICS embraces consumer participation as a principle integral to its structure, core functions and service improvement initiatives. WCMICS is committed to involving individuals with an experience of cancer in all activities, to ensure cancer services in the region are patient centred and receptive to feedback. Consumers are encouraged and supported as partners in shaping the cancer services the community receives.

strategy development

In 2007, WCMICS developed a Consumer Participation Strategy. The broad goals of the Implementation Plan for 2007-2009 are to:

1. enable consumer input into WCMICS activities to ensure services meet the needs/expectations of the community
2. enhance communication between WCMICS health services and the community
3. provide an opportunity to convey changes resulting from the WCMICS Strategic Plan to the community
4. feedback to consumers, publish outcomes and learn from the results
5. monitor, evaluate and disseminate results through publication

consumer register

The initial recruitment drive commenced in 2007, with advertisements placed in newspapers and online volunteer sites. Potential consumers were recruited through networking with WCMICS constituent hospitals and external voluntary organisations. The consumer role was also promoted at WCMICS tumour groups, where members were asked to consider patients, carers and/or advocates appropriate for nomination.

WCMICS follow a consistent process (as in figure 1) to orientate and engage with nominated individuals. The process has evolved as WCMICS has matured as an organisation.



the process

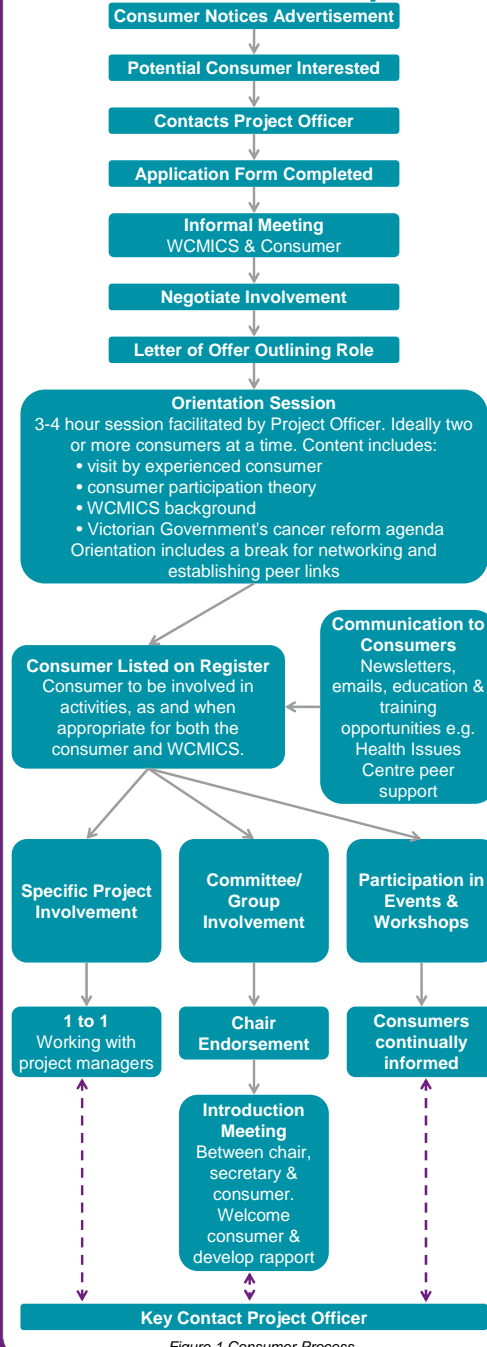


Figure 1 Consumer Process

implementation

At present, WCMICS is working in conjunction with 11 consumers. Representatives are currently members of the:

- Clinical Management Advisory Group
- Information Strategy Steering Group
- Supportive Care Advisory Group
- Breast Tumour Group
- CNS Tumour Group

In the past 12 months, WCMICS have involved consumers in the development of the Strategic Plan, Annual Forum and all conferences, workshops and events. Some consumers have provided feedback on patient information specific to their cancer experience. Others have had the ability to think beyond their experience by reviewing documents and resources in a tumour stream not related to their experience. WCMICS are currently developing ideal patient pathways for specific tumour streams and consumers are being involved in all of these activities via the steering group or through patient interviews.



evaluation

The WCMICS Consumer Participation Strategy is evaluated in a variety of ways. Consumers are encouraged to communicate regularly with the key contact project officer to ensure their role is mutually beneficial for both parties. This is an informal evaluation mechanism. More formal evaluation methods include (i) the initial orientation session evaluation form and (ii) other WCMICS event evaluation surveys.

next steps

In 2010, the WCMICS Consumer Participation Strategy will be reviewed. With experience and increasing outcome measures WCMICS is improving its engagement with consumers and strives to involve consumers in all work areas.

for more information

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