



North West
Hospital and Health Service



Consumer Representative Orientation Handbook

**PATHWAYS TO BETTER HEALTH
FOR OUR NORTH WEST COMMUNITIES**

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Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners:

We acknowledge the First Nations Traditional Custodians of this land on which we meet and celebrate their enduring connection to Country, knowledge, and stories. We pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

We also extend that respect to First Nations peoples from Kalkadoon, Mitakoodi, Pitta Pitta, Marmanya, Indjalandji-Dhidhanu, Mayi, Yulluna, Kutijar, Kaukati, Gkuthaarn, Gangalidda and Garrawa, Waanyi, Lardil, Kaiadilt and Yangkaal.

We acknowledge our gratitude that we share these lands, waters, and sky today, our sorrow for the costs of that sharing, and our hope and belief we can move to a place of equity, justice, and partnership together.

Welcome and Introduction



Sean Birgan,
Acting Chief Executive

Please accept my sincere gratitude to you for giving your time and commitment as a consumer for the health service.

The service you provide is a critical link between the health provider and the consumer and helps to shape the way we deliver services in our hospitals and health services throughout the North West.

Consumer representatives are best placed to reflect the community voice of our diverse health service demographic through strong links to community networks and contribute lived experience or awareness of cultural diversity perspectives.

When people are involved in decisions about their own health care and our services, we achieve better health outcomes and can create better health services.

Evidence shows that the involvement of consumers is more likely to result in services that are more accessible and appropriate for users.

Our aim is to partner with our communities to improve health outcomes by delivering valued, high-quality and sustainable health services that are close to home. Thank you again for your help to make our services better.

Partnering with you ensures we are on track to lead the delivery of safe, sustainable healthcare in our unique region with our diverse partners and communities.

Kind regards,

Sean



Cheryl Vardon, Health Service Board Chair

Thank you for joining us as a consumer representative for health in the North West. We aim to continually expand our network of consumer partners who help us design and deliver better hospital services.

We encourage passionate people with recent experiences in using our services to register and get involved. Your unique experiences help us to design care, plan services, develop and implement health programs, and undertake service measurement and evaluation.

North West Hospital and Health Service is committed to providing compassionate, high-quality health care. This vision can only be realised by partnering with consumers and the community to ensure we provide the right care, at the right place, at the right time.

We are all consumers, and to realise our full potential, we need all our voices. We intend to connect in meaningful, purposeful ways by consulting with our consumers on every aspect of our business.

I sincerely thank you for your time and commitment in joining us to reach our goal of better health outcomes for all North West residents.

Kind regards,

Cheryl

Welcome to the North West Hospital and Health Service consumer team.

Thank you for agreeing to be part of the future of NWHHS services. Your participation as a consumer is incredibly valuable to us, and we are very grateful for your time and willingness to be involved.

This consumer orientation handbook is designed to help you understand your role and the expectations of this role within the health service. It will also give you some practical help to get the best from the experience of consumer engagement.

NWHHS is committed to fulfilling our mission and priorities contained in our Strategic Plan.

To assist us to do this, we intend to partner with our consumers in a meaningful and purposeful way, and to consult with them on every aspect of our business.

Who are our consumers? Anyone who has had anything to do with the HHS, whether as a patient, a carer or guardian, or as a health professional, or a concerned member of the community.

Research has shown that effective consumer engagement improves clinical outcomes, patient safety and the type and structure of the services provided to communities.



North West HHS

North West HHS is the major provider of public hospital and health services in the North West Queensland region, covering a total land area of more than 300,000km.

North West HHS provides services to a population of around 27,000. We have a number of remote communities and discrete Aboriginal communities within our health service area and work closely with our healthcare partners to ensure timely and appropriate access to care across a challenging environment. North West Queensland is rich in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and people, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples making up 30.6 per cent of the population.

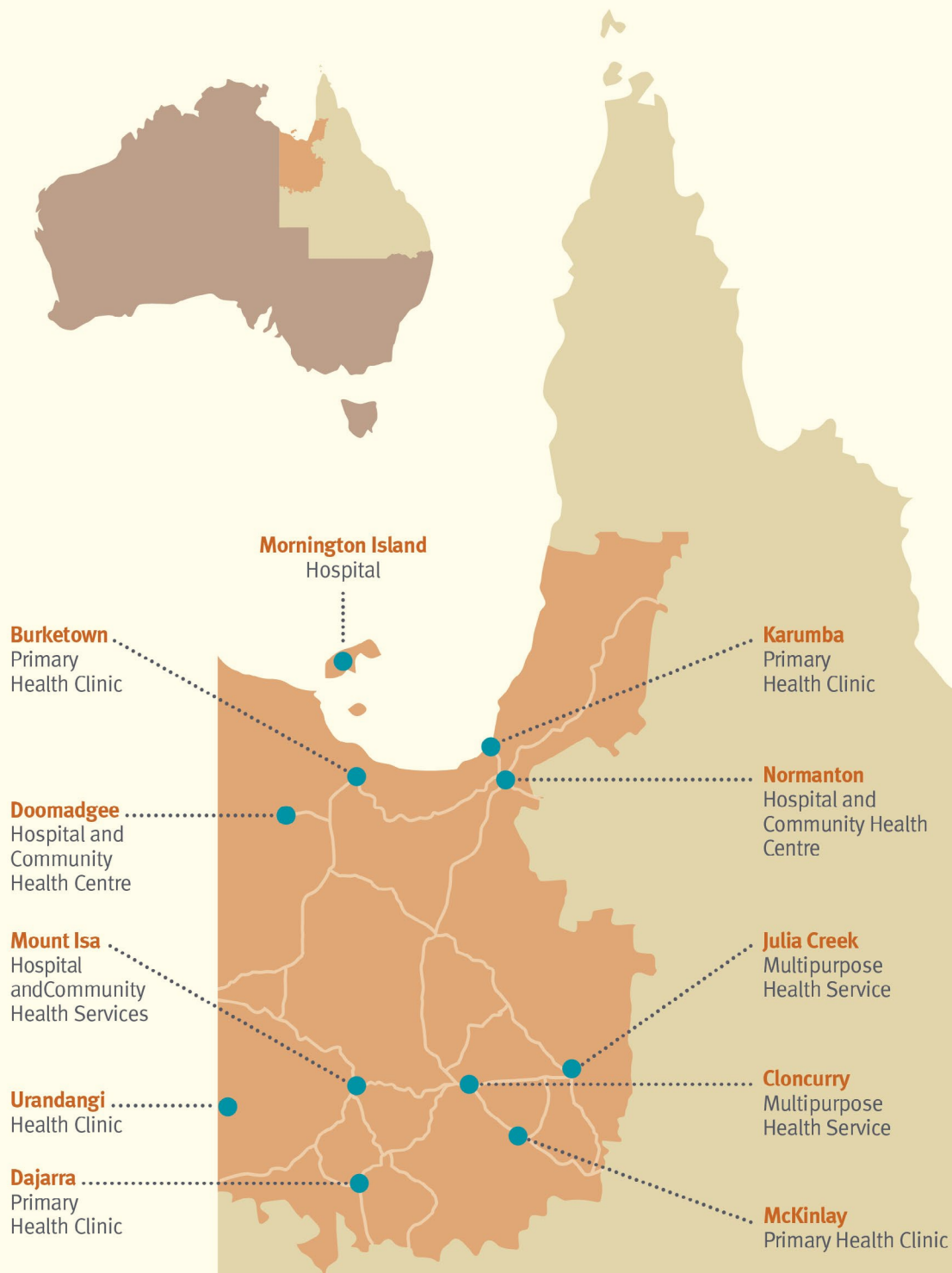
This makes North West HHS one of Australia's **largest** providers of health services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

NORTH WEST HHS PROFILE

Mount Isa Hospital is the primary referral centre within the North West HHS. Patients from other facilities across the North West region who require specialist treatment and care are referred to either the Mount Isa Hospital or to other major hospitals within Queensland, including Townsville, Cairns and Brisbane.

Specialist outreach patient services are managed from the hospital, which is the major hub for Telehealth services across the entire North West service area, two multi-purpose health services, three remote hospitals, five primary health clinics and one health clinic sites having access to 24/7 medical and nursing and midwifery support for the advice and management of lower risk emergency department presentations and other outpatient care.

North West Health Services



Getting started as a Consumer Representative

WHY WE NEED YOU

Your role is to help us to make sure the services we provide are safe, appropriate and meet the needs of our consumers, and also to help us plan for the future.

This may be in a number of ways, for example:

- Providing feedback on our services
- Providing feedback on information we give to our patients
- Sharing your story with our staff
- Participating in committee meetings to provide a consumer's perspective
- Providing your opinion on policy, protocol or procedure documents that we use in the health service
- Helping us to analyse feedback data such as compliments and complaints, and giving a consumer's view on potential quality initiatives
- Helping us to train our staff in people centred care, by sharing your experience of our services.

We may ask you to take part in these activities once, or on a regular basis. If you are selected to represent consumers on a North West HHS committee, we may ask you to be a part of a particular committee for a specified length of time.

NSQHS STANDARDS

From a policy context, the National Safety and Quality Health Service (NSQHS) Standards provide the framework for the service to implement systems to support partnering with patients, carers and other consumers to improve the safety and quality of care. The NSQHS, developed by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health, are one of the sets of standards against which the NWHHS organisation performance is measured. Standard 2: Partnering with Consumers is particularly relevant to this.

More broadly, the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights articulates that consumers have the right to have a say and be heard not only about a person's own healthcare journey, but in shaping the health system.

Thank you for agreeing to be part of the future of North West HHS services.

Your participation as a consumer is **incredibly valuable** to us, and we are very grateful for your time and willingness to be involved.

Getting involved in a committee

Community Advisory Groups and Hospital Committees

Most of our registered consumers are members of a Consumer Advisory Group (CAG) or a Consumer Advisory Network (CAN), or Health Council (Doomadgee and Mornington Island) or Elders Group, which have been established to provide community input and support for the delivery of high quality, valued services to each of the communities serviced by North West HHS.

Groups generally meet once per month with additional out of session meetings when needed. The chairing role can be undertaken by a consumer representative or a hospital staff member, such as the Director of Nursing. When you become a new consumer representative, you will be given further details about the committee you are joining, as well as contact details for key people and information about the next meeting.

Consumer representatives can also become part of a Healthcare Standard committee established for the purpose of improving the safety and quality of health services. These include Partnering with Consumers committee, Communicating for Safety committee and Controlling Infectious Diseases committee. Their membership is made up of hospital clinicians, allied health personnel, hospital administrators and consumer representatives.



Desirable skills of a consumer

Many people feel uneasy when they first begin consumer engagement activities. Some of the language used may be unfamiliar and the things discussed may be new to you.

Some consumers feel scared of saying the wrong thing, or making a fool of themselves. We will make sure you feel part of any engagement activity and that you feel comfortable with the situation before we include you. You should never feel afraid or anxious before or because of any engagement with us.

Remember, your strength, and the reason we have invited you to help us, is your **experience and knowledge**.

Be prepared for any meetings we ask you to attend. We will provide all the information you need, but please contact us if you do not understand the information or need some more help. We will always give you a contact person who you can call.

Write down any questions you may have, and any thoughts that come to mind when you read the papers you have been sent. This will help you to respond.



It's important to embrace the values of North West HHS. Having shared values when working together means consumer and the organisation personnel share common work attitudes and principles with one another. This can help build a feeling of camaraderie and a shared interest in success.

INNOVATION

we make things happen

RESPECT

we listen and learn from each other

ENGAGEMENT

we work together to involve our communities

ACCOUNTABILITY

we own our actions and behaviours

CARING

we treat people with kindness and look after each other

HONESTY

we are true to ourselves and others

Consumer diversity

At North West HHS we take pride in providing high quality patient care to a diverse multicultural population, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and to our rural and remote communities.

With 31.1 per cent of our population identifying as First Nations', our region is home to a wide range of cultural groups and individuals who identify with a variety of religions, racial backgrounds, ethnicity and languages.

As such, North West HHS is committed to enhancing the diversity of consumers through all of our engagement streams and activities.

We aim to have people from diverse cultural backgrounds participate in all of our engagement activities and consumer groups to ensure we are providing appropriate services to all of our consumers, region wide.



Your first meeting

BEFORE THE MEETING

- Read your committee's Terms of Reference provided by the meeting coordinator
- If asked, suggest things to add to the agenda for discussion at the meeting.
- Read the meeting agenda and any attached documents so you know about what will be discussed.

DURING THE MEETING

- Familiarise yourself with committee members
- Stick to the agenda; anything new can be presented at the next meeting
- Ask for clarification beforehand if you are not sure about something to be discussed
- There are no stupid questions – don't be afraid to ask!

EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION

Getting prepared is always important. Try to understand as much as you can about the things to be discussed.

Remember the reason you are there - to help improve healthcare and services for the whole community.

- Speak clearly and provide your insights and opinions at the right time.
- It's fine to disagree, but don't interrupt
- Keep ideas short and to the point, rather than giving lengthy explanations
- Your contributions are valuable, but don't let them get lost in conversation

Training and Support

Being a successful consumer representative just requires a willingness to get involved and give things a go.

Upon onboarding as a consumer and throughout your time with us, you will be supported through the following ways:

- Online consumer training via [HEALTH CONSUMERS QUEENSLAND](#).
- Direct access to North West HHS Consumer Liaison Officer, Public Relations Manager, and committee Chairs via phone or email.
- Access to the [NORTH WEST HHS PRIVATE FACEBOOK GROUP](#) for consumers, where publications, files, and staff are easily accessible.



CONSUMER:

TRACY LU
KARUMBA CAG

“The Consumer Advisory Group helps everyone to understand each other a lot better and it creates a better community. It makes people know that their voice is being heard and there is someone acting on that.”

Insurance and indemnity

As a consumer involved in a consumer engagement activity, you are covered for personal accident through the Queensland Government Insurance Fund provided you are not found to be negligent in any actions that led to an accident.

Consumers are responsible to ensure that their personal possessions, including motor vehicles, are adequately insured while on NWHHS grounds. Any theft must be reported to security immediately.

Complaints

If you wish to make a complaint about an engagement activity, another consumer, a patient or a staff member, please contact the person who organised the engagement activity or the consumer liaison officer at nwhhsco@health.qld.gov.au

Reimbursements

Consumer Representatives are entitled to participate voluntarily; or they may claim reimbursement of expenses. NWHHS will generally provide any out of pocket expenses the consumer representative may incur when involved in activities.

These include:

- Travel to and from meetings or activities, on a flat rate per kilometre, paid to a maximum of 100km for a return journey
- Taxi fares

If expenses are to be claimed, the Consumer Representative must complete the appropriate declaration forms for the Australian Tax Office.

They must also submit a tax invoice after completing approved activities. We will then set up a payment process from our accounts office directly into the Consumer's bank account and provide them with a remittance receipt.

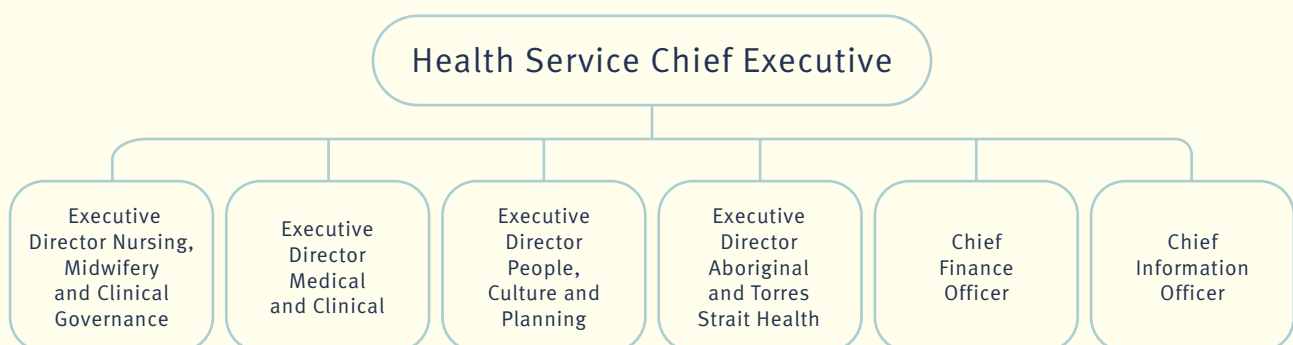
Board, Executives, and Committee Leaders

The board is comprised of non-executive members appointed by the Governor in Council.

Collectively, the Board serves to strengthen local decision-making and accountability by promoting local consumer, community and clinician engagement and setting the local health system planning and coordination agenda, including financial management and oversight.

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) leads and manages the business operations to ensure delivery of health services in accordance with the Service Delivery Agreement with the Department of Health. The ELT is led by the North West HHS chief executive.

The Committee leader is the person who presides over meetings and coordinates committee work and is referred to as the Chair. In Consumer Advisory Groups, the Chair is usually a community member who has been nominated for the position.



Goals, Strategies and Values

The North West HHS vision is to lead the delivery of safe, sustainable healthcare in our unique region with our diverse partners and communities.

Our purpose is to partner with our communities to improve health outcomes by delivering valued, high-quality and sustainable health services that are close to home.

Our values will guide our decision making and actions as we commit to respecting, protecting, and promoting human rights in our decision making and actions.

Each consumer representative group has its own goals consistent with the focus on delivering the best health care to everyone, regardless of who they are or where they live.



Resources

HEALTH CONSUMERS QUEENSLAND – GUIDE FOR CONSUMERS

CODE OF CONDUCT

AUSTRALIAN CHARTER OF HEALTHCARE RIGHTS

NORTH WEST HHS WEBSITE

NORTH WEST HHS ONLINE COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

NORTH WEST HHS CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Thank You

We look forward to working with you throughout your journey as a health consumer with North West HHS.





North West Hospital and Health Service

CONSUMER LIAISON OFFICER:

nwhhsclo@health.qld.gov.au

PUBLIC RELATIONS MANAGER:

nwhhs.engagement@health.qld.gov.au

MOUNT ISA HOSPITAL:

07 47444444