



Effective Consumer Participation in Meetings – A Guide for Chairs

In order to engage well with your consumer representative in your committee's/group's decision making process, you will need to remember the purpose and benefits of having a consumer representative working in your team.

Consumer Representatives play a vital role on many government and industry decision-making and advisory bodies, for they represent a broader group of like-interested members of the community. The Health Consumers' Council believes that genuine and effective consumer participation is a necessary part of a patient centred healthcare system.

Consumer Representatives are guided by the following 5 rights:

- The Right to Safety**
- The Right to be Informed**
- The Right to Participate**
- The Right to Redress**
- The Right to Consumer Education**

Sometimes, the Consumer Representative might be reluctant to contribute and speak up during meetings. We need your help to involve Consumer Representatives by inviting their comments. Below is a list of questions you can use to encourage your Consumer Representative to provide their input.

Questions for your Consumer Representative:

- ❖ Do you think this is an issue for consumers?
- ❖ How could we improve on what we are doing for consumers?
- ❖ What do you think might be some of the barriers for consumers?
- ❖ In your opinion, is this a patient-centred approach?
- ❖ How will disadvantaged consumers (such as Aboriginal people, rural and regional people, people from non-English speaking backgrounds and people with disabilities) do the following:
 - Access this service?
 - Understand this information
 - Co-operate with health services
- ❖ What is the best way to communicate with and inform consumers?
- ❖ What is the best way to disseminate information?

HCC acknowledges and thanks the committee for their commitment to consumer participation, as this is essential to the development of a consumer-focused health care system.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Consumer Participation Project Officer on (08) 9221 3422 if you wish to discuss any matters regarding consumer representation.