



HEALTH CONSUMERS'  
COUNCIL  
YOUR VOICE ON HEALTH

## Diversity Dialogues Forum

4<sup>th</sup> November, 2019

# Creating Connections

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The purpose of this forum was to explore ways to connect with and engage patients and clients from diverse cultural backgrounds as a means of assisting healthcare providers in regional WA to build on their knowledge. Research has shown that such connections enhance the health care experience for both patient and client and can lead to improved patient outcomes. This forum was held in partnership between the Health Consumers' Council (HCC) and WA Country Health Service (WACHS)

The Panel consisted of six people from a range of health service backgrounds. They were:

**Tania Harris** — Aboriginal Engagement Coordinator at HCC

**Jane Hung** — Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Health Promotion Officer at Katanning Primary Health, Great Southern region – WACHS

**Dr Bernadette Wright** - Clinical Psychologist - CrossCultural Intellect

**Abby Buccilli** – Head of Programs - Red Cross (Goldfields)

**Sonya Shultz** - Program Officer - Health Promotion & Recruitment – BreastScreenWA

**Karen Lipio** – Coordinator – Cultural Diversity Program - HCC

Heartfelt thanks go to all panel members for their participation and invaluable input. It was also wonderful to have people from around the State join and thanks go to them too for their participation and input.

Using slide presentations, Sonya and Bernadette described the actions and strategies they had used to increase engagement with clients from migrant backgrounds. Other panel members spoke from their experience both personal and professional, for example Tania spoke of her own experiences as an Aboriginal woman accessing healthcare. Common themes emerged amongst strategies which had been found to be effective. These included but were not limited to:

- Connecting with local community groups, community leaders and representatives
- Accessing community feedback on printed matter to ensure it is readily understood and appropriate
- Having materials in languages other than English
- Using clear and concise English both verbal and written and avoiding using medical terminologies (which may have no meaning for some)
- Knowing the demographics of your area
- Attending local community events to develop networks and build relationships
- A framework on working with multicultural communities in the area of mental health can be found on this site <https://www.embracementalhealth.org.au>
- Tools and resources in working with CALD clients can be found here. <https://www.ceh.org.au/resource-hub/>

After the Q&A session, where some excellent suggestions were made by both panel and audience members, recommendations were made regarding ways in which healthcare providers and organisations/departments could improve their service provision to members of culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

These recommendations were:

- Engage with communities with other agencies so people are not overwhelmed by the number of providers making contact
- Know your demographics and have information/resources in those languages
- Know who and where interpreter services are
- Use simple, clear, concise English both spoken and written and use pictorial 'clues' to assist understanding
- Be aware of how we phrase things, use person-centred language
- Gain input/feedback from community members when preparing written material
- Reduce terminology and acronyms
- Educate patients/clients about their rights
- Be aware that not everyone is literate in their first language, use face to face communication as this empowers community members
- Consider the situation and then how you will prepare e.g. resources, people
- Access support from upper management to assist with staff support and increase effectiveness
- Increase cultural awareness learning
- Create time for the engagement to happen when planning activities/staff roles

Once again, thanks to all who participated.

Should you be interested in further workshops or forums held by HCC please visit the website at: <https://www.hconc.org.au/> to see what is available or call on 9221 3422. Sessions can also be tailored to the needs of individual agencies and departments.