

ABOUT CHF

The Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF) is a small not for profit NGO, our key strategic focus is to advocate for impact by bringing consumer insights and perspectives to the national agenda and policy table.

Our philosophy is that we operate as a forum – we have around 250 members and a pool of ninety odd consumers nominated to strategic national committees.

We look to put consumers at the centre of policy, program development and service delivery.

Ultimately, we aim to represent all health care consumers, rather than focus on specific cohorts or diseases.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs)

CHF has established Special Interest Groups (SIGs) as an additional way to involve our members and consumer representatives in shaping our policy and advocacy work. SIGs make it possible to bring in even more consumer insight and perspective.

CHF has SIGs active in the following areas:

- Primary Health Care
- Research & Data
- Digital Health
- Safety & Quality in Healthcare
- Rural & Remote Health.

In addition to the [SIGs](#) CHF has also established the [Youth Health Forum](#) and [Australia's Health Panel](#) as avenues for consumers to get involved.

AUSTRALIA'S HEALTH PANEL

The Australia's Health Panel is an interactive platform dedicated to collecting the views of Australians about the state of the nation's healthcare system. This information is used to inform our policy work and advocacy.

Health care will change rapidly over the next ten years, driven by community expectations and developments in fields such as medical knowledge, genomics and digital health. Australia's Health Panel delivers insights that strengthen the community voice, shaping health care in the way we want it in the 21st century.

The Panel provides a unique, direct channel asking consumers about contemporary issues in health and care and what matters to them.

CHF invites consumers from all across Australia to join Australia's Health Panel and participate in regular snapshot consumer surveys. Through the Panel, we ask consumers about a range of healthcare issues that may impact them, their family and their community. These surveys are typically open for one month and can be completed in a few minutes.

We use your responses to take the pulse of how people feel about particular issues, find out about your experiences in obtaining health care services and get your thoughts on what's working and what isn't. This gives insights that help us to design and shape our advocacy work on health policy. It's also a great opportunity for you to get involved and have your say about health care in Australia.

Some prior topics of AHP surveys have included My Health Record, Telehealth, climate & health and the COVIDSafe app.

People can view the results of Australia's Health Panel surveys on our website at <https://chf.org.au/australias-health-panel-results>

CHF also has a Facebook group which is open to anyone with an interest in the consumer side of health in Australia. The goal is to give each other peer support in becoming better consumers and advocates as we create change in the health system. Joining the group is a great way to join the community of people pushing for consumer centred improvements - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ConsumerRepsCHF/>

CHF CONSUMER PROGRAM

As the Consumer and Member Relationship Coordinator, I am always looking to widen our pool of consumers to ensure representation is diversified better representing health consumers. The Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF) is constantly looking for new people to bring the consumer perspective to committee work and would value your involvement.

CHF is regularly approached by committee organisers from the Department of Health, the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, our member organisations and many other stakeholders to nominate consumer representatives to their committees, advisory groups and Boards.

CHF assists with sourcing consumer representation in two ways. In a select number of cases we run a selection and nomination process (nominating consumer representatives to a limited number of high level national committees and those related to funded priority areas). Where we cannot assist in this way, we advertise consumer representative opportunities to our national network, with applications going directly to the committee organisers (CHF does not play a role in the selection or nomination).

To make it possible for consumer representatives to contribute CHF first establishes that consumer representation is supported by the payment of a sitting fee and the coverage of travel expenses. When asked for guidance for levels of sitting fees, CHF refers committee organisers to the Remuneration Tribunal. The rate is around \$418 per day (5 hours). Meeting of less than 5 hours attract a proportion of this fee. Sitting fees should also be paid for teleconferences as the consumer representative is still required to set time aside to prepare and attend the meeting.

Once support is confirmed, CHF then advertises the opportunity to our members and to our pool of consumer representatives.

We keep our members informed of consumer opportunities advertised on our website at <https://chf.org.au/committee-vacancies>, they in turn forward this information on to their members. Worth noting that you do not need to be a CHF member to apply.

WHAT CONSTITUTES A STRONG APPLICATION

Should you see/hear about a vacancy which is of interest to you, discuss it with your health consumer organisation. Your health consumer organisation will need to support your nomination with a letter of endorsement. The endorsement letter needs to be from a consumer health organisation, made up of health consumers and which provides a voice for consumers on local health issues. A letter confirms a connection and involvement in grass-roots consumer networks and demonstrates that you are endorsed by and accountable to, an organisation of consumers. A letter from the Health Consumers' Council (WA) is ideal.

If you do not have a letter of endorsement, you will need to provide sound demonstration of your links with consumers (outside of CHF), explaining how the consumers you work with would inform your work. In a nutshell, CHF needs to know that you are backed with the confidence of consumers and have in place a consultative base to inform and support your work.

Your application should also be accompanied by a current CV. The CV should be tailored to the position you are applying, whilst it is important to know how long you have been a consumer representative, listing all the committees you have ever worked on is not as helpful as only listing the ones that relate to the work at hand.

You will also need to complete the online CHF nomination form by the deadline given. Please fill out the five questions in full, letting us know what makes you well a strong candidate for the advertised work. Be specific about your knowledge and skills of the work at hand, listing previous committee experience which would greatly help you in the role advertised. Do not for example, ask us to refer to your CV.

Your participation in the Australia's Health panel, CHF SIGs, the Youth Health Forum, our webinars or workshops would also give us an understanding of your interests and your ability to contribute at the strategic level.

Don't be tempted to apply for every opportunity we advertise, specialise in the areas that you are most passionate about.

Once nominated by CHF you can expect support in the way of:

- Networking opportunities with other consumers
- Policy support
- Administrative support (late papers, sitting fees...)
- Responding to the issues and requests you raise in your meeting reports. Reports are lodged online on the CHF website at <https://chf.org.au/representation/forms/meeting-report-form>. I read the reports and forward on any consumer issues raised to CHF's Policy Manager. Unless marked confidential, meeting reports may be shared with other consumer representatives.
- If your committee is working on a highly topical issue you may be asked to help CHF prepare a more in-depth article for publication in *Health Voices*.

For more information on consumer representation please go to <https://chf.org.au/representation>

Please feel free to contact me at g.martin@chf.org.au once you have had a chance to go through this information.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Ghislaine