

Joint Media Statement

Supporting Queensland consumers and health services to partner for better health outcomes

24 November 2015

A health system that places health consumers and carers at the heart of the system in a true partnership with those who provide the care is the driving force for Health Consumers Queensland and the Queensland Government.

On Tuesday 24th November, Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services, The Honorable Cameron Dick will officially open the new office of Queensland's peak health consumer organisation, **Health Consumers Queensland**.

"We fund and support Health Consumers Queensland because we believe it's good for the health system and health consumers for Queenslanders to have a strong voice in how Queensland's health services are delivered," said Mr Dick.

"The importance of the valuable partnership between Queensland Health and Health Consumers Queensland allows consumers to participate in the planning of health services and the development of health policy leading to health services that better meet the needs of the community.

"Health Consumers Queensland is a place Queensland Health staff can look to for advice, training and support in developing their consumer and community engagement strategies.

"It has skilled, knowledgeable staff to provide training and consultation.

"There is a growing body of evidence that engagement with health consumers is essential in lifting outcomes for patients and in improving community health overall," said Mr Dick.

The Government has committed three years funding to the organisation to enable increasing numbers of health consumers and families to have a real say in how public health services are planned and delivered.

Health Consumers Queensland General Manager, Melissa Fox said everyday health consumers, carers and their families are providing input into service delivery and design through avenues such as patient feedback and complaints processes, or as members of consumer advisory committees and as independent consumer representatives. "Our role is to take that involvement to the next level by developing the skills of those wanting to have a voice and we will do that through training and skills development programs, and maximizing opportunities for consumer representation at all levels of the health system."

"We are also working with the Hospitals and Health Services (HHS) to identify their needs in relation to staff training and providing strategic advice on effective consumer partnership."

Melissa has seen first-hand from her own consumer representative roles, how valuable the partnerships between consumers and clinicians are in creating healthier people and communities. "We are working towards consumers being recognised and valued as leaders in health decision-making for their own healthcare as well as at a policy and systems level."

Health Consumers Queensland Network member and carer representative Jan Kealton believes many people would like to speak out but do not believe they have the skills to do so effectively. "As members of Health Consumers Queensland, we have easier access to training and resources, and can play a much greater collaborative role in

ensuring our health services are designed and delivered to better meet the needs of our community and ensure the best possible outcomes.”

“It’s wonderful that, with this overt support, more of us can be empowered to take greater responsibility for our own health outcomes and those of our families.”

The launch will be held at Health Consumers Queensland’s office at 9.00am, Tuesday 24th November on Level 9, 217 George Street, Brisbane.

Health Consumers Queensland is a not-for-profit organisation and a registered health promotion charity.

ENDS

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