



# Amplifying the Youth Voice during COVID-19 and beyond

Communique (Nov - Dec 2020)

# OUR YOUTH REFERENCE GROUP (YRG)

The Youth Reference Group for the project brings together 24 young people from across Queensland, with the first meeting held on 24 September 2020.

The group is focused on three main deliverables for the project:

- Engagement with young people across Queensland about their experience of COVID-19, the barriers to engagement and priorities for health services.
- The development of a young health consumers network for Queensland, and
- A strategy aimed at increasing engagement with young people in the development and delivery of health services.



# YRG WORK SO FAR

- Come together for 8 meetings since September
- 1,111 interactions on the online platform
- Brainstormed Youth Network mechanisms
- Begun the development of a youth engagement strategy with a design-thinking approach
- Facilitated six (6) Kitchen Table Discussions in their communities with the purpose of hearing from young people across Queensland about their experience of COVID-19, the barriers to engagement and priorities for health services
- Developed a Youth Poll to hear from young people across Queensland of their experiences of health services to understand broader perspectives

# WHAT THE YRG IS TALKING ABOUT RIGHT NOW

- COVID-19
- Priorities for health services and qualities of staff
- Mental health and sexual health
- Barriers to accessing health services
- Communication and access to information

Young people want access to health services that provide safe, holistic person-centred care, with health staff that are empathetic, relatable, transparent and kind.

Young people feel as if they aren't taken seriously and there is also a lack of knowledge about services available.

More awareness is needed around mental health, alcohol and other drugs and sexual health particularly a lack of information and education provided in schools.

During the pandemic, telehealth has been a positive experience. Having a mix of both face to face and telehealth is important.

# YRG Member Spotlight

## Li Xuan Tan

Li is a data/policy analyst, youth advocate & soon-to-be Economics graduate from the University of Queensland. She is passionate about issues relating to mental health and CALD people. You can find her reading self-help books or birdwatching at the local park in her spare time.





## Anja Christoffersen

Anja is a young author, motivational speaker, health services management student and health consumer advocate passionate about improving patient-centred care and health service co-design with consumers. Anja was born with complex medical malformations called VACTERL Association that have resulted in dozens of surgeries and over 150 hospital admissions. As the QLD Young Achiever of the Year Leadership Award recipient for 2020, and the Youth Ambassador for the Continence Foundation of Australia, Anja has been able to share her lived experiences internationally with the purpose of improving care for others with chronic illness.

## Jabe Gerring

Jabe has lived experience of Mental Health, Alcohol and other drugs and has been actively in recovery for the past two years. Jabe lives on the Gold Coast and is an active community member who participates in as much as he can as he believes that being connected to community is the opposite of addiction. Jabe's role with the YRG has opened a new avenue of career prospects and Jabe recently commenced two new consumer roles with QLD Health and the Gold Coast PHN.





## Ariella Sinclair

Ari is a 3D Design student at Griffith University. She is an ardent advocate for youth mental health and hopes to use her Arts experience to improve youth healthcare. You could say she wants to help design a better healthcare system. Her personal interests lie in tech and gaming, and she has a strong passion for animals.



## Ellie Jean Buchan

Ellie is a lifelong consumer of Queensland's public health system, who is passionate about creating a fair and equitable healthcare system that positively engages with and empowers young health consumers. Ellie is a Consumer Representative on the Mater Youth Consultancy board, which aims to help provide a positive healthcare experience for young consumers at the Mater. In her spare time, you will find Ellie living as a bookworm and winning imaginary prize money on game shows.

## Kellara Harney



Kellara recently graduated High School as DUX and is enrolled to study a Bachelor of Occupational Therapy in 2021 at CQ University. She has also recently been appointed as a Youth Intern with Regional Housing Limited in Bundaberg. She has spent the majority of her life living in regional and remote QLD. Coffee has been described as her life source and she could happily live on corn chips and hummus for the rest of her life. Kellara is very passionate about holistic health care and improving the understanding and lived experiences for neurodivergent individuals.

## Claudia Bull

Claudia is currently undertaking her PhD in health services research at the Griffith University School of Nursing and Midwifery. She also works as a Senior Research Assistant in Health Economics at Monash University. She loves dogs, coffee and superhero movies (yes, even the DC ones). Claudia is hugely passionate about improving patient experiences in and across Australian health services, as well as improving the way patient experience and preference data is used to inform service delivery and health policy.



## Lachlan Kelly



Lachlan is 19 and lives in Fortitude Valley, Brisbane. Lachlan is a sibling of two younger brothers with nephrogenic diabetes insipidus; they were born premature with a myriad of accompanying medical complications. Lachlan grew up by their side in hospitals across America and Australia. As Lachlan got older, he became a volunteer and advocate for greater focus on patient-and-family centred care. Lachlan's future ambitions are building a bridge between local communities and our hospitals while encouraging young people to be more active in healthcare.

## Kealey Griffiths

Kealey is a third-year undergraduate student, studying a Bachelor of Science at the University of Queensland. She has had lots of firsthand experience with the health care system regarding mental health and is currently being treated for her anxiety and depression. Kealey has only started to receive regular support in the last 12 months, so has only received adult services despite needing support while she was still in high school. So far Kealey's experience has been relatively good, and she has found regular therapy to be helpful. Kealey is majoring in psychology and hopes to go into medicine after graduating so she can fulfil her goal of becoming a Psychiatrist.



## Breanna Medcalfe



Breanna graduated from Chancellor State College in 2019 and has now completed her first year studying law and criminology at the University of the Sunshine Coast. She lives with a high-level spinal injury from birth which limits movement from her neck down to her toes. When Breanna's head is not buried in a book, she spends her time on the farm with her horse Orion, dreaming about the day she hopes to represent Australia in dressage at the Paralympics. She recently participated in the Queensland Clinical Senate and is excited to be part of the HCQ Youth Engagement Group, giving a voice to other young consumers living with a disability.

# WHAT THE YRG SAID IN OUR LAST MEETING FOR 2020

Using one word, describe your experience of being a part of the Youth Reference Group?



# KEY ACTIONS & NEXT STEPS 2021



- We are looking forward to coming back together next year with the group to support the collaboration of this work with the aim of completing the project by the end of February 2021.
- We hope to launch the co-designed Youth Engagement Strategy and Youth Network by the end of February 2021.
- We aim to support Queensland Health and health services to partner with young people in service design.

# WANT TO KNOW MORE?



- The Youth Reference Group is keen to connect with young people across Queensland. If you're interested in being part of the project, get in touch.
- If you're an organisation who is already working with young people in the health sector and would like to collaborate or if you have an interest in engaging young people in the work you're doing, or you just want stay in the loop, email us and let us know.
- Contact:  
[leonie.sanderson@hcq.org.au](mailto:leonie.sanderson@hcq.org.au) or [Chelsea.gourgaud@hcq.org.au](mailto:Chelsea.gourgaud@hcq.org.au)