

“Get back to basics”

What health consumers and carers are saying this week

HCQ Consumer Coffee and Connect Session #3 & 4 and [HCQ on-line feedback form](#)

This week **HCQ’s online Coffee and Connect Sessions** were held on Tuesday morning (25 Jan) and Thursday evening (27 Jan 2022) to hear from consumers across Queensland. **Who attended:** people from across Queensland - majority live in SEQ but there were also attendees from across the state including, Wandoan, Cairns, Barcaldine, Townsville and Tambo. Attendees included First Nations people and people living with a disability and/or chronic and complex health conditions.

[How you are going living with COVID - Tell us what is happening?](#) is an on-line engagement tool for consumers to let us know how things are going. 7 responses were submitted this week from consumers across the state in the last week, from Brisbane, Sunshine Coast, Texas, Townsville and Tully.

Summary of key issues:

Key themes emerged from health consumers this week including **significant concerns for people’s safety and wellbeing in Residential Aged Care Facilities, those locking down for long periods of time, and people with disability.**

A joint statement from consumer, community, clinician and unions was issued called for immediate action from both the Commonwealth and State governments to give **priority access to key measures for people with disability.** Read the joint statement here: [Open Letter to Commonwealth and State governments calling for immediate actions - Queenslanders With Disability Network \(qdn.org.au\)](#)

There is still **widespread lack of access to RATs** for those who need them most.

- **Significant concerns about safety and wellbeing for people with disability and aged care residents**
- **Communication gaps**
- **Lack of access to RATs**

Significant concerns about safety and wellbeing for people with disability and aged care residents

Access to RATs and support care staff for people living with disability

“Strange isn't it that so much information has been disseminated for the "general Community" but now 2 years on people with a disability still don't have a clear pathway. Disability support organisations who hire support workers to care for clients are currently experiencing a limited supply to RATs.”

“The support staff I have spoken to have had to spend long periods of time waiting in line to receive a RAT to confirm if they are COVID positive or not, which is leading to staffing issues and leaving clients without the care they need on a daily basis”.

- People know of the significant strain on workforce so are sacrificing their own disability support needs so those who need it more receive their care e.g. people who need help with toileting, get the care and support they need.

Navigation and support

“Is there such a role as a disability liaison officer at any of the hospitals to keep families, carers and consumer informed and up to date [when their love one is admitted].”

- Consumers suggested creating nurse navigator roles to support and advocate for people with disability and/or complex health and social needs; to get the care they need when they are COVID positive.

Aged care residents

“The lack of infection control and active management (e.g. communal dining with covid positive residents walking around tables when there shouldn't have been communal dining; lack of correct PPE) has been appalling.”

- Residents not getting basic care and support. Ensure batteries are changed on hearing aids. Very worried about the health, safety and welfare of residents shut up in their room in lockdowns. That people are showered and helped to eat.
- Concern for those who don't have family/friends to check in on them. Can volunteers return to visit them?

Communication gaps

Press conference reporting of deaths

- There have now been over 100 reported COVID deaths in QLD in just in the last 24 days of 2022, as part of this 930 reported COVID deaths in 2022 across Australia.

“We should not be scarifying the elderly, the immunocompromised, people living with a disability, or just say “oh, it's OK” because they had “underlying conditions” / comorbidities / “they were really sick, anyway”! We need to STOP the “let it rip” strategy and put Health before Profits here in Queensland and Australia!

QH Website

“There is so much information, often difficult to see what is the most ‘up to date’, conflicting information on different pages. Parts of information relevant to you’ [reader] across a number of pages. So many pages it must be challenging for QH to keep it all up to date. Is it time to create a new website on COVID-19 information based on 2022, rather than one that has been built since beginning of pandemic in 2020”.

Health staff communication

- Information changing daily, sometimes hourly, difficult to give accurate, timely information to all staff who work in the health system.
- However key staff MUST know that: information is changing fast, they may not have the latest, who to ask for information when needed. *A person with disability was told by security at door*

that they would call the police because they were trying to enter health facility with their carer (which is allowed). Caused huge stress.

Clinic and health facility closures

- There has been no conversation with the public about clinics and services shutting down.
- Clinics and/or facilities are closing doors/services (or so community are told by community conversation) yet there is no transparency or communications about this. People don't know if it's closed for short term (to aid with a deep clean), for a week for an indeterminate amount of time.
- People want to know how to get care if urgent, and feel like their health is being put at risk as a consequence.

Ongoing access to RATs

- On-going concern about access to RATs for people who need them most.
- People with an NDIS package are deciding what parts of their package they will drop in order to pay for RAT kits for themselves, household members, and support workers.
- People with concession cards, often who have significant health needs, are not being prioritised to access RATs; put in challenging situations in order to get access to them e.g. lining up at 7.30am with many others to access them.

What are Health Consumers Queensland Coffee and Connect Sessions?

Different to HCQ's Consumer Conversations and Webcasts, this new format of HCQ's online consultation session is simply listening to consumers. No presentations or guest speakers.

- Share their experiences in a safe, respectful space with people who can relate to their experiences and circumstances
- Tell HCQ what it's like to navigate the health system at this time and flag up whether they are getting the care they need

Contact: Melissa Fox Chief Executive Officer melissa.fox@hcq.org.au