

# Communicating with consumers: effective engagement

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# Communicating with Consumers: Effective Engagement

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# Big picture view

- Bigger than having a community participant on your Board of Directors
- Bigger than getting a bit of consumer feedback here and there
- Bigger than having an ongoing consumer advisory group of some time

# A way of being as an organisation

- Puts consumers at the heart of the organisation (not on the periphery)
- Sees consumers as an integral part of how the Division operates (not an occasional add on)

# A broad vision is needed

- To create the enthusiasm to drive change forward
- To ensure don't get bogged down with the detail and the difficulties
- To prevent complacency

# Best practice in engaging consumers

- Multiplicity of mechanisms
  - formal and informal
  - ongoing and time limited
  - consumers coming in and Divisions going out
  - general and specific input
  - suit Division and consumer needs

# Best practice in engaging consumers

- Well supported consumers
  - welcome, respect
  - remuneration ( for some types of involvement)
  - logistics that work
  - training
  - connection with consumer advocates and organisations
  - good leadership
- Well supported staff and Divisions
  - champions
  - time
  - training
  - contact with others who are confident and have seen the benefits

# Multiplicity of mechanisms

- No two Divisions will be alike
- Vary according to:
  - consumers and their needs
  - geographic and other constraints
  - readiness of consumers and Division
- With experience comes change and improvement
- Build towards the bigger vision

# Multiplicity of mechanisms

- Board membership
- Consumer advisory/reference group
- Occasional meetings
  - focus groups
  - working parties
  - attend community organisations, eg Rotary, Lions, health consumer support groups
- Informal processes
  - attendance at community events
  - ‘hang-out’ at a school
  - stall at shopping mall

# Why do it?

- Better outcomes for consumers
- Relevance of the organisation
- Better use of energy –  
achievement vs resistance

# Case: Bowel Cancer Screening Pilots

- Consumers on the implementation committees
- Special working groups, eg Indigenous people
- Testing ideas and products with consumers
- Result: better understanding of barriers and enablers to participation, better messages, better ways of getting the messages out, better systems to support consumers to participate
  - *Excellent participation in the pilots*
  - *Improved health outcomes as a result*

# Now over to you:

- How have we already been successful?
- What do we already know?
- What have we learned so far – from successes and failures?
- What is good practice?
- Topics:
  - Recruitment
  - Engaging those traditionally hard to reach
  - Supporting consumers well

# Topic 1: Recruiting consumers

- rural Divisions
- regional Divisions
- urban Divisions
  
- How have we already been successful?
- What do we already know?
- What have we learned so far – from successes and failures?
- What is good practice?

**One** idea to contribute to the group

# Topic 2: Engaging all consumers

- young people
  - Indigenous people
  - people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
  - people with chronically debilitating illnesses
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- How have we already been successful?
  - What do we already know?
  - What have we learned so far – from successes and failures?
  - What is good practice?

**One** idea to contribute to the group

# Topic 3: Supporting consumers to effectively engage

- as Board members
- as members of Consumer Advisory Groups
- How have we already been successful?
- What do we already know?
- What have we learned so far – from successes and failures?
- What is good practice?

**One idea to contribute to the group**