

Consumer Reference Group

The Outer East Primary Care Partnership Consumer Reference Group (CRG)

met for the first time in February 2005. In the years which followed, the group became integral to the work of the Outer East PCP; providing leadership, support and centring consumer voices and perspectives in the design and delivery of services across the Eastern Metropolitan Region.

In 2003 the Outer East Health & Community Support Alliance launched the Consumer Carer and Community Engagement Strategy. Designed with the support of Women's Health East, the strategy outlined effective processes and strategies for engaging consumers in the design and delivery of services. It highlighted the need for meaningful consumer representation and co-design processes in local agencies and was integral to the launch of the Outer East PCP's Consumer Reference Group.

The CRG represented a diverse range of lived experience, perspective and expertise in engaging with the local service sector. With the PCPs having a central focus on service coordination at the time, the CRG played a key role in identifying access barriers for consumers and a range of quality improvements which informed the work being undertaken across the region.

Members of the CRG worked with PCP staff to develop a suite of tools and resources to support consumer-centred care and practices and worked directly with PCP partner agencies to develop effective systems and practices for consumer groups within their individual organisations; ensuring consumer representatives had a meaningful voice and platform within local service providers. Members of the CRG often attended other consumer representative meetings to directly support them in their work and to undertake significant advocacy to develop remuneration policies for organisations who utilise consumer expertise.

Throughout their history, the CRG delivered a substantial number of facilitated workshops to consumers and service providers across the Eastern Metropolitan Region. These forums highlighted best practice in consumer engagement, the importance of consumer/ agency partnerships and advocacy for stronger consumer voices within the local service sector. They consistently highlighted the importance of intentional co-design principles in the development and delivery of services and initiatives. These forums were an opportunity for consumers to better connect with each other as well as the staff and leadership teams within the services they utilise.

The CRG contributed a significant number of submissions to state-wide sector reform processes regarding issues such as mental health, disability, carer support and positive ageing. Members also contributed to messaging in primary prevention initiatives and support for the development of numerous media and social campaigns, including *Busting the Myth* (2017).

The Consumer Reference Group wound up their activities in 2019 after collectively contributing more than 50 years of leadership to the Outer East PCP. Their work ensured that consumer voices have always been at the centre of work undertaken across the region and played an integral role in system-wide reforms and local initiatives for more than 14 years. ●

www.oepcp.org.au/about/our-community-advisors/

Busting The Myth:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBrkv3U8REY



OEPCP Consumer Reference Group 2019:

Front row (L-R): Angela Fitzpatrick member CRG, Liz Ellis member CRG.
Back row (L-R): Kylie Osborne OEPCP, Pauline Cornell member CRG, Jody Pleogsma member CRG, Sophy Athan Chair CRG, Jacky Close EO OEPCP.

Project highlights

OEPCP acknowledges and celebrates the range of projects and initiatives the CRG members have led and supported over the years, including research reports, videos and information brochures.

Key outcomes

- Advocacy for a stronger consumer and carer voice in health care
- Stronger agency / consumer partnerships
- Encouragement and guidance for OEPCP to re-imagine and improve their partnerships and project.