

INSPIRING ALCOHOL  
& OTHER DRUGS  
TREATMENT & EDUCATION

Developing Consumer Participation at ReGen

The practice of Consumer Participation has been an integral part of UnitingCare ReGen for the past 9 years but especially so in the past 4 years. During this time, the leadership team decided upon the implementation of the facilitation model of Consumer Participation. This model served as the basis to the development of the practice by the Consumer Participation Facilitator. The establishment of this role meant Consumer Participation Practice could move forward in a coordinated manner, more quickly and on a larger scale.

Successes

- Client Charter, Complaints Process and Feedback Forms
- Agency-wide Consumer Participation Leadership Group
- Funding for Consumer Participation integrated within core service funding
- Consumer Consultant Meeting Group
- Regular delivery of two-day training for consumer participants
- Consumer positions in leadership groups
- Consumers' contribution to agency working groups
- Consumer-led sessions in Catalyst and Torque non residential rehabilitation programs
- Consumer-led review of (and reporting on) agency practice
- Peer Support Group led by Consumer Consultants
- Dedicated office space for Consumer Consultants
- 'Encouraging Innovation in Consumer Participation Practice' innovation seminar (2016)
- 'Exceeded' rating for QIC standard 2.4 (Confirming Consumer Rights)at 2016 external quality review
- Improved waiting area. Feedback surveys
- Methamphetamine Family Support program developed in partnership with consumers and family members
- Better understanding of Consumer Participation by ReGen staff.

Challenges

- Bureaucracy: Impatience with organisational decision-making and approval processes
- Distinction of the Consumer Participant role: The consumer participant is not a staff role and not a client role, although it has similarities with both.
- When a consumer participant is concurrently a client: Potential for blurring of relationships with treating staff.
- Intoxication: We will never knowingly permit a Consumer Participant to complete activities whilst intoxicated. If someone presents affected by substances, they will be respectfully asked to leave for the day.

Next Steps

- Supported employment pathways for Consumer Participants
- Review scope of Consumer Participation Facilitator role (in context of significant expansion of activities).

ReGen Consumer Participation Practice

	INVOLVEMENT	UNDERTAKEN BY	ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN	SUPPORTED BY
CONSUMERS	All Consumers	People engaged with ReGen services - Current Treatment	- Contribute to decision making about own treatment in partnership with their worker - Provide feedback on own experience of ReGen services - Rate ReGen's performance in upholding principles of Client Charter - Make formal complaints - Provide suggestions for quality improvement	- Rights & Responsibilities within Client Charter - Complaints process - ReGen clinical policies - Consumer feedback process
PARTICIPANTS	Some Consumers	Consumer Participants: - Current Treatment - Post Treatment	As for 'All Consumers', plus: - Contribute to service planning & review processes - Contribute to development of ReGen publications, including strategic plan, website etc. - Contribute to external quality reviews - Public advocacy - Support program delivery & evaluation - Support development & delivery of education & training programs	As for 'All Consumers', plus: - Consumer Participation Policy & Code of Conduct - Consumer Participation training
CONSULTANTS	Few Consumers	Consumer Consultants & Peer Leaders - Post Treatment	As for 'Some Consumers', plus: - Membership of Consumer Consultant Meeting Group - Rotating membership of the Consumer Participation Leadership Group - Other groups & sub-committees - Rotating membership of the Clinical Governance Committee - Interview panel members for new Consumer Consultants & staff - Consumer led research & evaluation projects - Leadership of Peer Support Group - General staff meetings	As for 'Some Consumers' plus: - Training (AOD & First Aid competencies; Group Facilitation, Mental Health) - Supervision by CP Facilitator (individual) & SHARC (group) - Supported pathways to employment - Consumer Participation office space