



# Policies for high level involvement



## Statement of commitment

As a consumer engaged in a working group, committee or board you are asked to commit to attend meetings, be informed about the issues discussed, actively participate, ask questions and contribute positively. The organisation will commit to supporting your administrative needs as required and by keeping you informed of meetings and actions taken, and acknowledging your contribution through internal mechanisms such as intranet, newsletters, annual reports, etc.

## Confidentiality

Often issues of a confidential nature will arise in working group, committee or board meetings. There are some groups which require all members to sign a confidentiality agreement as part of their membership. But all members—consumers and staff—are expected to maintain the same level of confidentiality. It is important that you:

- understand that as a member, you may be the recipient of either oral or written material pertaining to the operation and administration of the organisation
- undertake to maintain the confidentiality of any material that may come into your possession and confine discussions of this material to meetings
- maintain the confidentiality of all information regarding clients and their families, staff members and other relevant business that you may hear as a member of this group; this applies even after you have ceased to be a member of the group
- refrain from identifying any health service staff involved in your care, or the care of others, if there are circumstances where as a consumer member you wish to publicly discuss or debate issues arising from personal circumstances.

[Use organisation's own policy on Public and Media Engagement if available and Confidentiality Statement if available]

## Conflict of interest

As a consumer, you should declare when you have an interest—financial or personal—in a certain outcome relating to the group of which you are a member. In such circumstances it may be appropriate for you to remove yourself from the decision-making process.

## Complaints

Any concerns regarding the professional behaviour of staff or of other consumers should be directed to the relevant staff member within the organisation.

## Ethical practice

In accepting a role as a consumer involved in a working group, committee or board, it's essential that you know very clearly what is expected of you. The organisation will ensure that your roles and responsibilities are clearly outlined in Terms of Reference for each group. If you are unsure or feel that there are gaps in this information, please speak to the staff member who is responsible for your group.

## Indemnity issues

Consumers recruited to participate in our groups, committees or boards are covered by the [insert the relevant organisation policy] while carrying out activities they are recruited to perform. In accordance with this policy:

- when you attend a meeting, your attendance will be documented (date, time, and venue)
- when you attend meetings or events on behalf of the organisation (off-site) it would be helpful if you can inform the relevant staff member of your attendance, indicate the purpose of the event, the address and your contact telephone number while at the event.



## Privacy

As an organisation we will comply with the State/Australian privacy laws, the Information Privacy Act 2000 and the Health Records Act 2001, as well as other laws that regulate the handling of personal information. To this end, we will ensure that the personal information provided by consumers involved in the organisation's working groups, committees or boards is used only for the purpose for which it has been provided. We will not disseminate personal information to external parties, without prior consent.

## Representation

Within our organisation consumers are appointed to working groups, committees or boards as a 'consumer representative' because they can bring a different perspective to the decision-making process. Also, they are able to provide distinct views because of their experience of a condition, having cared for a person with a condition, or because of their knowledge of a particular population group. As such, they represent a 'consumer perspective' but are not expected to represent the views and opinions of ALL consumers or their families.

