



# Types of consumer involvement



**Personal engagement** refers to consumers who actively participate to raise awareness from a personal perspective. These consumers provide feedback to help services understand what's working well and what's not working, from a consumer viewpoint. Consumers share stories, participate in focus groups, surveys and targeted working groups.

**Advocates** are the most common and well-understood type of consumer. These consumers represent the broad views and experiences of a range of people affected by cancer. Consumer advocates work for improved information and support, better cancer services and coordinated care, enhanced research and policy, and involvement of consumers in decision-making. Their role is particularly important with those groups of consumers whose voice is not always heard. It is critical that consumer advocates are strongly linked with people whose outcomes are poorer; rural, remote and regional consumers; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

**Advisors** participate by providing opinions and guidance from a consumer needs perspective. Consumer advisors generally work together with a diverse group of stakeholders to give advice to cancer services, research organisations, government and NGOs, aiming to influence the outcome from the unique consumer viewpoint.

**Experts** are involved in high-level advisory committees, organisational boards or major projects. Consumer experts are knowledgeable across a broad range of cancer care and control and are supported by a network of consumers who advise and inform their work. They are sought because of their strong consumer expertise, their longstanding consumer involvement and their ability to engage a diverse range of consumers to assist them in presenting the consumer perspective.

**Partners** have essential knowledge necessary for health reform, research and policy development, and system change. This type of consumer is considered an equal partner in the process. Partnering is also referred to as co-design.