

## Partnering with Consumers and Carers – An Overview

### Our Commitments

CHN is committed to consumer and carer engagement in the activities of the organisation. Communities, consumers and carers bring a unique and valuable perspective on health and health care related policy, primary health care programs, local health services and the health service system.

CHN recognises that communities, consumers and carers are distinct groups and efforts will be made to appropriately engage these in strategic planning, commissioning and improvement initiatives as appropriate.

### Benefits of Consumer and Carer Engagement

CHN recognises the multiple benefits of engaging with consumers and carers:

#### Benefit to All

- Better quality health care – defining what quality means to the consumer and/or carer and developing services that optimise quality improvement.
- Increased efficiency in and effectiveness of service provision, reduction of waste and lower costs – through focusing on what is important to consumers and carers.
- Open lines of accountability – increased local accountability and enhanced community confidence in decision-making.

#### Benefits to Service Providers

- Improved consumer, carer and service provider satisfaction – through the co-design, development and delivery of person-centred quality health care.
- Early identification of synergies between CHN strategies - encouraging integration and comprehensive solutions to both community and service system needs.

### Our Obligations

CHN operates within both legislative and policy frameworks that place obligations on Board directors, executives, staff and contracted service providers to safeguard the rights of consumers and carers, uphold guiding principles and promote proactive consumer and carer engagement eg:

- Human Rights Act 2004 (ACT)
- Carer Recognition Act 2010 (Cwth)
- The Australian Charter of Health Care Rights 2008
- The Charter on the Rights of Children and Young People in Healthcare Services in Australia 2011
- NSQHS Standard 2 – Partnering with Consumers.

#### Benefit to Consumers

- Greater influence - opportunity to contribute to strategic planning, policy and strategy development, improved access to decision-making processes.
- Better health outcomes – engaged consumers and carers have improved health literacy and are more able to self-manage long term conditions.
- Equity of access – is improved when consumers and carers engage in their own care.

#### Benefit to CHN and Strategic Partners

- Consumer relevance - driving improvement, innovation and integration and higher quality decision-making.
- Improved risk management practices – allowing risks to be identified and considered early; standardised policy and development processes.

## Guiding Principles

Everyone has the right to have a say and be heard – particularly those impacted by a decision.

Communities, consumers and carers have unique expertise and distinct needs.

Appropriate and meaningful engagement improves health care quality and health outcomes, and can result in organisational change, service and system improvement, the reduction of duplication and waste, and enhance efficiencies.

## Consumer and Carer Engagement in the Commissioning Cycle

Effective consumer and carer engagement in the commissioning process elicits a shared understanding of expectations, limitations, areas of consensus, issues and challenges faced by CHN and the local health system. It increases public awareness of CHN's role and contribution and confidence in CHN decision-making.

Effective commissioning involves an engagement process that builds on constructive relationships with consumers and carers, health care professionals and service providers (public, private, non-government and community-based), public and private funders alike at each stage of the commissioning cycle.

Regardless of stage and scale, consideration will be given to the need for and/or approach to consumer and carer engagement in commissioning processes, encompassing strategic planning, commissioning and improvement initiatives.

The level, type of and approach to consumer and carer engagement will be confirmed in an Engagement Plan. The plan will be informed by the objectives, scope and complexity of the commissioning brief, the associated project risk and allocated resources (i.e. proportionate to scale) and level of influence consumers and carers have in CHN decision-making processes.

## Standards

CHN has adopted a standards driven approach to strategic planning, commissioning and improvement initiatives. Related standards include:

- NSQHS Standard 2 - Partnering with Consumers
- A Standards - Driven Approach to Commissioning
- AS/NZS ISO 9001:2008 - Quality Management Systems
- International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) - Quality Assurance Standard for Community and Stakeholder Engagement.

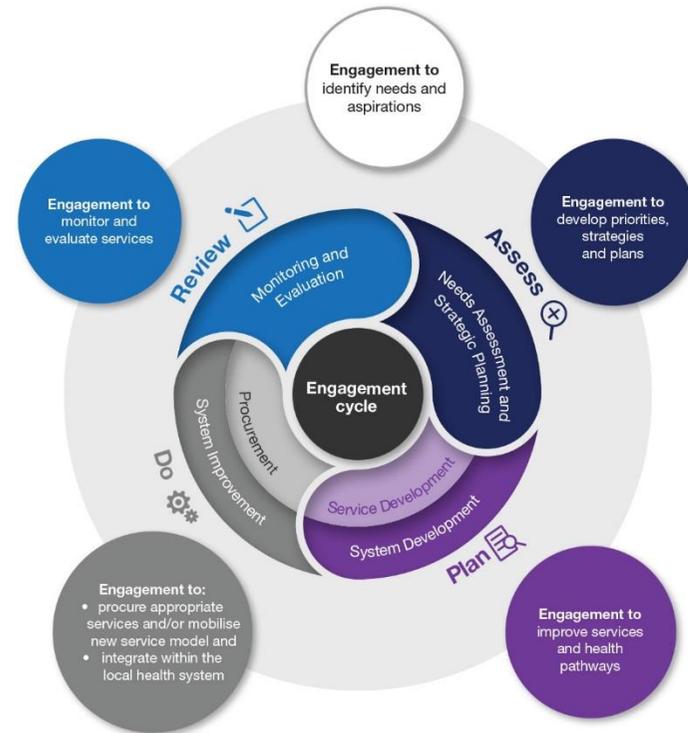


Figure 1: Commissioning Cycle

## The Spectrum of Participation

In line with best practice, CHN has adopted the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum as the standard methodology to determine, on a case by case basis, the most appropriate and meaningful approach to consumer and carer engagement. This method helps us define engagement objectives, the most appropriate level(s) of engagement and in doing so the role and contribution of consumers and carers in specific strategic planning, commissioning or improvement initiative.

There is no right engagement approach. Selecting the appropriate method of consumer and carer engagement and the relevant tools and techniques to facilitate the engagement process can vary according to situation, time, skills and resources. We may choose a number of different methods at different stages or multiple methods within a particular stage of the commissioning process.

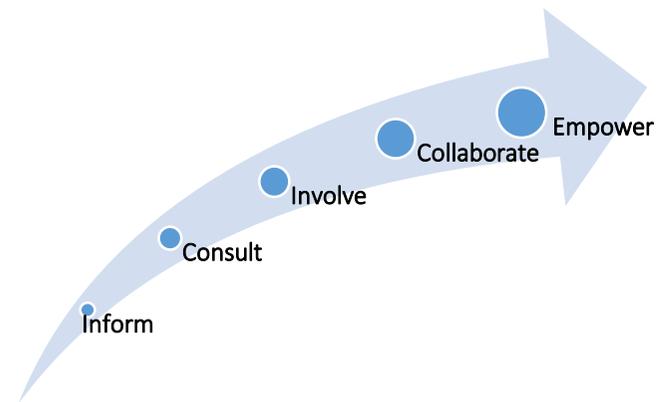


Figure 2: IAP2 – Spectrum of Participation

## Strong Governance

To ensure all strategic planning, commissioning and improvement initiatives are person-centred and community relevant CHN promotes consumer and carer engagement at all levels of the organisation:

Governance	Participation
<b>Membership</b>	Membership encompasses consumer and carer organisations, peak bodies, service providers, primary health care professionals and general practices. Individual consumers and carers can be affiliate members and receive CHN communications.
<b>Board</b>	CHN has a small skills based Board encompassing one Consumer Director.
<b>Community Advisory Council</b>	This standing committee provides consumer focused and community relevant advice to the Board. It comprises community, consumer and carer representation, advocates and opinion leaders.
<b>Committees and Advisory Groups</b>	Consumer and carer representation is secured on health service and system related improvement Committees or Advisory Groups.
<b>Project /Program Steering Groups</b>	Consumer and carer representation is secured on health service and/or system related improvement project and program steering groups.
<b>Ad-hoc working groups</b>	Consumer and carer representation is secured on ad-hoc health service and/or system improvement working groups.

## A Collaborative Approach

CHN (ACT Medicare Local and Division of General Practice before it) has established and long standing relationships with consumer and carer organisations at both a jurisdictional and national level encompassing:

- Health Care Consumers' Association ACT
- Mental Health Consumer Network
- Consumer Health Forum of Australia
- Carers ACT
- Carers Australia

Consumer and carer representation on CHNs committees is typically sourced from the above organisations as we value the support and networks they provide to representatives.

In addition CHN works in partnership with ACT Government, health care professionals and service providers, Aboriginal community controlled health organisations (eg: Winnunga Nimmitjyah), community organisations and associated peak bodies (eg: ACT Council of Social Service), private health insurers, research institutions and universities to encourage engagement.

Where appropriate CHN will collaborate with the above organisations when seeking community, consumer and carer input to and feedback on strategic planning, commissioning and improvement initiatives, and when engaging with hard to reach and vulnerable people.

## The Consumer and Carer Engagement Process

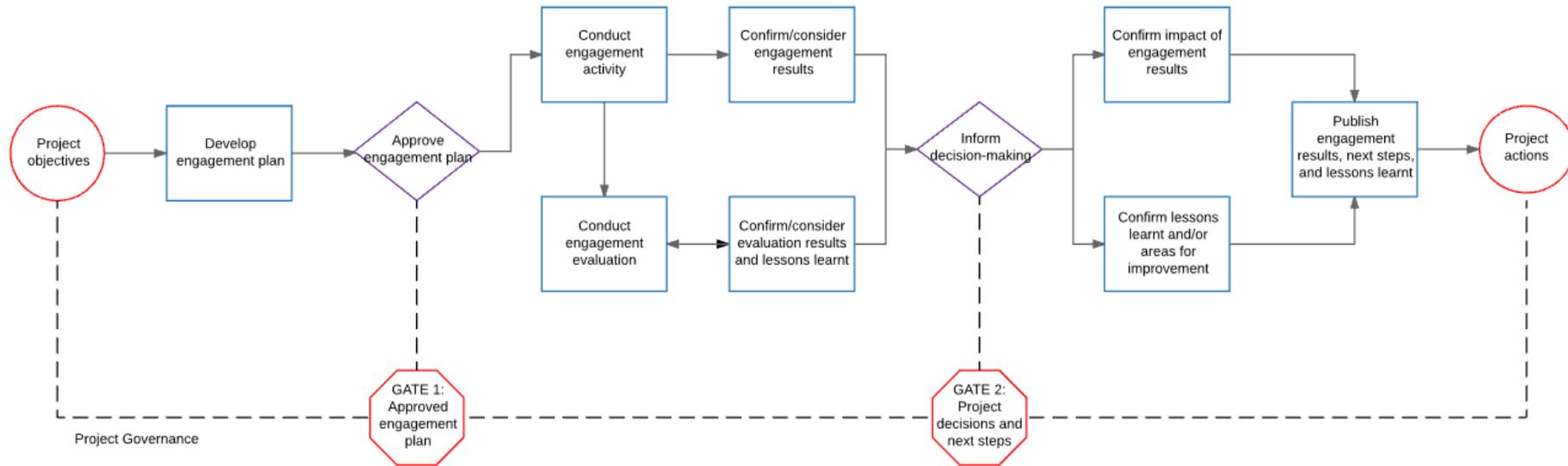


Figure 3: Engagement Process

### Policies and Procedures

- Partnering with Consumers and Carers – Policy (June 2016).
- Partnering with Consumers and Carers – A Framework for Effective Consumer and Carer Engagement (June 2016).
- Partnering with Consumers and Carers – Strategic Approach and Performance Framework (Aug 2016).
- Partnering with GPs and PHC Professionals – An Overview (Aug 2016).

### Tools and Resources

- Partnering with Consumers and Carers – Toolkit.
- Consumer and Carer Engagement Plan – Template.