



TASMANIA'S HEALTH PLAN

Your Care, Your Say: Consumer and Community Engagement Strategy

Working together we'll improve the health and wellbeing of all Tasmanians

What is about?

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is committed to engaging Tasmanians in decisions about their health and wellbeing. To support this we are developing a consumer and community engagement strategy.

The strategy will establish the broad policy to support community involvement in policy development, service design and individual care. It will span both health and human services areas of the Department and will be based on the principles of person centred care, community involvement and social inclusion.

Why is DHHS doing this?

By engaging and involving Tasmanians in decisions about their health and wellbeing, and that of their communities, DHHS believes it can serve the community better. People enjoy greater wellbeing and quality of life when they have more control over their personal situations. Consumer and community engagement leads to a more holistic and integrated approach to health and care.

Service standards improve when consumers and the community monitor safety and quality. Service providers and policy makers get a richer view of their service system and the community gains a better understanding of how the services they fund perform.

What has happened so far?

As an initial step, DHHS released the *Your Care, Your Say: Consumer and Community Engagement Consultation Paper* on 3 April 2009. We received 25 written submissions as part of this consultation process and gathered more comments through face-to-face meetings. The following are the key issues raised;

- meaningful consumer engagement is important and valuable for all involved and must be a major priority
- existing engagement practices and programs must be built on
- DHHS must recognise the challenges and opportunities of rolling out engagement across the whole of health and human services
- consumer and community engagement must be based on flexible approaches
- relationship-building is central to meaningful consumer engagement
- capacity-building is a key aspect of implementation
- DHHS must put appropriate structures, policies and processes in place at every level to ensure consumers can play an effective role.



What happens next?

We have now developed the *Your Care, Your Say: Consumer and Community Engagement* Position Paper. It draws on the above comments and provides a considered response to take forward.

How can you get involved?

We would really appreciate your comments on the Position Paper:

- The shorter version of the Position Paper has been attached to this Fact Sheet. Five questions included in the document and you may chose to use these as a basis for providing comment back to us.
- You can download a copy of the full Position Paper from our website at www.dhhs.tas.gov.au or you can contact Susan (details below) if you would prefer for a copy to be mailed to you.
- The public consultation period finishes on 2 October 2009.

The information received though this process will shape our final strategy and its implementation. The final strategy will be presented to the Department's two Ministers in November 2009.

If you would like further information please contact Susan via email susan.stipcevic-webb@dhhs.tas.gov.au, or on (03) 6233 6620.