



eNews

Email Bulletin of Health Issues Centre

7 December 2007

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Season's Greetings and Best Wishes for the New Year from the Staff at Health Issues Centre

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HEALTH ISSUES CENTRE

Annual General Meeting

On 20 November 2007, Health Issues Centre held its Annual General Meeting where Ian Roos, Chair of Cancer Voices Victoria, gave a presentation called, What Does it Mean to Consult with Consumers? The evening also saw the launch of *Consumer, Carers and Community Participation Resource*, a web-based resource developed by Health Issues Centre for the Primary Health Branch of the Victorian Department of Human Services. This resource is available from our website: www.healthissuescentre.org.au/Docs/consumercarercommunityparticipation.pdf

Reflections on Year That Was

Events such as the Annual General Meeting led to reflection so here is a summary of what Health Issues Centre has achieved between July 2006 and June 2007.

- Published four editions of *Health Issues* journal, containing 42 articles.
- Staff served on 24 health sector committees, both state and national.
- Appointed 62 consumers to strategic participation opportunities, including nominating consumers for:
 - 12 Victorian Department of Human Services Advisory Committees;
 - 6 health sector committees;
 - 4 Victorian Department of Human Services consultations and workshops; and
 - 12 health sector consumer participation opportunities.
- Published 15 editions of *eNews*, and added a further 359 people to the distribution list.
- Held two public policy forums.
- Received 70,948 visitors to our website www.healthissuescentre.org.au, with 60,000 documents downloaded.
- Received 349,986 visitors to our website www.participateinhealth.org.au, with over 61,000 documents downloaded.
- Had 159 Members.
- Provided training to more than 500 people from around Victoria

- Undertook 14 separate funded projects: nine on participation, three on research and two on education/support.
- Designed and delivered 24 participation workshops including:
 - 12 rural workshops for consumers and health professionals;
 - 5 metropolitan workshops for consumers and health professionals;
 - 2 workshops for the Victorian Department of Human Services; and
 - 5 workshops for Southern Health managers.
- 95% of training participants indicated their expectations had been met, giving an average evaluation score of four or over out of five.
- In collaboration with Cancer Voices Victoria and The Cancer Council Victoria, held two weekend advocacy workshops with people affected by cancer who are involved in advocacy work in Victoria.
- Ran a national consultation *Conversations with Australians* about the future of health care in the lead-up to the National Health Reform Summit in Canberra.
- Made presentations at many national and statewide conferences and workshops.
- Documented a total of 155 enquiries for information and support (in addition to our funded projects). Requests were mainly about involving consumers in organisational processes, resources and training. Primary health and acute settings were the organisational sectors making the majority of enquiries and requests throughout the year.
- Undertook work in Adelaide, Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, Canberra.

Annual Report

If you would like a more details about what Health Issues Centre was been getting up to in the last financial year, our *Annual Report for 2006–2007* is now available and can be downloaded from our website at:

www.healthissuescentre.org.au/Docs/annualreport06to07.pdf

OTHER NEWS

Medicare Online Service for Consumers

Medicare Australia has launched a secure online service for consumers that allows them to view their Medicare Safety Net balance, Medicare benefit tax statement, organ donor registration details and children's immunisation history, view and update some of their Medicare personal details, and request a duplicate or replacement Medicare card along with some transactions and enquiries.

All holders of a Medicare card who are over 13 years old and currently living in Australia can register for the online services at www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/online Ph: 132 011.

CONSUMER COMMENT

Health Issues Centre felt that it was important to give consumers an opportunity to voice their opinions on a number of issues in relation to consumer participation. In this edition, you will find our new "Consumer Comment" section. This section will be a regular feature and will give consumers as opportunity to raise issues that are current and important in terms of consumer participation.

If you would like to contribute or make a comment please contact Assunta Morrone at Health Issues Centre Ph: (03) 9479 3520, Email: a.morrone@healthissuescentre.org.au

Why are Consumers Always at the Bottom of the List?

In looking at many websites of the 'helping organisations'—hospitals, health organisations in general, public forums—it suddenly jumped out at me. The list of people spending, usually, a lot of time on boards of review etc always starts with Professor so-

and-so, Dr such-and-such, four or five other professionals, and finally Consumers. The connection I remarked on was the way in which this is reflected in the non-payment to consumers of fees for sitting on these Advisory Committees, Boards of review etc.

The response from organisers that: "Well, the professionals don't ask to be paid" is such a spurious one. They generally come in two categories: either highly-paid individual professionals for whom these committees are part of the reason they are paid so well; or people who work within departments who pay them for all their time anyway.

Yet the consumers for whom these committees are supposed to exist are often either people on pensions of some type who attempt to live on \$38.00 a day, or those who have their own small businesses and for whom each hour spent on such 'voluntary' work is an hour they are unable to make the money they need to keep the roof over their heads, literally.

Isn't it time to start shifting the listings to reflect the reality that without the consumer no one gets paid? Put the consumer first, on the list, and in the mind-set.

Beryl Shaw, Author and public speaker

Beryl Shaw is an expert in her own field. After experiencing cancer Beryl decided that she wanted to help people deal with difficult situations in their lives. She also decided that she wanted to help health professionals communicate better with their patients and their families. Beryl has written many self help books, she has designed and run seminars, courses, workshops and one off public speaking presentations for people in difficulty, doctors, nurse and many other health professionals. If you would like more information about Beryl you can visit www.anotherlife.com.au

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Eye and Ear Hospital Community Advisory Committee

The Eye and Ear Hospital is a statewide specialist hospital treating Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat conditions. The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) provides advice to the Hospital Board from a community point of view on:

- consumer and community participation;
- service planning and delivery; and
- advocacy and priority community issues.

The hospital is looking for enthusiastic, committed people to join the CAC in 2008 for a two-year appointment. You will help the hospital get real representation and involvement from the people who matter—the patients and the Victorian community. You do not need any particular skills or qualifications to join the committee, you just need a desire to help your community. You will be assisting our hospital in recommending changes that will positively affect the community.

You will need to attend six meetings a year during business hours and be prepared to give some time in between meetings to progress our work. In return the hospital will pay for reasonable travel expenses, and offer you support and development opportunities in your new role. This is a voluntary, unpaid position. **The closing date for nominations is Monday, 17 December 2007.**

For further information about this role and a nomination form please contact Kellie Michel, Community Development Officer, Ph: (03) 9929 8598, Fax: (03) 9929 8216, Email: kellie.michel@eyeandear.org.au To find out more about the Eye and Ear Hospital go to: www.eyeandear.org.au

DO YOU WANT TO BE INVOLVED

Take the Cochrane Consumer Network Survey

The Cochrane Consumer Network is a network of the Cochrane Collaboration, an international not-for-profit organisation providing up-to-date information about the effects of health care by developing systematic reviews of the strongest evidence available about health care interventions. The Network is asking consumer and patient groups to contribute to a survey that aims to improve consumer access to health information. The survey assesses the criteria that consumers find useful when seeking health information.

For further information, go to:

http://news.cochrane.org/view/item/review_one.jsp?j=1013

RESOURCES

Consumer, Carer and Community Participation Resource

(Department of Human Services—Primary Health Branch)

This resource is designed to give primary health agencies easy access to ideas and information related to consumer, carer and community participation was launched by Health Issues Centre and the Primary Health Branch, Department of Human Services at the Annual General Meeting of the Health Issues Centre on Tuesday, 20 November 2007.

The resource includes information on four workshops run over 2006–2007. These workshops were based on three themes identified by Primary Care Partnership managers: the connection between consumer participation, health promotion and community development; engaging newly arrived communities; and consumer participation and chronic disease management. The resource contains details of the workshops (including tips for running similar events), relevant articles and case studies and suggested further reading.

The resource is available on the Health Issues Centre's website at:

www.healthissuescentre.org.au/Docs/consumercarercommunityparticipation.pdf

For further information about the resource, contact Dr Tere Dawson at the Health Issues Centre, Ph: (03) 9479 5827.

Mission Australia 2007 Youth Survey

Each year, Mission Australia conducts a national survey of young Australians which uncovers the issues that concern them, who they admire and where they turn to for advice and support. This year's survey—the sixth—is the biggest yet with 29,000 respondents, between ages 11-24, taking part in every state and territory around the country. Mission Australia's survey is a valuable snapshot into the minds of young Australians and provides a wealth of important information for anyone interested in their wellbeing.

Reports can be downloaded from www.missionaustralia.com.au/youthsurvey

To subscribe or unsubscribe to eNews, contact Diane Lowther at:

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