

Mission:

Health Issues Centre Inc. aims to improve the health outcomes for Australians, especially the disadvantaged. Its principal activity is to promote the prevention and management of disease by developing and disseminating information on more effective consumer-centred health care.

Our role is:

To work with consumers and health care providers in Victoria and health policy-makers at all levels to ensure that consumers' perspectives are included and valued. This is achieved by undertaking research, policy analysis, information provision, and training and support for both consumers and health care providers.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2008-2010

(Note inclusive definition of 'Consumer' in Appendix.)

1. To increase the level of support among health sector and government leaders for strong ongoing Consumer and community participation throughout the system, and increase sector's capacity to effectively involve diverse Consumers and communities
 - 1.1 *Increase level and availability of constructive analysis and evidence about current participation practice and of resources/tools to facilitate it*
 - 1.2 *Increase health leaders' understanding about, and support for, the legitimacy of diverse Consumer voices in health policy, quality improvement and broader health decision-making*
 - 1.3 *Improve health services' capacity to involve Consumers and disadvantaged groups at all levels of their organisations*
 - 1.4 *Improve the capacity of DHS/regional/statewide (and broader where applicable) health organisations to involve Consumers more effectively in development of strategic level policy, practice improvement and decision-making*
 - 1.5 *Increase capacity of sector, including research bodies, to undertake research on participation*
2. To strengthen networks and capacity of diverse Consumers and their organisations and groups
 - 2.1 *Strengthen and build HIC networks with Consumers, Consumer organisations and groups*
 - 2.2 *Build the capacity of Consumers and relevant population/community groups to engage effectively at all levels of the health sector, in range of roles, and around current health issues*

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3. To influence health policy and practice towards a more equitable and Consumer-centred health system
 - 3.1 *Influence policy/practice within the health system through collaboration with organisations with similar goals*
 - 3.2 *Conduct research and consultancies strategically targeted towards change*
 - 3.3 *Ensure broad dissemination/publication of Health Issues Centre research and policy findings*

4. To be a long-term sustainable organisation, working towards its mission
 - 4.1 *Develop a sustainable business operations model and put into practice*
 - 4.2 *Monitor financial status*
 - 4.3 *Raise profile among stakeholders and build membership base*
 - 4.4 *Ensure that the Board of Governance continues to set and monitor the strategic direction for the organisation*
 - 4.5 *Ensure staff are supported and managed, and their skills enhanced in order to optimise their contribution*
 - 4.6 *Improve HIC's capacity to ensure high levels of stakeholder satisfaction on a continuing basis, including continuous improvement of the project management systems*

APPENDIX – SOME DEFINITIONS

Definitions of consumers and participation vary due to different philosophies and political positions.

What is a Consumer?

We use the term 'Consumer' to include, **depending on the context:**

- people who are current users of health services
- patients or potential patients
- carers, parents /guardians, family members
- citizens as active members of the community and potential users of health services
- groups of consumers involved in the health system
- consumer organisations representing groups of consumers or sub-populations.

We believe in inclusion, diversity and equity. In our work we will prioritise population groups which are traditionally excluded from decision-making and experience health outcomes inequalities.

What is Consumer Participation?

"... that which encourages consideration and debate through processes that allow people to be involved in decision-making about their health care and that of the community. It necessitates the communication of your views, scrutiny of motive and an ability to listen and appreciate others' views and ideas. Through involvement decisions are made that may accommodate a range of perspectives."

(Victorian Department of Human Services, 2005, Participation in your Health Service System: Victorian Consumers, Carers, and the Community Working Together with their Health Service and the Department of Human Services)

[Approved at the Board of Governance meeting on 26 November 2007]