

Message from the Board Chair



Tim Mulherin

Focusing on Consumer and Community Engagement

The Mackay Hospital and Health Board and I are committed to further embedding consumer and community engagement into the Mackay Hospital and Health Service (HHS) organisational culture to support us in delivering Queensland's best rural and remote health care.

Recently I provided a presentation to the senior leadership team for the Mackay HHS at the Heads of Department meeting where I spoke about my personal dedication to ensuring we are actively engaging and building strong relationships with our consumers and their families, carers and significant others as well as our communities, stakeholders, health care partners and staff. Effective engagement is the key to delivering person-centred, integrated and more transparent healthcare.

This year we have seen our Consumer Advisory Partners group come to fruition with some significant milestones achieved. We now have consumer representatives actively engaged on a number of our committees, sub-committees and specific project working groups. Our consumer representatives are providing a valuable conduit between the HHS and the communities we serve.

Stakeholder engagement is also pivotal to our engagement. I recently met with stakeholders across the region including Mackay Regional Council and James Cook University. The Chief Executive, Executive Director Rural Services and I also recently also attended the Whitsunday Community Cabinet in October to meet with community members and listen to their concerns and ideas.

This recent engagement has highlighted how instrumental our reference group structure is to how we actively engage and provide a voice to our consumer and communities. As such, we plan to enhance our reference group structure in early 2017.

The new structure will ensure engagement is reflective of our geographical location and will also have a stronger focus on including people from marginalised backgrounds. The review of the reference group structure will include a focus on supporting the development and growth of new and existing consumer and community reference groups across all of our facilities. The Board and I have recently committed to the development of a Bowen Community Reference Group which is expected to commence in early 2017.

Moving forward we can expect to see growth within our engagement space. This month (November) community and staff were given the opportunity to be a part of the preliminary research into the development of the Mackay HHS Consumer and Community Engagement Strategy 2017-2020. The Consumer and Community Engagement Strategy 2017-2020 will focus on the importance of consumers' and communities' active participation into shaping health policy, planning, service provision and evaluation.

If you would like to become more involved in healthcare for the Mackay HHS region make sure you join our Community of Interest Facebook Group by visiting www.facebook.com/groups/mackayhhsengagement or you can visit our website www.mackay.health.qld.gov.au We value the importance of actively involving patients, their families and carers, and the community in decision making processes which shape the service, treatment and care we provide.

Kind Regards,

Tim Mulherin

