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Foreword

Every day West Moreton Health staff care for people with a clear goal in mind: to provide safe, excellent, person-centred care.

This means we listen and work in partnership with consumers and members of the West Moreton community as we constantly improve how we deliver care.

The new West Moreton Health Consumer Engagement Strategy 2018-2021 sets out how we will join with consumers and our community in true partnerships. It sets out how we will engage in a respectful and purposeful way to deliver safe, excellent health care here in West Moreton.

The Strategy provides a way to gather feedback, including listening to individual experiences and working with consumers and staff to plan, design and evaluate our services. This is expressed at West Moreton as Caring Better Together.

We have many challenges in West Moreton, including high rates of chronic disease, growing populations and demand, and a high number of disadvantaged people, with Indigenous people still having a significant gap in life expectancy compared with non-indigenous people. We also have many patients from diverse backgrounds living in West Moreton.

We are determined to tackle these challenges in partnership with the West Moreton community.

West Moreton consumers have been involved in drafting this work and we thank them for their time, energy and investment in our health service.
Introduction

West Moreton Health is committed to person-centred care, which is at the heart of our Strategic Plan.

Person-centred care is being respectful and responsive to the preferences, needs and values of patients, consumers, colleagues and community. Person-centred care has its focus on the whole person, not just the physical aspects of their health. It’s the provision of care that is informed by each individual situation and the needs of consumers.

Care is person-centred when people are treated with dignity and respect, when information is shared with them, and participation and collaboration in healthcare processes is encouraged and supported to the extent which the individual chooses to engage.

Delivering person-centred care benefits patients, consumers, clinicians, health service organisations and the health system. There is demonstrated evidence of clear links between good consumer experience, and high-quality health care with improved clinical outcomes for patients.

As a health service we listen, and we use appropriate tools and techniques to encourage the two-way communication that is necessary for the provision of person-centred care. We form genuine partnerships with consumers and the West Moreton community to plan, develop, implement and evaluate service planning, service delivery, and service improvement.

The West Moreton Health Consumer Engagement Strategy will provide direction for staff to always work with consumers to drive better health outcomes.

Acknowledgement of Country

West Moreton Health acknowledges the traditional owners and caretakers of the land in which our services are located and operate. We pay our respects to their ancestors and Elders past, present and emerging and pay tribute to their ongoing connection to land, wind and water.
Who are we?

West Moreton Health exists to provide, and to help others provide, health and wellbeing services to the Somerset, Scenic Rim, Lockyer Valley, Ipswich, Springfield and Ripley communities. It serves a population of 280,000 people spread across 9,521km from Esk to the north, Gatton to the west, Ipswich to the east and Boonah to the south.

West Moreton Health is responsible for the management of the following services within the health service’s catchment including:

- Boonah Health
- Esk Health
- Gatton Health
- Goodna Health
- Ipswich Health Precinct:
  - Ipswich Hospital
  - Ipswich Oral Health Clinic
  - Community Health Plaza
- Laidley Health
- The Park – Centre for Mental Health, Treatment Research and Education
- Gailes Community Care Unit
- Prison Health Services.

West Moreton Health is fortunate to have strong networks and relationships with our community partners to support our theme of Caring Better Together.

Our region is experiencing rapid growth, with the population predicted to increase by over 100% to almost 600,000 by 2036. West Moreton demographics are diverse, and include both metropolitan and rural settings. The strength of West Moreton Health as a health service lies in this diversity. In our health service over 17% of the total population were born outside Australia, 8% speak a language other than English at home and 4.1% are Indigenous Australians.

We are committed to investing in the local community, this investment will be achieved by valuing the strengths that this community, and its healthcare consumers can contribute, in the form of feedback, suggestions and ideas that will inform and improve health outcomes for patients.
Principles

West Moreton Health knows that successful engagement with consumers will position us to better understand the needs of the people who use or will potentially use our health services. We have adopted the following Health Consumer Queensland (HCQ) principles of consumer engagement as our guide to help us provide effective episodes of consumer engagement:

**Participation:**
Consumers participate and are involved in decision making about the West Moreton Health healthcare system.

**Person-centered:**
Consumer engagement processes are consumer-centered.

**Accessible and Inclusive:**
The needs of those who may experience barriers to engage effectively are considered to enhance their accessibility and inclusion.

**Partnership:**
Consumers, community, West Moreton Health staff and partner organisations work in an effective partnership.

**Mutual respect and value:**
Consumer engagement is undertaken with mutual respect and valuing of each other’s experiences and contributions.

**Diversity:**
The consumer engagement process values and supports the diversity of all those involved.

**Support:**
Consumers are provided with the support that they need to engage meaningfully with the West Moreton Health healthcare system.

**Influence:**
Consumer engagement influences West Moreton Health health policy, planning and system reform, and feedback is provided about how this engagement has influenced outcomes.

**Continuous improvement:**
Consumer engagement is reviewed and evaluated to drive continuous improvement throughout the organisation.

Elements of engagement – the *engagement spectrum*
The level of consumer involvement in health service planning, design, delivery and improvement will vary depending on the specific activity or service, and the individual’s preferences. This involvement will range from the collection of patient experience information that informs immediate bedside practice change through to co-designed projects, where direct consumer advice is used in formulating ideas and solutions to address systemic issues. At West Moreton Health, we use the HCQ elements of engagement to describe the varying elements of consumer engagement. These elements of engagement include:

**Inform:**
We will keep you informed.

**Consult:**
We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how your input influenced any decision taken.

**Involve:**
We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and we will provide feedback on how your input influenced the decision.

**Collaborate:**
We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.

**Consumer led:**
We will implement what you decide, utilising a co-designed project approach to the change.

We will ensure that we work with consumers at the involve, collaborate and consumer-led levels wherever we can.

“I have been a consumer of this health service for 39 years. In this time, I have experienced a productive, considerate and compassionate health service to my needs. As a consumer representative I now feel I can give back to the health service through sharing my feedback and advocating for their services to my community”.

– Michelle Maybanks
Links with West Moreton Health Strategic Plan

Our patient, carer and consumer engagement is directly linked to the West Moreton Health Strategic Plan 2017-2021, which aligns the work to the future community we wish to help create. The Strategic Plan, along with other key documents, provides key performance indicators are collectively contributing to the vision and goals.

“Being a consumer representative for West Moreton Health is important because having my voice heard, working collaboratively and sharing my lived experiences help inform health improvements for the benefit of not only myself and my family but for all members of my community.”

– Belinda Barrie
Our promise

The West Moreton Health Consumer Engagement Strategy makes sure that consumers, carers and the community have a voice when it comes to their healthcare. The West Moreton Health Consumer Engagement Strategy provides a framework for us to gather feedback from across the system, from the collection of individual patient experiences, through to system level participation by consumers to ensure the consumer’s journey is appropriate and of a high standard of care.

The West Moreton Health Consumer Engagement Strategy explains that we will achieve this purpose through adopting the five elements of consumer engagement and linking the choices we make together to key performance indicators.

1. Inform

- We will implement systems and processes to ensure patients, carers, families and consumers have access to information about their healthcare rights at all stages of their journey through our health service.
- We will implement systems and processes to ensure patients and consumers understand their treatments, including treatment risks, benefits, and alternatives so they can give informed consent to any treatment provided.
- We will share decision making in care; provide education to patients and consumers regarding clinical status, progress and prognosis; update them on changes to care processes; and give them any other information; process of care; and information to help ensure autonomy and ability to promote and self-manage their own health care.
- We will ensure that patients, and/or substitute decision makers are involved in care planning, setting goals and making decisions about their current and future care to the fullest extent possible.

How will we measure this?

- We will ensure that the Charter of Healthcare Rights is available for all patients, in formats that they understand.
- We will measure patient experience by collecting information to drive change and improvement, including information on individual access to the Charter, the level of planning and decision making in care and the experience of informed consent. We will use this information to measure consistent improvement and change across all our services.

2. Consult

- We will partner with patients, carers, families and consumers in a manner that is respectful of, and responsive to, their preferences, needs and their values.
- We will provide and communicate mechanisms for consumers and the community to bring ideas forward, and put processes in place to explain how that information has been used to improve how we deliver care.
- We will improve the identification and recruitment of consumers interested in participating in and co-designing our health service.

How will we measure this?

- Consumers will have the opportunity to be involved as representatives in their area of interest, and have access to information in accessible formats and language that makes it easy to understand.
- We will report on the number of consumers currently participating as consumer representatives in our health service.
3. Involve

- We will partner with consumers in West Moreton to design our services (including governance) in a way that acknowledges and supports the individual contributions of consumers.
- We will support the learning and development of consumer representatives so they can confidently provide the perspectives of themselves and others in the planning, development, implementation and review of improved health services.
- We will develop and implement well-defined strategies to engage with culturally and linguistically diverse people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- We will take the time to regularly check in with all West Moreton Health consumer representatives, to support their involvement so they can engage effectively with the Health Service.
- We will train our workforce in the community and individual benefits that come from having consumers actively engaged as health care partners.
- We will develop a workforce that has a strong appreciation for diversity including diversity of culture and language and of the need to ensure that both are accommodated in the delivery of inclusive services.

How will we measure this?

- There will be accessible information that can link consumers to specific activities or work underway with West Moreton Health.
- We will provide an orientation program to assist consumer representatives when engaging in West Moreton Health.
- We will partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the community, so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have equitable access to health services within West Moreton Health that are culturally appropriate and safe.
- We will develop training for our staff, and identify opportunities for ongoing training and support, via on-line/interactive resources and face-face communications such as staff forums or at other relevant staff meetings.

4. Collaborate

- Our systems and committees (clinical and consumer governance) and quality improvement systems will support partnering with consumers and carers in healthcare planning, design, measurement and evaluation.
- We will communicate with consumers in a way that supports effective consumer partnerships, and to ensure that West Moreton Health provides information about care, treatment and health that consumers can understand (health literacy).

How will we measure this?

- There will be a published policy and procedure framework that guides staff in partnering with consumers on projects or service improvements.
- Leadership positions that have significant consumer engagement accountabilities will have consumers on the recruitment panels.
- West Moreton Health groups and committees will be refreshed periodically to ensure that they have consumer input that is reflective of the diversity of our community.
“Being a Consumer Representative is important to me as it allows me to share the views of my community and helps shape the health system to be more inclusive and responsive to the needs of people with disability”.

– Peter Tully

The West Moreton Health Consumer Engagement Strategy is about leading actions that demonstrate and embrace consumer involvement in the design and delivery of care at West Moreton Health.
The Yarning Circle

Conversations about care and treatment can now take place beyond the clinical space at Ipswich Hospital following a project that was set up to better meet the needs of West Moreton’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. A Yarning Circle, created outside the hospital’s East Street entrance, is a collaboration between West Moreton Health and Traditional Owners and Indigenous Elders, supported by Ipswich City Council and the Darling Downs and West Moreton Primary Health Network.

The Yarning Circle is a culturally safe and appropriate place where Indigenous patients and their families can meet with Elders or Indigenous Hospital Liaison Officers to discuss any concerns and help make a decision that will lead to better health outcomes. It was created using sandstone and granite rocks and ironbark timber donated by West Moreton Health project manager Justin Bowman from his own Bowman Park pastoral property.

Traditional Owner and Ugarapul Elder Uncle Ross Anderson said the Yarning Circle would provide a place for Elders to sit and talk and share their wisdom and knowledge with patients and their families. “It will be a place of emotional, spiritual and social healing and by connecting with others, we hope Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients will find comfort at a time when they are away from their families and homes.”
Words for wellbeing

Words for Wellbeing is a self-help program implemented by West Moreton Health to provide accurate health resources prescribed by general practitioners and health professionals via the region’s libraries.

The initiative involves a cohesive partnership between West Moreton Health, Ipswich City Council, Lockyer Valley Regional Council, Scenic Rim Regional Council, Somerset Regional Council and the University of Southern Queensland.

The program is designed to support patients to understand and manage common conditions with relevant and accurate information. This self-help approach to health care has been found to work best when it is supported by health professionals and aims to reduce inaccurate self-diagnosing of patients.

Under the program a general practitioner, nurse or health professional will suggest a range of books available for borrowing which directly relate to the patient’s current mental or physical health concern.

Although books can sometimes work on their own, research has shown that self-help approaches work best when there is support from a health professional.

Health professionals recommend books on a Words for Wellbeing prescription flyer, talking to the patient about reading to improve their understanding of their health condition. The initiative is the first in West Moreton to incorporate resources dedicated to both physical and mental health concerns. The books will allow patients to read and think about ways of improving their health with professional support.
Appendix 1:

Definitions

The following definitions have been taken from the Health Consumers Queensland (HCQ) Consumer and Community Engagement Framework and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).

Consumers

Consumers are people who use, or are potential users, of health services including their family and carers. Consumers may participate as individuals, groups, organisations of consumers, consumer representatives or communities.

Consumer Representative

A Consumer Representative is a health consumer who has taken up a specific role to advocate on behalf of consumers, with the overall aim of improving healthcare. A Consumer Representative is someone who voices consumer perspectives other than their own and takes part in decision making on behalf of consumers.

Carers

Carers are people who provide care and support to family members and friends who have a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, terminal illness, an alcohol or other drug issue or who are frail aged.

Community

Community refers to groups of people or organisations with a common local or regional interest in health. Communities may connect through a community of place such as a neighbourhood, region, suburb; a community of interest such as patients, industry sector, profession or environment group; or a community that forms around a specific issue such as improvements to public healthcare or through groups sharing cultural backgrounds, religions or languages.

Consumer engagement

Processes through which consumers and carers actively partner with health organisations in their own healthcare and in health policy, planning, service delivery and evaluation at all levels of the health system.

Community engagement

Community engagement refers to the connections between government, communities and citizens in the development and implementation of policies, programs, services and projects. It encompasses a wide variety of government-community interactions ranging from information sharing to community consultation and, in some instances, active participation in government decision making. It incorporates public participation, with people being empowered to contribute to decisions affecting their lives, through the acquisition of skills, knowledge and experience.

Patient experience

Patient experience encompasses the range of interactions that patients have with the health care system, including their care from health plans, and from doctors, nurses, and staff in hospitals, physician practices, and other health care facilities.
Appendix 2: References


