

Engaging with citizens

Themes from the AIHPS study:

Consumer Engagement in Australian Health Policy

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The AIHPS project

- Review and assess current practices for engaging consumers
- Contribute to the development of more effective consumer engagement strategies
- Focus at the level of health policy



Project outcomes

- Literature review (August 2006)
- Framework (September 2006)
- Qualitative interviews (March 2007)
- Case studies (April 2008)
- This event
- Final monograph



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1. Poorly understood, inconsistently practiced, and under theorised

- Policy decisions rarely involve significant levels of engagement
- Short consultation and community submissions most likely



2. Poorly defined

- No common language to discuss engagement
- Distinction between consumer, community, and citizen
- Distinction between engagement, participation, and involvement



3. A mindset, not a technique

- About bringing in a consumer perspective
- Involves some element of power transfer
- No 'one size fits all'



4. Requires organisational commitment and a high-level champion

- High-level champions – the driving force who influence the organisational culture
- Cultural change is slow to develop



5. An ongoing process, not a fixed time event

- Not something positioned between a draft policy and a final decision
- Most successful if consumers are involved right throughout the policy-development process



6. Consumers need to be confident their input will be valued

- Consumers want to know the extent of their influence



7. Consumers usually need background information

- Consumers need well-written, clear, background information that provides sufficient detail
- Information allows consumers to engage in meaningful discussion and deliberation



8. Different approaches offer different opportunities for policy development

- Consultation/information gathering
- Discussion/deliberation



Consumer engagement



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