Western NSW PHN
Community Advisory Council Terms of Reference (TOR)

1. Background

PHNs have been established by the Commonwealth Department of Health to:

- Increase the availability, efficiency and effectiveness of primary health care services for patients, particularly those at risk of poor health outcomes; and
- Improve coordination of care to ensure patients receive the right care in the right place at the right time.

2. Purpose of Group

The purpose of the Community Advisory Council/s is to advise the Western Health Alliance Limited (WHAL) Board on locally relevant community perspectives to improve the health and wellbeing of primary health care consumers in the region. WNSW PHN believes that health care consumers (patients, carers and their families) are essential partners in creating better health care. We value the knowledge and lived experience that consumers can bring to the WNSW PHN to inform strategic direction.

3. Role and Function

The main role and functions of WNSW PHN's Community Advisory Council/s are to:

- Provide advice to the Board regarding the organisation's strategic direction and priorities.
- Make recommendations to the Board and Executive on ways to promote best practice consumer and community engagement across and within the organisation's governance, culture and operations, with a focus on key functions including primary health care commissioning.
- Review and recommend improved engagement and communication with consumers and local communities by providing feedback on WNSW PHN's Consumer and Community Engagement (CCE) Framework.
- Identification of current health issues and inefficiencies within local communities from a consumer perspective.
- Use patient and carer stories to inform and communicate service improvements or system changes required.
- Suggest strategies to improve consumer health literacy, patient self-management and care navigation skills.
- Provide advice on how best to introduce consumer perspectives on areas linked to WNSW PHN's commissioning work.

The Community Advisory Council/s may also be asked to actively consider relevant strategic issues emerging from the WNSW PHN Aboriginal Health Council, GPs in our region, the Western and Far West Clinical Advisory Councils, other clinical networks and/or community groups.

The WNSW PHN Community Advisory Council/s will be guided by WNSW PHN's Strategic Plan and will act in accordance with WNSW PHN applicable policies. These will be available from the Council's Coordinator.

4. Membership

WNSW PHN Community Advisory Council/s will be individual members, with 10 members on each council appointed for a three-year term. Membership will be skills based and may include:

- Consumer/Carer.
- Community Services.
- Population health and health inequity.
- Health systems and service development with a focus on prevention, primary and integrated care.
- Clinical governance and organisational development.
- Local government.
- Regional and community development.

Membership may include people with relevant experience in the following areas:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and well-being.
- Chronic Disease management.
- Mental Health.
- Maternal and Child Health.
- Disabilities.
- Carers.
- Aged Care.
- Primary Prevention and Early Intervention.

The Community Advisory Council/s also seek to maintain a membership that is representative of the geographic spread of the five planning sub regions within the WNSW PHN boundary and to ensure an equitable voice from smaller communities where access to services is limited.

The Community Advisory Council/s, via the Chair may invite other individuals to attend meetings as and when necessary for specific purposes or to provide expert advice or information to the group.

It is important that the Community Advisory Council/s members abide by the values of the WNSW PHN including Integrity, Collaboration, Professionalism, Respect and Innovation.

5. Appointment

Following a process of selection and assessment through the WHAL Governance Committee, the WHAL Board will appoint members including Council Chairs. Selection will be based on demonstrated experience, strength of networks and ensuring the broadest possible cross section of community interests are represented on the Community Advisory Council/s.

6. Duration of Membership

The Board will appoint Community Advisory Council/s members for a term of up to three years.

Membership may be terminated by the Board for breach of the Terms of Reference and other guidelines and requirements, including the WHAL Code of Conduct.

7. Roles and responsibilities

WNSW PHN will:

- Report to members on strategic activity undertaken by the WNSW PHN.
- Consult with Community Advisory Council members on significant health issues, projects or other issues that impact on consumer health.
- Support the ongoing professional development of the Community Advisory Council members, with a focus on building the members knowledge in relation to the strategic objectives of the WNSW PHN.
- Undertake all duties to enable effective and efficient management of Council meetings.
- Facilitate liaison between the Community Advisory Councils, Aboriginal Health Council, Clinical Advisory Councils and the Board.
- Provide direct contact to the Board through a nominated Board Liaison Director.

Community Advisory Council members will:

- Attend and contribute to Community Advisory Council meetings.
- Read and review information circulated.
- Objectively communicate the views and health issues affecting consumers and members of any networks they may represent.
- Where relevant, seek feedback or input from their communities.
- Where relevant, provide feedback regarding meeting outcomes and decisions to consumer networks.
- From time to time, contribute to out-of-session consultation.
- Connect to the broader consumer health environment.

8. Confidentiality

Matters discussed at WNSW PHN's Community Advisory Council meetings may be of a confidential nature and must be treated as such by members. Meeting papers and other materials must only be used or disclosed for the purpose of the Community Advisory Council function, unless otherwise advised by the Chair of Community Advisory Council and/or WNSW PHN's CEO.

9. Extent of Authority

WNSW PHN's Community Advisory Council is an advisory body and does not have authority to:

- Convene without prior approval.
- Speak on behalf of WNSW PHN without prior approval of the CEO.

10. Probity and Conflict of Interest

Members have obligations for declaring any actual or potential Conflicts of Interest, including financial, professional and personal.

11. Meeting Frequency and Schedule

The Community Advisory Council/s will meet at least three times per year – by face to face meetings and/or tele/video conference. Members are expected to attend all meetings.

12. Quorum

A quorum is considered 50% plus one member in attendance.

13. Endorsement and Review

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed at the end of term or as required.

14. Evaluation

The performance of the Community Advisory Council/s will be evaluated by the WHAL Board against these Terms of Reference after twelve months.

15. Reimbursement of Expenses and Sitting Fees

When attending meetings or workshops Community Advisory Council members will be eligible for reimbursement of appropriate travel expenses. Sitting fees will be paid to members, except if they are an ex-officio member such as the Far West and Western NSW LHD representatives or in other paid positions.

16. Related Documents

- WHAL Code of Conduct
- Confidentiality Agreement
- WHAL Councils and Other Meetings Remuneration Policy.