

Media Release – 6 April 2019

Building a Consumer Health Voice in Tasmania

Tasmania will join the ranks of other Australian states by establishing a state-wide organisation to champion the views of local health care consumers.

Work commenced late last year with the appointment of Bruce Levett, to undertake work on designing the new organisation.

“It is still early days and we are still in the building phase, which to be honest, is a rare but exciting position to be in”, explained Bruce Levett, the new Executive Officer.

“The Minister for Health, Michael Ferguson and Primary Health Tasmania have provided three-year seed funding for the establishment of an independent organisation that supports consumer input into the Tasmanian health system”.

Design of the new state-based healthcare consumer organisation – will enable the health system, healthcare providers and policy makers to partner with consumers to ensure the consumer voice helps shape a health system tailored to their needs.

“Consumers are best placed to know what they, their families and their communities need”.

“Our first step was to involve consumers in the design of this organisation so it does what they want it to do. We had 45 interested stakeholders attend a design workshop in Campbell Town in February to provide their views on how we should structure the organisation and what our core functions should be”.

“Our next step is to work with consumers to ensure they have the skills and confidence to be able to present their views and that of their communities so they can contribute meaningfully”.

Consumer training is being rolled out across the state, with sessions being held in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie over the next two days **[8 and 9 April]** with approximately 40 people attending.

“Training of consumers is critical. It is important that they understand some of the dynamics of working on committees, forums and meetings and they can do so in a safe way, but also in a way that allows them to respectfully contribute their ideas and be heard”.

“It is important to realise that – and I believe for us to be successful and have a meaningful voice, that we work closely in partnership with the system, that we provide a proactive and evidenced based voice that is strong and is presented to all levels of the decision-making process, from the top down”.

“For further information on this initiative can be found on www.chf.org.au/health-consumers-tasmania”

ENDS

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