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**Tasmanians have their say on the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights**

The Commission responsible for delivering the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights, the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, travelled to Tasmania to seek feedback on the second edition of the Charter.

Sixteen people from across Tasmania, from Burnie to Huonville, travelled to Hobart to attend the workshop. It was coordinated by Health Consumers Tasmania, the recently established peak body for consumer advocacy in accessing the Tasmanian health system.

The updated Charter was launched in August this year after extensive consultation with consumers, health service staff and policy makers nationwide.

The Commission’s representative, Naomi Poole, said "The meeting was a great opportunity to hear about what matters to Tasmanian consumers. To work together to improve people’s understanding of their healthcare rights."

CEO of Health Consumers Tasmania, Bruce Levett, said, “The Charter outlines the rights of consumers accessing health care in Australia and these rights cover the fundamental right of access to health care”.

“For Tasmanians, this may mean they are given clear information about services including waiting times and costs and what the implications will be on their health and wellbeing”.

The Charter describes what you, or someone you care for, can expect when receiving health care. It includes:

* Access to healthcare services and treatment that meets your needs, including physical and financial barriers, regardless of where you live,
* Safe and high-quality health care
* Being treated respectfully
* Receiving privacy
* The ability to ask questions and participate in planning and decision-making
* Receiving clear information about your condition and the benefits, costs and any risks associated with your treatment
* Being treated fairly when providing feedback, and receiving a timely, transparent response

The Charter also provides key contacts for consumers on how to take things further if they believe their rights are not met.

“Those present were particularly vocal around the issue of access to healthcare and what is being done to ensure that people working in the health system understand and practise the Charter”, Mr Levett said.

There was also substantial discussion on how the community can be better informed about their health care rights. Emma Shanahan from the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre said "Attending today is important to me as an individual health care consumer, and it's also about enacting the Charter as an organisation that delivers healthcare services, so we can empower our clients with an understanding of their rights"

Mr Levett said “I encourage everyone to take a look at the Charter and share their impressions.”

“It’s about empowering consumers to be active and to fully engage with the healthcare system so they can be fully involved in the planning and decision making about their own health care”.

The Charter can be found by visiting www.shorturl.at/acsv2

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