



Engaging our communities

Consumer and community engagement is at the heart of the work we do at Darling Downs Health to make sure people have input into their health journey. **Partnering with consumers** is one of the pillars of our strategic plan (engage) and the **National Safety and Quality Health Service Standard 2**. Our values are consumer-centred and align with the vision for our health service – *Caring for Communities, Healthier Together*.

Engaging our communities

Engagement with our consumers, carers, and the community is essential to improving health outcomes and building high-quality healthcare.

No one understands the consumer experience better than consumers themselves. They are a valuable partner to support the work we do in planning, designing, delivering, and measuring the success of health services.

The purpose of engaging with our communities is to make sure our services are meeting their needs.



Our aims

- » Involve consumers, carers and the community in planning, delivery and evaluation of services so we are responsive and innovative.
- » Build channels of communication and engagement between our facilities/services, the consumers and communities they serve.
- » Ensure local communities are well informed about local and wider health service issues and priorities.
- » Support individuals to feel valued and respected when actively partnering in their health care.



Our outcomes

- » **Engage** – our diverse communities.
- » **Collaborate** – with our many stakeholders.
- » **Lead** – continuous improvement in engagement practices.
- » Maintain effective communication and accessible information.



Our objectives

- » Increase opportunities for consumers to get involved.
- » Diversify communication channels to improve the health literacy of our communities.
- » Encourage diversity of consumers on consumer advisory groups.
- » Capture the consumer journey.

When we engage

Patient and consumer partnerships take many forms and at many different levels. Darling Downs Health will seek to engage consumers by listening, understanding and responding by:

- » Developing a new consumer publication (fact sheets, brochures, forms)
- » Evaluating a service or model of care
- » Designing or reconfiguring a ward, waiting room or facility
- » Planning a new initiative, project or community event
- » Recruiting staff in key positions as part of a recruitment panel
- » Forming a committee or working group.



Types of Engagement

Inform: increase visibility of consumer group outcomes and encourage participation.

Consult: survey our communities to understand problems and find out what alternatives and solutions they would like to see implemented.

Involve: outline how we partner with consumers in policy, procedure, and strategy document.

Collaborate: embed check-up pulse survey capacity for consumer advisory groups to provide feedback and report these findings back to the organisation.

Empower: incorporate consumer-led feedback on services into the future and report each year on changes made.



Indicators of success

- ◆ Improved community satisfaction and patient experience.
- ◆ Enhanced capability to engage with community and consumers.
- ◆ Increased health literacy and health outcomes for consumers.
- ◆ Greater involvement by consumers to improve health care services for communities.

Strategic deliverables

Engage our diverse communities

Stage of engagement	What	How	When
Involve	Increase opportunities for consumers to get involved	A consumer group at every hospital	December 2023
Consult	Diversify communication channels to improve the health literacy of our communities	Survey our communities to find out how they would like to be communicated with	December 2023
Inform	Encourage diversity of consumers on consumer advisory groups	Increase visibility of consumer group outcomes and encourage participation	Ongoing

Maintain effective communication and accessible information

Stage of engagement	What	How	When
Involve	Increase the accessibility of information for our communities	Review the Darling Downs Health website to be fully accessible and responsive across devices	December 2023
Collaborate	Enhance the accessibility of health information	Increase views on Darling Downs Health content on social media and website	December 2023
Consult	Improve health information	Review all consumer facing content to ensure accessibility and readability	Ongoing

Lead continuous improvement in engagement practices

Stage of engagement	What	How	When
Empower	Increase the capacity for consumers to give greater input into health service collateral	Provide training as part of their role in consumer advisory groups	December 2023
Involve	Develop, evaluate and improve existing policies, procedures and guidelines to support partnerships	A policy, procedure, and strategy document that outlines how we partner with consumers	December 2023
Collaborate	Ask for feedback on how we can improve consumer and community engagement	Embed check-up pulse survey capacity for consumer advisory groups to provide feedback	Ongoing