

# COMMUNITY CALLED TO ACTION: STRATEGIES AND SUCCESSES IN ENGAGING CONSUMER ADVOCATES IN CANCER RESEARCH PROGRAMS



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Actively involving consumers in research and cancer control is integral to improving the outcomes and experiences of those affected by cancer. The Hunter Cancer Research Alliance (HCRA) set about establishing and engaging with a local Consumer Advisory Panel (CAP).



## VISION AND PURPOSE

Establish a Consumer Advisory Panel that will:

- Offer **insight** into the consumer experience
- Give a **community perspective** on research priorities
- Ensure research materials are **appropriate**
- Improve local research **dissemination**
- Establish sustainable **mentoring relationships** for scientists



## BUILD RELATIONSHIPS AND SKILLS

- HCRA **Community Engagement Committee** (researchers, clinicians and CAP representatives) oversee CAP activities
- HCRA Operations Team is the point of contact for between CAP members and researchers, ensuring consumer advocates receive **regular, consistent information and updates**.
- CAP members receive regular newsletters, showcasing researcher-consumer **partnerships, achievements, tips** on being a consumer advocate in research and training opportunities.
- Cancer Council NSW provides **formal training** for interested members



## PARTNERSHIPS AND RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

- **Cancer Council NSW** and **Cancer Voices** facilitated opportunities for recruitment
- **Hunter Medical Research Institute** provided access to their database of local research volunteers and developed video content for **social media**
- **Community presence** – HCRA promoted the panel at existing community events
- Information brochures were distributed in **Oncology settings** e.g. patient support groups



## FACILITATE CONNECTIONS

- A **Researcher-Consumer matching service** brings researchers and CAP members together to **achieve common goals**
- An annual **Public Lecture** is held to coincide with the Hunter Cancer Research Symposium
- **Community Showcase** events provide opportunities for researchers to receive feedback from CAP members, refine skills in lay communication and make informal networks



## WHERE TO FROM HERE?

- Have fostered meaningful connections between researchers and the community
- Continue to review priorities to further embed CAP members into our research culture.
- Are striving to move beyond the mindset of consumer engagement as a 'tick a box' for grant applications.
- Continue to champion consumer engagement as integral to translational cancer research.

36 CAP members

13 projects reviewed

8 formally trained

CAP representation on funding review panels

### Acknowledgements

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