



# HEALTH ISSUES CENTRE

2016  
ANNUAL  
REPORT



FRAMES OF REFERENCE -  
EXPLORING CONSUMER PARTICIPATION



## Health Issues Centre

Level 8  
255 Bourke Street  
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Phone: (03) 9664 9343  
Fax: (03) 9663 7955

[www.healthissuescentre.org.au](http://www.healthissuescentre.org.au)

[info@healthissuescentre.org.au](mailto:info@healthissuescentre.org.au)

Inc. Re No: A14282J

ABN: 96 599 565 577

# CONTENTS

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT	2
CEO'S REPORT	4
STAFF HIGHLIGHTS	6
GETTING TO KNOW OUR STAFF	8
BOARD OF GOVERNANCE	11
MEMBERS & SUBSCRIBERS	14
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS	15

# CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

It is very pleasing to report that this year has been a year of significant growth, I could safely even say exponential growth. We have nearly doubled our staff whilst we also continue to employ consultants on an as-needs basis.

For an organisation the size of the Health Issues Centre this demonstrates substantial growth.

Our growth reflects the changing environment but also the Board's vision and determination to transform the health system. This could only be realized under the leadership and vision applied by our current Chief Executive Officer and his staff.

Such growth can come at a price and we are cognisant that we also need to consolidate and ensure that these changes are effectively embedded within our organisation and also in the health system. Maintaining that balance has been tricky at times however, so far we have been ably maintaining it. Like with all capable and mature organisations we have assessed the risk and mitigated it whilst keeping our business running smoothly.

Externally we have seen significant change. Too much change though can have some negative impacts and over the last year we have seen a culmination of significant reviews and changes broadly impacting on Acute Health Services, Primary Health, Mental Health, Aged Care and Disability. Inevitably there are always unexpected outcomes which impact on the delivery of service and that means on consumers. At times these unexpected outcomes can be experienced negatively by patients, consumers and carers. Anecdotally consumers are telling us that the changes when implemented with limited planning and with little or no consumer input can have adverse effects on their health and well being.

There has been significant demand put upon us as an organisation to participate in health system change. As an organisation it is gratifying to be experiencing such demand for participation and input into reviews, committees, surveys, focus groups, consultancies and participation partners.

At times though the demand has stretched our resources to full capacity and we have had to be selective in what we participate in and what we choose not to be involved in.

It is very pleasing to be reporting that we have developed a range of projects which we feel will assist in transforming the health system and place the consumer at the centre. An example has been the Advance Care Planning Project event in October “Unspoken: What will become of me?” The project was sponsored by the Department of Health and Human Services. This project was an immensely successful event engaging thousands of community members in a variety of ways. We are also in the process of developing capacity building training units in the areas of co-design and clinical governance. Consumers need to be adequately trained to participate effectively in building and transforming the health system in meaningful ways to achieve better outcomes. Co-design is the new catch phrase and we need to ensure that we are clear on what is meant by co-design and how consumers can be active co-designers. We have launched a first time project entitled Practice Partners where we sought applications from the sector for projects. The successful applicants will be announced at this year’s AGM. The response to our request seeking submissions was most gratifying as it demonstrates the considerable interest and commitment in the field to working effectively with consumers and carers. Our CEO will provide further details on all of our work in his report. Suffice it to say that this has been an immensely rewarding year for the Board as it supported all of the above mentioned projects and others to achieve its vision and strategic directions.

On behalf of the Health Issues Centre I would like to thank the Department of Health and Human Services for their ongoing support for some of our core projects which we would not have been otherwise able to deliver. It has been a true working

partnership and we hope that this coming year this working partnership will be even stronger as we consider further opportunities for consumer, carer and community participation.

I would like to thank my co-directors for their support and commitment to our vision and strategic direction. We have had a range of interesting discussions at our Board meetings as we tried to unpack complex issues and determine the best way to move forward. We have been fortunate to have a full and stable board with no changes over the last 12 months which is of great help to our work.

On behalf of the Board I would like to express our thanks to our Chief Executive Officer, Danny Vadasz, and his staff. They have achieved a remarkable year demonstrating commitment to our work and vision and willing to undertake new ventures as they arose. In an environment where change seems to be constant the staff got on with their jobs and ensured that we had a successful year where we delivered improvements to consumers, carers and community.

Last but not least I would like to thank our consumers, carers and community who engaged with us and participated on a range of requests for their involvement on a raft of projects. Your participation is critical to the changes that we are all trying to achieve. It is your voice that government responds to and as your voice gets stronger increasingly the health system will truly become person centred engaging you in meaningful co-design for better health and safety outcomes.

In terms of our future direction we are hoping to build on what we have already achieved by also further strengthening our partnership with consumers and working with those diverse communities that we all find harder to reach opening pathways for them to participate in meaningful ways.

**Sophy Athan**  
CHAIR



# CEO's REPORT

In last year's Annual Report I signalled our plans for an ambitious program for 2015/16.

I foreshadowed a HIC that would be a leader in innovative practice, offer a broader suite of capacity building opportunities and develop new pathways to engagement that would focus on giving voice to those who have no say.

I'm pleased to report on how we have delivered on those ambitions.

## **Capacity Building**

In addition to our established suite of offerings, HIC is developing four new consumer training modules. The first two: Clinical Governance and Co-Production are in testing phase and will be offered from early 2017. Two other modules: Consumers in research and Consumers and Quality and Safety are scheduled for launch before the end of 2017.

## **Practice Partners**

HIC has identified an enthusiasm for innovative consumer partnerships among health services but also a deficit of resources and expertise. To this end we have recently launched our Practice Partners program to support health services, community organisations and peak bodies in innovative projects promoting Person Centred Care and Consumer Engagement. The first call for submissions attracted 13 worthy applications. Our first four successful applicants will be announced at the AGM. As you will see they reflect a diversity of health service location, size and originality.

## **Clearing House**

In support of its role as a catalyst of innovation, HIC has taken on the role of a clearing house, ensuring that innovative projects will be disseminated and adapted to local circumstances. As well as promoting case studies through its web-site the HIC Journal has been revamped as a chronicle of best practice and thought leadership.

### **Pathways to Engagement**

While HIC is eager to improve Health Literacy for all, it also recognises the need to overcome existing barriers to participation. We are very proud of a number of novel and ground-breaking initiatives we have piloted:

- **Film production:**

The power of the narrative became all the more powerful this year when we established an in-house film production capacity. Our first short film *"I'll think about it tomorrow"*, based on consumer experiences will be screened at the AGM.

- **Social Media:**

HIC finally entered the Social Media space with a bang. Our initial foray into hosting on-line conversations engaged over 70,000 people and demonstrated not only that Social Media is an effective engagement tool but a powerful research tool.

- **Events:**

HIC set an exciting precedent when we created, produced and staged the unique event "Unspoken: What Will Become of Me?" to promote "difficult conversations" around Advance Care Planning. The successful event has firmly established HIC's credentials as a leader of innovation in the health sector and has generated national as well as regional interest and acclaim.

### **Recruiting for Diversity**

As a commitment to ensuring the voices of marginalised communities are heard, HIC has established the role of Diversity Officer. The organisation has specifically prioritised working with Aboriginal and CALD communities to ensure that their wisdom and perspectives shape the transformation of the health system.

### **Advocacy**

#### **Consumer inputs into inquiry:**

HIC has moved away from providing expert commentary on behalf of consumers to ensuring that collective consumer wisdom is heard. Our input into the recent review of Hospital Quality and Safety Assurance was based on extensive consumer consultation which informed the 14 recommendations submitted as our report.

#### **Public advocacy**

HIC's voice has been absent for some time from public debate around contemporary health issues. As part of our strategy to become an essential media reference point HIC commissioned a Publicist to re-establish awareness of HIC as a participant in public health conversations.

#### **Restructure and recruitment**

For the last few years HIC has operated with a very flat organisational structure whereby every staff member has been a direct report to the CEO. To prepare for a period of growth and opportunity we have differentiated our work into separate disciplines to create a scalable structure. This includes creation of two new managerial positions (Manager Communications and Engagement and Operations Manager). We have also expanded our skills base by tapping into University work-placement programs. Both Damien Rogers (Videographer) and Zoe Dragwidge (Social Media Officer) were recruited through Swinburne University and have made significant contributions to our collective efforts. The year also saw the departure of Emma Sayers who led our early research work in Advance Care Planning.

### **Future prospects**

Much of our work in the last 12 months has been to prepare HIC for a variety of opportunities emerging in the consumer participation space. Throughout the year we have seen an increasing demand for our expertise in policy development, consultation, capacity development and health system reform. We believe we have demonstrated our thought and practice leadership through our initiatives and anticipate a growing role and influence for the organisation in the year ahead.

**Danny Vadasz**  
CEO



# STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

In a year packed with diverse opportunities and challenges, Staff have nominated the following activities as their personal highlights:

## **Training and Development – Tere Dawson**

One of our most satisfying achievements for the year was obtaining the re-accreditation of our nationally accredited courses by the Australian Skills Quality Authority. This was the culmination of 18 months of work to ensure the continued delivery of the courses nationally. The Graduate Certificate in Consumer and Community Engagement (10164NAT) and the Course in Consumer Leadership (10163NAT) were successfully delivered during the year in Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania and they continue to attract interest from health and community sectors with more than 30 courses delivered in the six years since 2010.

Non-accredited training and capacity development were also in high demand with over forty tailored training sessions delivered in metropolitan, regional and rural Victoria to staff, clinicians, Boards, executive teams and consumers and carers with a total of approximately 600 participants.

## **Peer Leadership Project – Esther Lim**

Recognising that this was the third and final year of our Empowering Participation Project, HIC focused the majority of its efforts in sector capacity development and peer support advocacy.

Fifty-nine peer leaders attended our one-day forums in Shepparton and Traralgon. These forums were delivered in partnership with organisations such as Parkinson's Victoria and Epilepsy Foundation to strengthen the capacity of peer support leaders in consumer leadership as well as to encourage them, and in turn their members, to take an active role in their own health care decisions. We also developed a three-hour Continuing Professional Development session – *Chronic Disease Self-Management: Doing it with me not for me* – for health professionals. We worked with The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and Melbourne Primary Care Network to deliver this training to 25 doctors, nurses and practice managers and allied health professionals.

The highlight of this year's project was certainly the development of two narrative videos and a podcast on peer support and its value in chronic disease self-management. These online advocacy tools would not have been possible without the support and involvement of five peer support groups and nine

health-related organisations. Since their launch in June 2016, the videos have garnered over 630 views and received encouraging feedback from the peer support sector.

The videos and podcast are available on Health Issues Centre's website. We would also like to thank the Department of Health and Human Services for making this project possible through the Health Conditions Support Grant.

## **Consultations – Susan Biggar**

### **Organisational Consultations**

HIC concluded its work with the Royal Australasian College of Physicians to develop a framework and recommend a series of strategies in consumer engagement and patient centred care across the College, in the areas of governance, policy and advocacy, and education. This work involved running a number of consultations across five states and New Zealand with physicians, trainees and consumers. The final outputs of the project were presented to the College Board in May 2016 and accepted by them.

### **Consumer Consultations**

At short notice, HIC organised a consumer consultation with Stephen Duckett and his team to provide input into their deliberations on the quality and, particularly, safety of hospital care in Victoria. HIC also produced a highly regarded written submission to that review.

Other consultations during the year included:

- The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare (NSQHS) commissioned a consultation to provide feedback on version 2 of the NSQHS Standards.
- DHHS commissioned HIC to run a consultation on the implementation of a Pharmacist-Administered Vaccination Program (the program) in Victoria commencing in 2016.



### **Committee work**

I provided consumer input on an ongoing (and short-term) basis to several committees, including judging both the Public Healthcare awards and the Volunteer healthcare awards. I continued to give input to the NHMRC AHPRA project advisory committee and the Royal Children's Hospital Clinical Quality and Safety Committee.

### **Consumer Step-Up - Mary Macheras-Magias**

This was an action packed year for CSU. Membership steadily grew; requests for consumers peaked significantly over the year and the type of requests were varied. Workshops for consumers ran in Melbourne, Ballarat and planning for Horsham began, we also ran one specifically for Department of Health and Human Services staff; this was also the year of Consumer Consultations (these are listed below); lastly we ran the inaugural Consumer Fest a network event for consumers. We listened and we heard the importance of belonging to a strong consumer network and having the opportunity to come together and share experiences.

### **One Day Forum**

This year we embarked on one of our more ambitiously named forums, ***Our Fabulous Failures: Learning from the past for better consumer engagement***. The aim of the day was not so much about services or individuals ruminating about their mistakes or failures, it was more about the roadblocks along the way and changing direction or thinking to achieve one's goal and reflecting on the learning from these events.

A highlight of the day was our debate: ***Consumer Engagement: a failure thus far***. It sparked lively discussion and provoked deep thinking about the issues.

# GETTING TO KNOW OUR STAFF



**DANNY VADASZ**

CEO

Danny was appointed Chief Executive Officer of Health Issues Centre in November 2014. Prior to this he spent five years with Australian Conservation Foundation, Australia's foremost environmental agency, as Deputy CEO and Chief Operating Officer/Director of Marketing.

With experience in business leadership, management, communications and marketing Danny has a long history in the health, corporate and not-for-profit sectors. He has worked extensively in health, environmental and social issues promotion, and in developing successful social enterprise initiatives.

Danny has a long and powerful background in community advocacy and is passionate about driving sustainable, positive change. Throughout his career he has demonstrated strong commitment to the consumer voice and to social justice.

He brings energy, knowledge and commitment to achieving better consumer health outcomes with and for consumers.



**NICKY BARRY**

SENIOR PROJECT AND CONSUMER SUPPORT COORDINATOR

Nicky is the go-to person on Community Advisory Committees, Nicky provides support, resources, advice and at times humor to Victoria's publicly funded health services. She is often called upon for her in-depth knowledge of relevant policies. She also coordinates the Rural Health Consumer Participation Project which aims to foster consumer participation across rural Victorian health services.

Nicky comes to us from the community development sector with extensive experience working with her local community. She has worked with volunteers, cultural and linguistically diverse communities, adult learners, parents, carers and children to develop services they need.



**SUSAN BIGGAR**

SENIOR MANAGER, CONSUMER PARTNERSHIPS

Susan has a passion for encouraging patient and family centred care across Australian health care settings. She leads our training in this, speaking from a strong consumer perspective. Susan launched our Consumers Step Up program, has responsibility for our one-day forums, is involved in policy work and general project management.

She is also a writer who has written for a variety of publications; her first book, *The Upside of Down*, was released in September 2014. Originally from San Francisco, she has lived in six countries over the past 25 years. She has three sons, two of whom are living with cystic fibrosis.



**TERE DAWSON**

SENIOR PROJECT OFFICER,  
CONSUMER PARTICIPATION CAPACITY  
DEVELOPMENT

Tere has over a decade of experience in consumer engagement and participation practice and research. She has an extensive research and academic background, a Masters of Public Health, Masters and PhD in sociology and anthropology and has published widely. She dedicated a four-year NHMRC Postdoctoral Research Fellowship to undertake research on women’s health and cultural diversity.

Using her Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, she was instrumental in the development of our nationally accredited courses in consumer leadership and engagement. The courses aim to develop the capacity of consumers and the health sector to implement best practice consumer engagement.

Tere manages consultancy, research and tailored training for the health sector and community groups across Australia.



**ESTHER LIM**

PROJECT OFFICER, CONSUMER  
PARTICIPATION PROJECTS

Esther has a passion for encouraging people to play an active role in their own health. For the last three years, she has lead HIC’s Empowering Participation Project which aims to strengthen the important work of consumer peer leaders in Victoria and establish peer support as a vital part of chronic disease care. Esther is Chair of the Chronic Illness Alliance Peer Supporters Network and has a background in public health and health promotion. Since August 2016, Esther has transitioned into a consumer engagement and cultural diversity role. Amongst the many hats Esther wears, she also coordinates our monthly *Full Circle* newsletter and is actively involved in the development and maintenance of this website.

Esther grew up in food-haven Singapore. Prior to Melbourne, she was developing health education programs and resources for children and adolescents with Health Promotion Board, Singapore.



**MARY MACHERAS-MAGIAS**

COORDINATOR, CONSUMER  
REPRESENTATION AND TRAINING

Mary is a HIC staff member who after facing her own health issues took a detour from teaching to become a consumer advocate and trainer. She initially came to HIC as a trainer for the accredited courses but more recently has taken responsibility within the Consumers Step-Up program, one-day forums and the development of new training approaches.

Mary continues her voluntary work as a consumer representative and sits on a number of committees both locally and nationally.

Currently she sits on two Cancer Australia committees: an Expert Group and a working party group; Southern Metropolitan Integrated Cancer Services (SMICS) shared care committee; SMICS Consumer Participation Development Group; during this financial year she was the Chairperson of Cancer Action Victoria; and has previously used her story to co-write, direct and perform in a play highlighting the issues pertaining to younger women with breast cancer.

## SOUZI MARKOS

SENIOR ADMIN OFFICER

Souzi is the engine that keeps all of us running. She has been with us for over 25 years and has a deep knowledge and understanding of the organisation and its history. She is responsible for all administrative functions and provides vital support to the CEO and broader team.

Souzi is the person that makes sure your enquiries find their way to the relevant staff member. So, if you have a question, why not give her a call?

## SHANE O'MEARA

Finance Officer

As our Finance Officer, Shane is the most important person in the organisation every second Tuesday (payday).

## ZOE DRAGWIDGE

Communications Officer

Zoe Dragwidge is in her second year of a Bachelor of Health Science (Health Promotion) at Swinburne University and is undertaking a six month placement with Health Issues Centre.

As Communications Officer, Zoe is taking on a variety of responsibilities. These include liaising with a range of health and community organisations, contributing to editorial pieces in the health care sector and implementing a successful social media campaign. More recently, she was involved in the planning and supervision of HIC's advance care planning event *Unspoken (What Will Become of Me?)*.

## DAMIEN ROGERS

Videographer

Damien Rogers is a final year Swinburne student enrolled in a Bachelor of Film and Television. Since March 2016 Damien has been on student placement and is producing video content for internal and external usage. This involves filming and editing content such as speaker presentations, events and interviews.

Damien is particularly interested in increasing in highlighting the consumer and health care professional perspectives to the broader health sector.

## EMMA SAYERS

SENIOR PROJECT AND POLICY MANAGER  
to June 2016

## BOARD OF GOVERNANCE



**SOPHY ATHAN**

CHAIR

With a strong interest in mental health, disability, the aged and women's health, Sophy has been an advocate in the health sector for over 13 years. She has presented at conferences and workshops on consumer and carer perspectives. She is also a member of several health service committees and Chairs a number of consumer and carer committees.

She is the Director of her own company, Euroforce Music. Prior to this she was a senior public servant in both state and local governments.



**MARIE GILL**

DEPUTY CHAIR

Marie has worked as a nurse for over 30 years, mainly in chronic disease care. She has extensive knowledge and experience of the health care system and works as a consultant with

government, community health, hospitals, primary health care providers and non-government organisations.

Marie has a Masters of Education and works with health organisations to improve the way they deliver care for people with chronic health issues. Her focus is to promote the concepts of client-centred care, self-management, consumer consultation and peer learning.



**PETER CASH**

TREASURER

Peter is a Chartered Accountant operating his own consultancy practice. He has considerable experience working in both England and Australia, in the retail sector and in the meat industry.

Semi-retired, Peter is also on the Board of a cooperative medical practice in the Western suburbs.



**LAUREN CORDWELL**

BOARD MEMBER

Lauren Cordwell has extensive health policy, strategy, community engagement and business development experience in the health and community sectors. She is the National Manager at the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners where she has responsibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Rural Health.

Lauren has completed a Bachelor of Health Science (Honours) degree, a Masters of Public Health and a Post Graduate Diploma of Management.

Lauren joined the Health Issues Centre Board in October 2015.



**DEMOS KROUSKOS**

BOARD MEMBER

Demos is currently the Chief Executive Officer of North Richmond Community Health. He is also a Director at the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity & Health. He has held senior positions in the health care sector including Executive Officer at Preston/Northcote District Health Council.

Demos' professional interests include health and cultural diversity, refugees and migrant health, indigenous health, and the development of ethical health care practice.



**GRAHAM MCDONALD**

BOARD MEMBER

A lawyer by background, Graham has experience running administrative reviews on consumer-related matters across State and Federal Governments, and private entities operating in Aboriginal affairs, banking and superannuation.

He has served as Presidential Member of the Federal Administrative Appeals Tribunal and, for some years, sat on the Victorian Health Commissioner's advisory committee.

Graham has been the inaugural Australian Banking Ombudsman and has also chaired the Superannuation Complaints Tribunal.



**REBECCA POWER**

BOARD MEMBER

Rebecca Power is the Principal Project Manager, Better Care Victoria Australia. Rebecca is a qualified social worker and has worked in health settings across Australia, England and New Zealand. Rebecca has a Masters in Health administration and roles have included team and service manager, project management, and Director of allied health.

Rebecca has a keen interest in planning and strategy, and a passion for innovation and service development that supports the partnering with consumers agenda. Rebecca has published articles on both data mining (with a homelessness focus) and experience based co-design in a workforce redesign setting.



**LIZA NEWBY**

BOARD MEMBER

Liza is a passionate consumer consultant and advocate with over 20 years' experience in the health system - mainly in public policy and governance. Originally with a legal background, her professional life has been characterised throughout by her strong commitment to promoting and building consumer and patient centred health care.

Her personal experiences, while recovering from a major haemorrhagic stroke some 19 years ago, have helped her understand the difficulties for consumers navigating the health system.



## PETER RUZYLA

### BOARD MEMBER

Peter has a background in Educational Psychology and Health Services Management, with wide experience in the education and health sectors as a service provider, manager and policy advisor. Peter is currently the CEO of EACH Social and Community Health which provides a wide range of primary health care, mental health, counselling, disability, employment services, aged care services across Victoria, NSW, ACT, Qld and Tasmania. Peter is also CEO of EACH Housing Limited, a subsidiary company of EACH and a registered Housing Provider.

Peter has been in CEO/Director roles for over 25 years. Peter's governance experience includes having been Chair and Director of several not for profit organisations and peak bodies such as Care Connect, VHA, VICSERV, QIP and is also currently a director of VICSERV (peak body for mental health services) and Health Issues Centre. Peter also served on the Board of the East Melbourne Medicare Local. Peter has contributed over many years to a range of Advisory Committees and partnership development through the Victorian Primary Care Partnerships.



## ROSE WILLIAMS

### BOARD MEMBER

Rose is a passionate consumer representative, having seen both the best and worst of consumer relations in the health care field. She is an active member of the Melbourne-based young women's breast cancer support group Boob Club. She is a keen advocate of continuous improvement in both policy design and implementation of patient-centred health care.

Rose works professionally in the publishing industry, working with scholarly organization to develop the impact of their journal publishing programs.

Photos: Kristian Gehrardte

# MEMBERS & SUBSCRIBERS

## MEMBERS

Rebecca Allen  
Sophy Athan  
Maria Anne Berry  
Peter Cash  
Lauren Cordwell  
Chronic Illness Alliance  
Melissa Coulson  
Darebin Community Health  
Twanny Farrugia  
Marie Gill  
Kim Hider  
Inner South Community Health Services  
Val Johnstone  
Demos Krouskos  
La Trobe Community Health  
Tony McBride  
Graham McDonald  
Sally McRae  
Janny Maddern  
Patricia Magee  
MonashLink CHS  
Liza Newby  
Denise Parry  
Marie Piu  
Rebecca Power  
Natalie Ross  
Peter Ruzyla  
Salvo Connect Social Services  
Leonie Short  
Eleanor Sumner  
Yoland Wadsworth  
Pamela Williams  
Rose Williams  
Women's Health Victoria

## SUBSCRIBERS

Department of Parliamentary  
Services, Library  
Monash University Library  
Our Lady of Mercy College  
Parliament of Victoria, Library  
WorkSafe Victoria  
University of Newcastle

## LIFE MEMBERS

Meredith Carter  
Kay Currie  
Marilyn Hage  
Bill Newton  
Michele Plane  
Jane Sydenham-Clarke  
Lois Woodward (deceased)