



### COPMI Initiative

#### Consumer and Carer Participation Strategy

##### *Goal:*

The COPMI initiative and its parent body AICAFMHA seeks to be informed through a diverse group of consumers, carers and young people that will be able to advise and inform the COPMI team on a range of issues as needed.

##### *Principles:*

*Participation of consumers, carers and young people is an essential component of strengthening the COPMI initiative.*

- The COPMI team and its parent body AICAFMHA endeavours to be inclusive of and informed by a diverse range of perspectives and voices.
- Effective communication links will be set up to enable sharing and exchange of information between consumer and carer participants and COPMI team members.
- The COPMI team recognises the need for resources and support to enable effective consumer and carer participation.
- Consumers and carers will be notified of their role and responsibilities if asked to participate in a COPMI related activity. There will be clearly identified expectations, paths of communication and responsibilities.
- It is anticipated that the organisations that people are already involved with will provide support with planning and debriefing around COPMI activities. The COPMI Consumer and Carer Participation Officer will also be available when necessary.

##### *Purpose:*

1. To build on the existing body of COPMI knowledge through reciprocal partnerships with consumers, carers and young people.
2. To acknowledge, value and incorporate the perspectives and understandings of consumers, carers and young people gained through their lived experience of COPMI issues.
3. To use the information gained to enhance COPMI knowledge, information and resources.

4. COPMI will endeavour to engage with a forum of people from diverse sociological, and cultural populations. Ideally this will include people who are :
- consumers,
  - carers
  - Young people
  - From CALD, Indigenous, rural, single parent, foster carers, gay and lesbian communities, foster carer and grandparent groups.
  - Some people will bring knowledge and experience from more than one perspective.

### *Expected Outcomes*

This will allow the COPMI initiative to:

- Be better informed
- Gain an increased understanding of the consumer, carer and young peoples' perspectives
- Incorporate these perspectives into the core body of information that informs the COPMI initiative and its future planning.
- Increase valued roles for consumers and carers including young people within the COPMI initiative
- To strengthen the voice of consumers, carers and young people within the COPMI initiative.

### *Opportunities for Engagement with the COPMI Initiative*

There will be many opportunities to engage with the COPMI initiative. They may include but not be limited to the following:

- E list
- Focus Groups
- National COPMI Family Forum \*
- Work shops
- Peer Reviewer for information and resources.
- Peer Researcher
- Education and training of workers –work force development.
- Media and communication
- Newsletters or COPMI news items.
- Groups for particular communities or interest groups eg rural consumers and carers, young carers

\*For further information see Expression of Interest for Membership of COPMI National Family Forum at [www.copmi.net.au](http://www.copmi.net.au)

*Roles will include but not be limited to the following:*

- Provide a voice from a consumer, carer and young person's perspective to inform the work of the COPMI initiative.
- Identify the strengths within their own state or territory within the COPMI arena
- Identify those COPMI areas that need further work or work that needs to be initiated.
- Be a conduit for receiving and sharing information through formal and informal networks and contacts.

COPMI will notify people of the various opportunities to be involved through announcements in the COPMI e-list and through various other avenues such as National and state/territory peak bodies and networks.

#### *Reporting Mechanisms*

- Verbal
- Written
- Email
  
- Reporting mechanisms and pathways will be reciprocal between participants and the COPMI Team and will be clearly identified for each COPMI activity that involves input from consumers and carers.

#### *Remuneration*

- Reimbursement or sitting fees (commensurate with government policies) will be paid to individuals who make a significant contribution to the work of the COPMI Initiative.
- Short term contributions such as to focus groups may attract reimbursement of expenses, such as travel and meals.

#### *Evaluation*

- Consumers and carers will be invited to comment on any interaction that they have with the COPMI initiative.
- Feedback may be channelled through the COPMI Consumer and Carer Participation Officer or the team member involved in the activity or interaction.
- Each focus group, workshop or forum will provide the opportunity for evaluation by participants through written and verbal feedback.
- An optional written evaluation sheet will be provided at the end of each workshop or forum. Evaluation can be anonymous.

*This policy will be reviewed annually by the National COPMI Family Forum and the COPMI Reference Group.*

*References:*

Government of South Australia, Department of Health. *Consumer and Community Participation Principles and Sitting Fees/Reimbursement of External Individuals for Department of Health internal Committees and Workgroups Policy. 2005*

Mental Health Council of Australia, *Consumer and Carer Participation Policy Template at [www.mhca.com.au](http://www.mhca.com.au)*

Hamlet Trust 2007, *Pathways to Policy A Tool kit for grassroots involvement in mental health policy. 2007 [www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)*