



Consumers Health  
Forum OF Australia

## **Rural and Remote Health Special Interest Group**

General purpose and operation of the group

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Consumers Health Forum of Australia (2019)  
*General purpose and operation of the Rural  
and Remote Health Special Interest Group.*  
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## About Consumer Health Forum of Australia

The Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF) is the national peak body representing the interests of Australian healthcare consumers. CHF works to achieve safe, quality, timely healthcare for all Australians, support by accessible health information and systems.

CHF does this by:

1. advocating for appropriate and equitable healthcare
2. undertaking consumer-based research and developing a strong consumer knowledge base
3. identifying key issues in safety and quality of health services for consumers
4. raising the health literacy of consumers, health professionals and stakeholders
5. providing a strong national voice for health consumers and supporting consumer participation in health policy and program decision making.

## Special Interest Groups

CHF currently have three SIGs (Consumers Involvement in Research, Digital Health, and Safety and Quality in Healthcare) which provide a source of policy input and a forum for 'sense testing' and further development of ideas/policy positions before they are disseminated to a broader audience and adopted officially by CHF.

Through this group, CHF hope to provide a space for those interested in rural and remote health to share information, communicate, bounce ideas around to enact change. The SIG is intended to be informal and therefore CHF believe a 'term of reference' is not appropriate. Instead, this informal document outlining the general purpose and operation of the group has been developed. This group is advisory to CHF, with final decisions remaining with the CHF Board.

## Purpose of the Rural and Remote Health SIG

The group was developed to work with CHF to ensure we include the voices of rural and remote consumers in all our policy and advocacy work. Consumer participation in this group will help identify what matters to consumers, where improvement can be made and contribute to the cultural changes needed among health professionals, health managers, health services and the wider community that are needed for sustainable improvements in rural and remote health.

### The key objectives are to:

- Provide a channel for rural and remote health consumers to raise their concerns and issues with Government and across the broader community.
- Give CHF access to a broader pool of rural and remote consumer and consumer representation opportunities, workshops, focus groups and other consultations.
  - This participation would not be confined to discussions designated 'rural' or 'remote' but would allow rural and remote consumers to have input across the policy spectrum.
- Give Government enhanced access to rural health consumers.

# Operation of the Rural and Remote Health SIG

## *Co-Facilitators*

The group will be co-facilitated by a CHF Secretariat member and a consumer. The consumer co-facilitator will be selected by members voting. This process will be coordinated by the CHF co-facilitator. All members will have the opportunity to nominate themselves for this 12-month role.

### ***What will their role involve?***

The co-facilitators will work closely to:

- finalise the Agenda Items for each meeting.
- facilitate discussion during meetings.
- document outcomes of each meeting, including any meeting minutes and actions arising.
- distribute meeting documents / Agenda papers and other relevant documents, to the group in a timely manner.
- publish a regular group newsletter.
- keep the groups SharePoint updated and monitor group discussions.

## *Members*

This group is open to all members and consumer representatives. The maximum number of people within the group at any time will be 25. This number includes the co-facilitators. This cap helps keep the group manageable while assuring diversity.

People can choose to leave the group if they no longer have the capacity. An email should be sent to the co-facilitators of the group to advise them of your withdrawal. This will not influence your relationship with CHF.

### ***What contribution is expected from members?***

Members of the SIG are expected to participate actively in a monthly meeting via teleconference, including reading circulated papers before the meetings, and to share information. An online forum, SharePoint, has been established for members to engage in friendly discussion, share information and ideas between meetings. Members are expected to treat each other with respect and listen to each other.

## *Reporting*

- A draft agenda will be distributed to members two weeks prior to a meeting inviting suggestions for additional agenda topics.
- A copy of the final agenda and all papers to be discussed will be distributed to all members at least one week prior to a meeting.
- A draft document highlighting outcomes of meeting, including actions arising will be distributed to attendees of a meeting within one week of a meeting.
- A group newsletter will be distributed monthly.