



Consumer and Community Participation Fact Sheet M09: Grant Application Reviewers

Consumers and community members are increasingly involved in providing a perspective on grant applications. The Western Australian Health Department and the Cancer Council NSW have consumers and community members involved in reviewing their grant applications.

Planning or support considerations

- What training or support will be required and/or offered to the consumers and community members?
- Guidance should be offered to provide the focus of the review, this can be in the form of providing a review document which asks questions such as;
 - Is the project practical for the participants to do?
 - Are there any ethical considerations about this research project?
 - Is this research useful?
 - Has the project any consumer and community participation?
- Reviewers should be aware and understand the funding criteria in good time for the review.
- Payment of expenses and/or honorarium should be discussed.
- How will the review take place? Face-to-face panel style review or sending the applications to reviewers at home?
- All research requires ethics approval, those projects focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities have more stringent requirements regarding community involvement. Plain language summaries may help members to understand the research.

Conditions on the reviewer

- The reviewer has to build confidence which happens over time. This means that they may need support such as providing an explanation of technical terms.
- Sometimes the simplest questions can be the most important.
- Consumers and community members will offer a different perspective to other reviewers.
- It is very important that consumer and community reviewers are made aware of confidentiality requirements before the process starts.
- Check for conflicts of interest, reviewers must declare any conflicts of interest prior to reviewing the application.

The Western Australian Health Department's State Health Research Advisory Council has provided funding for short term research projects since 2007. Since 2008, a member of the Advisory Council at The University of Western Australia School of Population Health has been a consumer representative on the grant review panel.

The consumer representative's input is considered to be an integral aspect of the Panel's deliberations in allocating grants.

Consumer Review Guidelines see cancercouncil.com.au



Good practice

- The Cancer Council NSW in collaboration with Cancer Voices NSW has developed comprehensive guidelines for consumers involved in reviewing grant applications.

- Reviewers with a conflict of interest must not review an application or try to sway any other reviewers' view of the application.
- Pre-submission review panels have been established in a bid to pre-empt and solve any problems that may be identified by the reviewer.
- Having high level consumer and community member involvement in the whole of the research project should identify any issues with the project before it is reviewed.