



The UWA School of Population Health and the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research

Consumer and Community Participation Program

Memorandum of Understanding

Background

The School of Population Health at The University of Western Australia (School) and the Telethon Institute of Child Health Research (Institute) have actively and successfully pursued greater consumer and community participation in their research activities as a joint and collaborative Participation Program since 1998. This Participation Program has been supported in principle by the Health Consumers' Council of WA (Inc) and primarily funded through competitive research grants and infrastructure funds from both the School and Institute.

The Participation Program is based on world-leading practice principles of consumer and community engagement and has implemented a framework that is driven by community values and embeds a credible consumer and community 'voice' in organisational activities.

Purpose and Scope

This Memorandum of Understanding (Memorandum) acknowledges the unique strengths this joint collaboration has developed since its inception and is a statement of our ongoing commitment to working together to continue and strengthen the Participation Program.

The purpose of the Memorandum is to ensure that the foundation work of the Participation Program is carried forward with acceptance and acknowledgement of the varying contributions from both the School and the Institute.

The long term goal of the Participation Program is to increase the uptake of consumer and community participation across both organisations. We will seek funding opportunities to facilitate and enable consumer and community participation to become standard practice across both organisations through the provision of:

- Dedicated positions to support and facilitate greater consumer and community participation;
- A governance framework which includes Consumer and Community Advisory Councils at each organisation;
- A range of models for implementing participation activities that are budgeted and supported;
- Training courses for researchers, consumers and community members;
- Forums and events to bring together researchers, consumers and community members;
- Resources and website to support and enable consumer and community participation; and
- Leadership and support for the operational objectives of the Participation program.

Contributions to the Participation Program

At different times each organisation has, and will contribute to the Participation Program with funding, resources and support. These contributions are made according to needs and availability of funding. At different times both the School and the Institute has been a principal funder sharing their program resources with the other organisation. These contributions are made in the spirit of improving and supporting our joint Participation Program.

Benefits of a joint Participation Program

The Participation Program had been made possible through the ongoing sharing of costs, resources and intellectual property that has enabled the development of a program that is highly valued by researchers, funders, government and the community.

The success of the Participation Program places both organisations at the forefront of a national change in attitude and culture towards the value consumers and the community can contribute to research.

The Participation Program affords the School and the Institute a unique opportunity to 'tap into' community intelligence and information to support and ensure the consumer and community 'voice' is integral to its activities.

Having a joint Participation Program that is underpinned by a shared ideology rather than being mandated by a government or funding body will ultimately increase the benefits to the end recipients of our programs, the community of Western Australia.

Review

The School and the Institute will review the Progress and Scope of the Memorandum at least once in each year and report on the achievements.

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