

# Terms of Reference

## Local Community Engagement Working Groups (CEWGs)

### Purpose

Southern NSW Local Health District launched its *Strengthening community engagement* framework in January 2024. The Framework was developed in consultation with community members to establish a consistent and systemic approach to community engagement.

Consumer, carer and community engagement is about sharing information and decision making between consumers and community members and health services. Engagement enables health service organisations to better plan, design and deliver services that meet the needs of local communities, gather feedback and deliver improved services.

Community Engagement Working Groups (CEWG) will be established to represent local community interests at a local level with a focus on activities that engage local communities. They will replace existing Community Consultation Committees (CCC).

### Objectives

The objectives of the local CEWG are:

- Connect with the local community and advocate for local health services
- Assist with promoting health and wellbeing – raise awareness about local services
- Establish 2-3 priority action areas or projects that align with LHD and NSW health priorities
- Facilitate the establishment of trust through transparent, two-way communication
- Respond to NSW Health’s *Strengthening local health committees report’s* five guiding principles:
  - Commitment to community
  - Collaborative partnerships
  - Committee-led action
  - Committee members as champions
  - A culture of learning and improvement

### Matters that fall outside the role of CEWG

CEWG members do not have the scope or authority to be involved in:

- Managerial responsibility over staff of the Local Health District.
- Operational issues of the health facility.
- Facility budgets and financial management.
- Recruitment of health staff, including medical practitioners (unless

specifically invited to sit on a panel).

- The handling, investigation and resolution of staff matters, complaints, service delivery issues involving private clinicians or private hospitals.
- Media commentary or official correspondence with politicians or government agencies

## Composition

The Chair and Secretary of each CEWG will be nominated and elected by group members.

The following LHD staff will be invited to attend CEWG meetings:

- Site Manager/Director Nursing and Midwifery
- Network General Manager

Where the Facility Manager is unavailable to attend the meeting, another staff member will be delegated to attend.

## Guests

CEWG are encouraged to invite guest speakers to present on topics of interest to the local community. Guests may be called upon to attend meetings to share their expertise. Guests may include:

- SNSWLHD Board member
- SNSWLHD Executive member
- Health specialists
- Mental Health Drug & Alcohol / Community Services / Health Promotion / Allied Health team representatives
- Local Shire or town councillors
- Patient Experience Manager

In accordance with the NSW Health Ministerial protocols, CEWG are not able to invite a Member of Parliament or Minister to attend a meeting or function without prior consent from the SNSWLHD Chief Executive.

Each Network Community Engagement Working Group comprises of:

- Chair – elected by the Committee
- Secretariat – elected by the Committee
- Up to 10 Community representatives (including Chair and Secretariat)
- One Aboriginal representative
- One clinical representative (not employed by SNSWLHD)

Where possible the membership of the CEWG should reflect the diversity of the local area.

All committee members will be onboarded as SNSWLHD volunteers and will be asked to complete a National Police Check.

## Chair's Specific Duties

The Chairs will:

- Ensure meetings are called and held in accordance with this Terms of Reference;
- In consultation with other Committee Members, establish and confirm an agenda for each meeting;
- Ensure the meeting agenda and relevant documents are circulated to Committee members 5-7 days in advance of meetings;
- Provide leadership to ensure that Committee Members are aware of their obligations and that the Committee complies with its responsibilities;
- Ensure that discussion on agenda items is on topic, productive and professional;
- Provide sufficient time to discuss agenda items fully at Committee meetings;
- Officiate and conduct meetings;
- Action items in accordance with meeting outcomes.

## Meeting Schedule and Procedures

Agenda and minutes templates will be provided.

CWEG are requested to hold at least 4 meetings per year with each meeting to take approximately 60 to 90 minutes.

All meetings will be managed by the Chair and in his/her absence, the Secretariat. In their absence the meeting will be postponed or cancelled.

Matters for discussion should be tabled through the Chair at the meeting. Individual discussions should not take place outside of the meeting, and all conversations should be transparent.

At times, CEWG members may use personal stories to illustrate concerns or experiences with health services. Patient privacy must be respected at all times, and CWEG members should refrain from mentioning individual names in their discussions.

CEWG members must disclose any potential conflicts of interest related to the work of the committee.

Apologies to be sent to Chair via email or phone. Absenteeism without an apology on three consecutive occasions will be deemed to have resigned from the CWEG.

Each committee member has a term of 3 years. It is expected that members would serve no more than three terms (9 years). Committee members may resign at any time within the term. A letter of resignation is expected stating this request.

Meetings will be held in person within the local area with the option to join online via Teams or other virtual meeting program.

A quorum is achieved with attendance by fifty percent plus one of the membership.

## Reporting

Each CEWG will provide meeting minutes to the Manager Media and Communications who will share with the relevant (Coastal or Inland) Network Community Engagement Committee, SNSWLHD and Board.

Additionally, the CEWG should report on current priorities/projects (up to 3), upcoming or recent activities and any issues/concerns raised by local community.

The relevant Network Community Engagement Committee agenda and minutes will be shared with CEWGs.

The Agenda, supporting papers and discussion of the CEWG are to remain confidential to the membership, staff in attendance and formal reporting structure unless specifically authorised for distribution by the Chief Executive.

### **Terms of Reference Review**

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually.