

**Sydney North Health Network Community Council**  
**Terms of Reference**

## Background

The Sydney North Health Network (SNHN) is operated by SNPHN Limited. In 2015 the Australian Government awarded SNHN funding to establish a primary health network (PHN) for the Northern Sydney region.

As one of 31 PHNs across Australia, SNHN is entrusted with the objectives are to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of medical services for patients in our region, particularly those at risk of poor health outcomes; and improving coordination of care to ensure people receive the right care in the right place at the right time.

The SNHN Community Council was established in 2015. It provides guidance to the SNHN staff and Board on health consumer issues being addressed by the SNHN and on the unique needs of respective communities.

## Purpose

The SNHN Community Council will assist the Sydney North Health Network to develop local strategies to improve the operation of the health care system for people in the Sydney North region. It will focus on facilitating effective, person-centred primary health care to improve the overall health of our population and reduce avoidable hospital presentations.

The Community Council will provide guidance to the SNHN staff and Board on community issues relevant to Primary Care to:

- inform decisions, investments, and innovations based on local health consumer and carer experiences and expectations,
- support person-centred, high-quality, cost-effective outcomes responsive to local community needs,
- support local primary care providers to improve peoples' outcomes and experiences with the health care system,
- evaluate and identify inefficiencies and optimise the use of existing services and resources

It will work in partnership with the SNHN Clinical Council and Northern Sydney Local Health District (NSLHD) to achieve this and with other key organisations and relevant Health Consumer Groups/Bodies such as other PHNs, not-for-profit and non-government organisations working in Community Health.

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## Responsibilities

- Contribute to the SNHN Population Needs Assessment process and provide input from a consumer and community perspective to assist in determining local health priorities.
- Provide a consumer and community perspective when the Board is seeking advice on issues and initiatives delivered by SNHN.
- Collect and articulate the community and health consumer voice (stories and experiences) on health issues, needs and concerns through connections to the wider SNHN health consumer network and via regional consumer forums and other community networks.
- Advise on the conduct, methodology and diversity of community consultations, and framing of recommendations for action.
- Advise on developing partnerships with relevant stakeholders to strengthen response to community and health consumer needs.
- Advise SNHN on health consumer engagement best practice.

## Membership

- **Council Size:** The Community Council will comprise up to 12 members
- **Broad-based:** Membership should be diverse and representative of broader consumer and community interests in local health services. Members will bring perspectives from their background, area of interest or expertise, rather than representing their specific organisation on the Council.
- **Active:** As active participants of the council, it is expected that members will canvas feedback from their broader network base to inform opinion and gain additional insight into community and consumer-related issues.
- **Dynamic:** In addition to this core membership it may be appropriate to invite other attendees, when relevant.
- **Cross-representation:** There will be cross-member representation on both the Clinical and Community Councils.
- **Board members:** The Council membership will include two SNHN Board members as additional members, one of whom will Co-Chair the Committee and will be required to report to the SNHN Board.
- **Co-Chair:** The second Co-Chair will be appointed by the SNHN Board, from the Community Council members.

## Appointments and tenure

Health consumers and community members will be invited to participate through an open Expression of Interest process undertaken by SNHN. Members will be appointed/approved by the SNHN Board.

Appointments will be for an initial term of up to two years. Appointments may be extended by mutual agreement with the SNHN. Terms will be staggered with the intention that no more than one-half of the Council members terms are up for renewal annually.

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Membership will cease when:

- A member resigns.
- A member has not attended two consecutive meetings, except on grounds of leave granted.
- A term has expired and no renewal of appointment has occurred.
- A member breaches confidentiality and/or the law, or
- Does not adequately declare conflicts of interest.

### Meeting frequency and notice

The Community Council will meet bi-monthly for approximately two hours per meeting. Frequency of the meetings will be reviewed annually. This will include four Community Council Meetings and two Joint Community and Clinical Council meetings.

Extraordinary meetings may be called with a minimum 2 weeks' notice.

It is intended that agendas and papers will be circulated at least 5 working days before each meeting.

Minutes of the meeting will be circulated within 10 working days of the meeting after approval by the Chair.

### Secretariat

SNHN will provide administrative support for SNHN Community Council including meeting venues, conferencing facilities and collation and circulation of meeting papers, minutes and agendas.

### Quorum

A quorum will be 50% of current appointed members plus one. At least one of either the Co-Chairs of the Community Council or the SNHN CEO must be present at each meeting.

### Reporting

SNHN Community Council will report to the SNHN Board after each meeting.

Minutes from all Community Council meetings will be provided to the SNHN board.

Brief notes or communiques may be distributed to other relevant stakeholders as determined by the SNHN Board.

The SNHN Board may form focused working groups or subcommittees to investigate particular issues in more detail, as required.

## Remuneration

Members will receive a sitting fee per meeting attended as per the SNHN Remuneration Policy.

## Terms of Reference Review

The terms of reference will be reviewed every two years (biennial) and approved by the Board of SNHN.

## Evaluation

The Community Council will conduct a self-evaluation on an annual basis and may also be evaluated by an independent body.

## Guiding Principles

Members will:

- commit to attending meetings with apologies, if needed given, where possible, 1 week in advance.
- ensure that knowledge is shared with their networks including the Community group(s) they are representing, and routinely seek and provide feedback on issues discussed at meetings within agreed timeframes.
- ensure papers and information shared for distribution are circulated to relevant stakeholders.
- endeavour to operate on the basis of consensus, however, where this is not possible the majority view will prevail.
- adhere to the values of honesty, integrity, service, accountability, collaboration, openness, respect and empowerment.
- declare any potential, perceived or actual conflicts of interest.
- maintain confidentiality and adhere to the SNHN Privacy Policy.
- participate in continuing professional development activities if required to effectively fulfil the position responsibilities.
- participate in an annual evaluation of the Community Council's performance.

**Agreed by the SNHN Board (date) 2020**



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