Ensuring Community Voice and Tackling Inequities
Rural Proofing for Health

13th OECD Rural Development Policy Conference

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Australian National Rural Health Commissioner
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The Office of the National Rural Health Commissioner in Australia

- formulate advice for the Minister for Regional Health to improve the health of rural and remote Australians
- Consulting with community & key stakeholders
- Independent Statutory Office

L to R: Deputy Commissioner Shelley Nowlan, Commissioner Ruth Stewart, Deputy Commissioner Faye McMillan
Consumer Engagement
Community voice in the Ottawa Charter...

World Health Organisation 2012, Ottawa Charter for health promotion
Partnering with Consumers Standard
Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care

- **Aim**: to create health service organisations with mutually beneficial outcomes
- **consumers** as partners in
  - planning,
  - design,
  - delivery,
  - measurement and
  - evaluation of systems and services
- **patients** as partners in their own care, *to the extent that they choose.*
Providing an explanation of
• what consumer & Community engagement is
• When & where it can take place
• Why it should be done
• What consumers can expect from engaging with health services
Kitchen Table Discussions

- Facilitated by trained consumer hosts
- Held at “the kitchen table”
- Health Service staff/consultants are not in attendance - community speaks openly
- Removes power imbalance
- Ensure community views are heard accurately & clearly
- reaching hard to reach & disadvantaged
- Participants enjoy the process – ask for more
- Provide valuable stories & comments
- Can increase consumer knowledge & awareness / health literacy

"Thank you, it is awesome and helps to confirm that our voices makes a difference."

*Kitchen Table Discussion Host*
Consumer Engagement in Indigenous Health
First Nations Australians’ Health & Wellbeing

• More than individual physical wellness
• Social, emotional, & cultural well-being of whole Community
• Individuals achieving full human potential
• Creating total well-being of their community
• Whole of life view
• Includes the of life-death-life cycle
Tackling institutionalised racism & cultural disempowerment

- Cultural Safety
- Cultural respect
- self-determination
- Co-design
- Co-decision
- “Nothing about us without us”
- Yarning
Yarning Circles
Thursday Island Midwifery Group Practice

Co-designed with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community
Continuity of care in a culturally safe manner

Significant reduction in
• Antenatal smoking
• Preterm birth
• Incidence of low & very low weight births

Image: Bobbi Lockyer https://www.bobbillockyer.com/
Summary:

• The role of the National Rural Health Commissioner
• Consumer Engagement:
  • Consumer voice and representation
  • Empowering First Nation People & amplifying their voices
• Impact of consumer Engagement
Thank you