



Te Tāhū Hauora
Health Quality & Safety
Commission

System Safety Strategy, consumers supporting strategy development

Te Tāhū Hauora Health Quality & Safety Commission (the Commission) asked for two consumers to join the group tasked with developing the System Safety Strategy. Its approach includes systems intelligence and human factors to strengthen safe provision and delivery of care. The group will contribute to achieving our vision, hauora kounga mō te katoa | quality health for all.

An Expression of Interest (EOI) was developed and promoted through the consumer health forum Aotearoa members in March 2022, and received 14 responses. Following a selection process, two consumers were invited and accepted the opportunity to contribute to this important work. Unfortunately, operational delays meant the first time the group met was September 2024.

One consumer, who wishes to remain anonymous, provided feedback about their experience.

How was your experience of the EOI process and onboarding into the project?

Obviously, this was some time ago, so it is a little difficult to respond to this entirely accurately. My experience at the time was that it was a fairly comprehensive EOI I responded to, with some warm and congenial conversations with those onboarding at the time.

I didn't have a very clear picture of what the rōpū was intended for then and, of course, the project went on hold during restructuring for a good two years. During this time I gathered I would no longer be a participant in the rōpū, due a lack of communication. I was pleasantly surprised to hear from the project lead earlier in the month asking if I was still interested in taking part. I got the impression that information has been made as readily available as reasonable.

I do still have a sense that a brief, informative onboarding to HQSC generally and the project, in particular, would have been useful.

At the first meeting at the Commission on Thursday 26 September, describe your experience and how you were included and heard

I felt very welcomed, and regular efforts were made for inclusion of my perspectives and opinions. I got the sense that rōpū members generally, especially from the Commission but also the rōpū more generally, made an effort to get to know me personally.

During conversations, where at times I felt I was somewhat out of my depth given the extensive health and policy experience of the rōpū and scope of the conversations, there were efforts from the Commission to communicate to support my inclusion.

I particularly noticed and appreciated efforts to communicate complex or abstract concepts in a meaningful, accessible way; facilitating conversation to directly elicit my perspective if I had not been doing so; and supporting, developing on and referring back to my contributions helped to give me the confidence to contribute further. Although I was nervous at the start of the hui, by closing I felt I had found my place and voice, supported by the Commission's efforts.

How do you think your contribution influenced the work?

Yes, I felt my perspective of a perceived sense of consultation fatigue among consumers, that is, not having a clear sense of progress or honouring perspectives beyond generating reports was validated within the hui.

As was my suggestion to counter this by putting the present consultation within the recent history of conversations and consultations around harmful engagement with the health system when engaging with consumers, so as to honour the tapu of these stories and put some of the work back on policy people to connect these dots.

I was pleased this was brought forward into an action, however, I am unsure of the outcome of my less developed suggestion that an iwi-Māori partnership board representative fill the presumably empty place the Te Aka Wha Ora representative would have occupied.

We were discussing membership at length during the close of the meeting but at a level I was unfamiliar with, so did not have the confidence to clarify this. I would have thought their inclusion in overseeing the project, rather than just as a consulted stakeholder, would have greater significance in supporting Te Tiriti o Waitangi and WAI2575.

We also asked the project lead for some feedback about the role of consumers in the project.

What is your previous experience of a project that involved consumers? What is their role?

I co-chaired the Healing Learning & Improving from Harm policy with the chair of our Consumer Advisory Group. Their role was to ensure we were meeting the needs of consumers and whānau, and that their voices and perspectives were reflected in the design and delivery of the policy.

How important is it have consumers at the table? What is the impact of their contribution?

Extremely important. It has a significant influence on the work by keeping the focus on what this means for consumers which can get lost when we are focused on our own perspectives.

Any further comments and improvements to consider?

Having been through an EOI process and then again through our existing Consumer Advisory group and network, the ease of this process is a testament to the work of our previous Partners in Care and current Māori Health and Consumer teams.

Please describe the consumer (specifically recruited through the consumer health forum Aotearoa EOI process) involvement, contribution and impact at this early stage of the project

The consumer was elected through this EOI process and attended our first System Safety Rōpū. They brought their own experience of harm and the focus of the rōpū on system learning and the importance of restorative responses resonated with them which they shared with the group. At this early stage this has had significant impact on the intent of our direction to focus on people and relationships.

This development of a System Safety Strategy, including input from the advisory group is ongoing. We hope to add further insights as the strategy progresses.

We thank the consumer representative for sharing their story with us and we hope this encourages others to put themselves forward for opportunities that speak to their experience.