

The Value of Consumer & Carer Engagement at South Pacific Private

South Pacific Private's Consumer & Carer Advisory Committee (CACA) comprises of past patients who are involved in, and advise on, issues that relate to both our clients and their carers or family members. The committee meets quarterly and the meetings have clear agendas where suggested and ongoing improvements fed back to South Pacific Private by the committee are openly discussed and logged.

South Pacific private believes the value of the CACA committee is insurmountable and both values and prides itself on the importance of this feedback as well as the impact it has on the integrity and improvements in the hospital and for the patients.

Claire Barber, South Pacific Private's General Manager commented that "*Effective partnerships, consumer experience and high quality health care are of the utmost importance to South Pacific Private and we feel privileged to work so closely with our consumers, carers and healthcare partners.*"

The hospital received full accreditation in the 2013 National Accreditation Survey and was singled out by the surveyors for its work with consumers, receiving a Merit in the category of partnering with consumers. According to the surveyors, "*There was very strong evidence throughout the service that a central tenet of the organisation is partnering with consumers.*"

The value of consumer engagement – in real life

The CACA committee has been an integral part of several key improvements throughout the hospital in recent years including:

- 24 hour alumni support line in place from May 2013 resulting from a CACA suggestion
- Client Rights and Responsibilities complete overhaul following CACA review
- Development of *Changes 2* program resulting from phone survey
- *Pacific Connections* (our alumni newsletter) developed following phone survey feedback
- Complete revision of the *Step Down* program (became *Transitions*) following feedback from phone survey
- Aftercare planning groups and lectures developed to improve client aftercare knowledge and engagement

The CACA committee provides ongoing support and advice to the hospital and there is complete transparency in this relationship. In addition to the quarterly meetings, South Pacific Private also engages with our consumers and carers through assorted channels which include:

- Annual phone survey of past clients
- Suggestions box placed in the hospital
- Client Feedback cards available throughout the hospital and at the reception area
- All compliments and complaints logged and addressed on a weekly basis
- Weekly staff (clinical and non-clinical) & community meeting which provides the opportunity for current clients to feedback directly to staff
- Alumni Support email address

The Perspective of a CACA Committee Member

John McMillan is one of the longstanding committee members and has been involved in many of the improvements and changes over the last 20 years South Pacific Private has been operating. He has also gone through recovery first hand and brings his experience of that recovery to the CACA committee in terms of perspective, insight and support.

South Pacific Private asked John a few questions about his experience with the committee over the years in order to really provide insights into the value of the committee and the importance of their involvement with the hospital.

You've been involved with SPP both as a client and now as one of our Consumer and Carer committee members; it's been a journey over the last 20 years together! What changes have you been privy to and do you think are significant?

There have been a number of significant improvements over the years. The first I would cite would be the remodel and refurbishment of South Pacific Private. It impacted the 'flow' of SPP in a really positive way and I believe the service provided as a result is fantastic. Secondly, there are more beds; and thus more help in respect to what is on offer, which is great as it supports each individual experiencing treatment at South Pacific Private (regardless of how far along a person is in their recovery journey). Thirdly, some of the biggest changes I have been privy to are the addition of more after care programs and day programs which is really important in terms of a person's recovery post discharge from South Pacific Private.

Finally, and most significantly – the program has stayed constant, effective and has great integrity.

You've been a key member of our CACA committee for some time now – what's the value in being involved in that committee from your standpoint?

I am able to share with others, from an intimate point of view, what is on offer; from the perspective of what the hospital is offering now and what the future holds. The CACA committee offers the layer of support that allows the vision and strategy of the hospital to be fulfilled and SPP to continue to support clients.

Consumer participation and family participation central to the hospital's philosophy of care

The CACA committee enables South Pacific Private to seek advice and feedback on the needs of consumers and carers in relation to treatment and community service provision. SPP recognises that the CACA committee is in a unique position to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of mental health services delivered within the private sector and this commentary and insight is highly valued and treasured.

Executive Director of South Pacific Private, Lorraine Wood, who founded the hospital in 1993, said that consumer participation and family participation was central to the hospital's philosophy of care, stating, "*We look forward to continuing our partnership with consumers to support ongoing improvements in the safety and quality of our care and to ensure that we remain responsive to patient, carer and consumer needs.*"

About South Pacific Private (SPP): SPP is a Treatment Centre specialising in the integrated medical, psychiatric and psychotherapeutic treatment of mental illness,

addictions and trauma related conditions. Established in 1993, SPP is located in Curl Curl on Sydney's northern beaches. For more information visit www.southpacificprivate.com.au

If you are interested in finding out more about the South Pacific Private CACA committee please contact Jacquie Grant, PR Manager on jgrant@southpacificprivate.com.au