



# The Story of Us

Communicating, Listening and Responding

Western Sydney Local Health District Community and Consumer Engagement Newsletter | Nov 2015



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# Meet the WSLHD Consumer Council



From Left to right: Greg Long, Karen Walsh, Kathie Collins, Monica Mahy, Pam Johnstone, June Heinrich, Kathy and Evert Van Oeveren

The WSLHD Community and Consumer Council is a key internal partnership. The Council was established as a feedback and feed-forward forum, promoting engagement with the appointed WSLHD Community Representatives and their individually identified constituent communities. The Council is a mechanism to ensure that WSLHD Consumer Representatives learn from and support each other to enrich their role and contribution. It meets monthly and has developed a robust structure to enable appropriate governance. There are real opportunities and benefits emerging from this partnership with health consumers in Western Sydney. The WSLHD Consumer Council has demonstrated the strength and enthusiasm of our local community, who are keen to work with WSLHD to plan and deliver better health services. The WSLHD Consumer Council is driven by our own Consumer Representatives

and is the result of conversations we have listened to across the LHD.

Consumer representatives work on a number of portfolio areas depending on their interest. They have been properly recruited as contingent workers and have a Stafflink ID. They agree and sign our Code of Conduct, have reference checks, NCRC, 100pts ID and undertake training. Currently there are 35 consumer representatives that have gone through recruitment, and nine going through the process. Another 16 are on a waiting list. Consumers are offered training through Health Consumers NSW and are oriented to the position of "Consumer Representative" through their monthly consumer council meetings and mentoring with more experienced reps. They also receive mentoring provided by the Manager for Consumer Engagement. A position









Why? Because it reduces harm to the patient, creates more consistent person centred models of care and reduces waste and duplication in the system.

It will be important for the Service Improvement team to become highly visible across the organisation so we can support staff and projects aiming for excellence in person *centred* care with robust processes. We want to make sure health care isn't person *dependent*.

The strength of a person lies in partnerships and the ability to collaborate. As one person I cannot change a lot but within a team we have strength. It is about leveraging off other people's strengths and experiences to create great person centred care.

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**My thoughts about the key strengths and opportunities in our health care system?**

I think it is important to challenge the status quo. There is always a better way to provide care to our community which may challenge some traditional views. We are in a world where people demand information and services NOW. That is a challenge for healthcare. Consumers want better health/ and medical records in hospital connected seamlessly with primary care. How can we build the required infrastructure? We have challenges with population growth and cultural diversity. How do we continue to provide services that customers want?

We can no longer think of health as a stand-alone system because other things in life affect our health. How do we work with food, transport, health and other entities to ensure we maximise the social determinants of health?

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**My values?**

I am a country girl. To a degree it is true that you can't take the country out of the girl. I have strong values around family and community. I am driven personally and professionally to continuously improve my skills and knowledge to function in an ever changing environment. I am undertaking a Master's degree in Health Service Management and Planning. I get married in November this year. I haven't thought about it too much yet, as I have assignments due and life is hectic!

I have a knack for finding lost people in Western Sydney hospitals and walking them to where they need to be ...

*"It's about taking time to stop and look around you rather than being totally consumed in your own day and forgetting we are here to serve the people around us".*

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**My favourite book**

*Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom



Joint health consumer think tank convened by Health Issues Victoria during October at the Children's Hospital Westmead. Consumers from WSLHD, Sydney Children's Hospital Network, South West Sydney Local Health District. The outcome will inform how the RACP engages with the broad Australian community.

# Meet William Bagatcholon WSLHD Health Consumer

## My background?

I am a carer of my older brother. He is 34 years of age and lives with schizophrenia and acute ongoing depression. My brother has been in and out of mental health hospitals. My family didn't receive any support until someone referred us to an advocacy service which really made a difference. My mother raised us on her own when we were 10 and 11 when we moved here from the Philippines. Over the years I have struggled with identity conflict - being gay and a Christian. But my family always needed me so I kept it to myself and set my own issues aside, particularly coming from a religious Christian background.

In my current role as a project officer for Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW (MDAA) I deal with young people from a multicultural background 16 – 25 who live with disability. I also assist with advocacy and support planning for people with disability to help them transition to the NDIS.

Earlier this year I won a grant from *My Choice Matters* – NSW Consumer Development Funds. It is to produce a film called '*Being Gay and Christian*'. It is a short film documentary looking at the lives of people who are gay and Christian, and the barriers that exist in dealing with conflict identity on being a gay Christian. You can read a blog about my film on the link below.

<http://www.mychoicematters.org.au/blog/run-projects-update-being-gay-and-christian.html>

My organisation is called Small Stone Media Productions. Why "Small Stone"? Because my name *Bagatcholon* means *small stone* in my native language. I am looking to partner with other organisations that may be willing to

invest in my projects. I hope to develop the documentary '*Being Gay and Christian*' into a 3 part TV series that looks at mental illness (health and wellbeing) which often leads to homelessness and suicide of LGBTI community members, in particular youth.



William Bagatcholon

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## My networks?

Previously I was a committee member of MDAA but I stepped down to take on my role as a project officer. I now run and develop a project for youth called Small Stone Project. The project is run by and for young people with disability. Small Stone Project has a network of young people who are the advisory committee of the project. Through the project I have networked and partnered with the Australian Human Rights Commission on the National Inquiry on Employment Discrimination of People with Disability, Youth Without Borders and The Starfish Collection along with Exodus Foundation to work with high school students who are studying food tech. Our aim with this partnership is to teach youth the value of food and cooking for the homeless for inner western Sydney. We will be using the 'MasterChef' kitchen to do the cooking. I also work closely with Auburn Youth Community Centre and Settlement Services International with Ability Linkers to

link young people with disability to services. These are just a few of my networks that I am currently working with.

**How can I add value?**

My strength is based on the lived experience of a person with disability, and the pressure it brings to the family household structure. I am particularly interested in mental health – health and wellbeing, with particular focus on the multicultural perspective.

I am very passionate about embracing equity and equality as a whole. My objective is to change and influence people to create a society where, regardless of disability or background, everyone feels welcome, included and supported.

**My particular interest as a health consumer representative?**

Areas of opportunities that I am most interested in is youth and leadership, family and carers with a particular focus on health and well-being. I believe that young people particularly those from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background and LGBTI youth are not well represented in the broader community. There needs to be more positive reinforcement particularly in western Sydney region.

**When am I available?**

I work part time so can be flexible about my engagement activities with WSLHD.

**My thoughts about the key strengths and opportunities in our health care system?**

The key strength of the mental health system is that counselling is provided from every year, at least one session per month.

The biggest opportunity is that people who suffer from extreme mental health disorders need clinical psychology. For a person on a new start this can be problematic because clinical psychologist do not provide free services. Often, they do not accept bulk billing. In Western Sydney with the high level of lower socio-economic situation, this does not help or make things easier for the person with mental illness, their family or carers.

**What is your favourite book / movie?**

Book: *Desert Flower, the Bible*

Movies: *Notebook, Shelter*

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Consumer representatives attending health consumer training provided by Health Consumers NSW. From L to R (Back): K Filocamo, M Mahy, M Knight, K Van Oeveren, W Vogels, E Van Oeveren, M Dent, T Sonnaveld, S Vogels, P Johnston. Front from L to R: G Armstrong, G Long, K Collins, C Hall, D Cunningham.

# Meet Hayley Manyu

## Team member Service Improvement

### **My background?**

I was returning to work after having had my baby and was fortunate enough to find a great job in the Executive Medical Service of Western Sydney Local Health District. I met Emma Clarke and applied to get involved in supporting her work across the District.

I provide administrative support for the Service Improvement Program. I work with Emma's team. I have over 12 years of administration experience having previously worked in the project team on the Royal North Shore Redevelopment Project. It was challenging as we needed to understand and address the needs of many different stakeholders. These included staff, neighbours, community members, volunteers of the hospital, consumer representatives, builders, architects and engineers. It wasn't just about bricks and mortar, it was about making sure that the hospital fits with what the community needs and wants.

I love working in the Service Improvement program. I see so many new and exciting projects come to life from ideas through to working processes - which make a positive difference in the way the health care is delivered across the district".

### **What do you think is the value of engaging with health consumers?**

I think health consumers play a huge part in getting answers to the questions about how we can improve our health system. They are the 'customers' of the hospital and their input about what can be done better is extremely valuable.

### **What do you think are the strengths and opportunities of the health system?**

I think there can always be new and improved ways of doing things especially in an environment that is as complex as a health



Mr Hayley Manyu

care system. Behind the scenes I see a lot of good things happening and unfortunately sometimes these are overlooked.

The health service has opportunities to improve. I know that emergency departments really struggle with waiting times. Communication between the different parts of the system can be challenging. I think the work that our team is doing is really focused on the problems that are identified by staff wanting to redesign models to address these challenges.

### **My favourite book?**

I'm more of a magazine girl at the moment - as a busy mum of a toddler it's hard to find the time to read.

### **My favourite saying?**

Pressure makes diamonds

### **Favourite movie?**

The Notebook

We hope you have enjoyed meeting some of our Bravehearts. If you want to get involved with our health consumers or if you want to be profiled as one of our Bravehearts in the Story of Us, please get in touch.

## *Coralie*



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