



Consumer Representative Participation Payment Policy

1. Background

Globally, healthcare is focussed on creating a culture of partnership and collaboration with patients and their families and carers by involving them in decisions about their care. The evidence is clear that when we listen to and learn from people who use our health services, we can improve the health outcomes for the people that we care for and the safety and quality of the health services we deliver in our communities.

The WA Country Health Service (WACHS) is committed to involving patients, families and carers in the planning, implementation, delivery and evaluation of our health systems services and care. This commitment is evidenced in the WACHS Consumer Engagement Strategy (2020-2025), which has three key directions:

- **Direction 1:** *Develop systems and structures that support effective and inclusive consumer engagement.*
- **Direction 2:** *Build the capacity of the workforce to engage with consumers*
- **Direction 3:** *Build the skills of consumers to be active participants in healthcare.*

This policy encourages consumer engagement and participation across all levels of WACHS by supporting the directions outlined in the WACHS Consumer Engagement Strategy.

2. Policy Statement

WACHS recognises that travel and other costs can sometimes be a barrier to community and consumer participation. WACHS is committed to supporting active consumer engagement by offering:

- Reimbursement for pre-approved and reasonable expenses incurred as a result of active participation in consumer engagement activities; and
- Participation payments as an acknowledgement of the lived experience, time commitment and for significant contributions to WACHS engagement and improvement activities.
- Digital platforms and innovative technology to support consumer participation from a range of locations across WACHS regions.

Many people choose to volunteer their time as consumer representatives for the purpose of health system improvement. All consumer representatives have the right to accept or refuse payment for their participation.

This policy does not provide guidance around gratuities or payments for community members who conduct cultural ceremonies, including Welcome to Country. For advice regarding regional payment protocols for cultural activities, please contact your Regional Aboriginal Health Consultant. For further information please refer to the [Welcome to country and acknowledgement of traditional ownership. Guidelines and protocols for WA Health](#).

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the WACHS [Consumer and Carer Engagement Policy](#).

2.1 Scope

This policy applies to all people who have been formally appointed as a WACHS consumer representative, and have undertaken an orientation process. The nature of consumer engagement activities may vary, but could include:

- attendance in a focus group, workshop or consultation activity;
- participation in safety and quality improvement activities, for example in the review of a clinical incident;
- consumer representation on a recruitment or selection panel;
- active participation in the development of resources and publications;
- sharing of their lived experience of the healthcare systems for the purpose of workforce training; and
- membership on a WACHS committee, including steering groups, working groups and local, regional and executive level committees.

Consumer payments **cannot** be offered for:

- participating in compliments and complaints processes by offering opinions or feedback via general feedback methods including via Care Opinion, suggestion boxes, in writing, and by phone or email;
- patients, families and carers engaging in personalised healthcare planning;
- open invitation community forums or consultation events;
- participation in surveys or ad hoc communications with the health service;
- WACHS volunteers as defined by the [WACHS Volunteer Policy](#)
- support persons to the appointed consumer representative
- Current WACHS employees
- people who are funded to represent another external agency, organisation or group; and
- any engagement activities or expenses that have not had prior approval from the Regional Director or their authorised delegate

Consideration can be made by the Regional Director on a case by case basis to all claims for participation payments, particularly when a lack of payment may impact on a person's ability to participate in consumer engagement activities.

2.2 Reimbursement process

Participation payment information and forms are to be offered to a consumer representative by the delegated administrative staff who are supporting the engagement activity. Approval for consumer participation payments and out-of-pocket expenses are to be confirmed by the Regional Director prior to a consumer representative attending a consumer engagement activity.

Evidence of attendance and/or expenses must be provided (e.g. attendance record, meeting minutes, relevant receipts etc.), in order to initiate completion of the relevant form.

- [AP3 Consumer Participation Payment Request Form](#) or
- [Kilometer Allowance K1 Form](#) (based on current rates as advised by the [Australian Taxation Office 'Claiming A Deduction for Car Expenses.'](#))

2.3 Participation payments

With approval from the Regional Director/ Executive Director, consumer representatives can be paid in accordance with the rates tabled below. Consumer participation payments are the responsibility of the business unit organising the event. WACHS plans, projects and consumer engagement activities are to consider including a budget for consumer participation in the planning phase.

<i>Tier</i> →	Attendee	Active participant*	Advisor
<i>Activity</i> ↓	(no payment)	\$35 per hour or part thereof	\$70 per hour or part thereof
Forums, consultations, workshops or focus groups.	General attendance	Specifically invited to actively participate	Co design and co-produce.
WACHS Committees or groups with Terms of Reference.	N/A	Member of a WACHS committee or group	Member or Co-Chair of a system, executive or strategic level committee or group.
Recruitment or selection panels	N/A	N/A	Member
Other projects.	N/A	Special projects or duties	Special projects or duties

The WACHS consumer participation payment rates have been derived from the [Western Australia Mental Health Commission Consumer, Family, Carer and Community Paid Partnership Policy](#).

Consumer representatives can claim for participation payment for time spent attending meetings and reasonable time for administrative tasks undertaken in order to meaningfully participate in engagement activities. For example: becoming familiar with the agenda and paperwork; liaising with a network to gain other consumer viewpoints (where confidentiality allows this).

2.4 Length of time to claim reimbursement

Any claim for reimbursement is to be initiated by the consumer representative with support from the secretariat or administrative staff within six months of the approved activity.

3. Definitions

Active participation	Providing opinions, input, and feedback or sharing unique experiences of the healthcare system to contribute to an understanding of the ideas being discussed.
Consumer representative	A patient, family member, carer or community member who has been asked to contribute to the planning, implementation, delivery or evaluation of WACHS health services.
Carer	Carers are people who provide unpaid personal care, support and assistance to another individual in need of support due to disability, medical condition, including terminal or chronic illness, mental illness or is frail and aged (Carers WA).
Participation payment	Payment made to an approved consumer representative in recognition of their time and expertise provided during an approved meeting.
Travel expenses	Reimbursement to cover the cost of travel i.e. public transport fees or, if the consumer member uses their car to travel to an approved meeting they may claim reimbursement per kilometre as per the Australian Taxation Office 'Claiming A Deduction for Car Expenses . Reimbursement of travel expenses does not include payment for travel time.
Volunteer	A volunteer is an individual who chooses of their own free will to engage in specified, unpaid activities within WACHS. Volunteers may receive payment for out of pocket expenses. For more information see the WACHS Volunteer Policy .

4. Roles and Responsibilities

WACHS Accounts Payable

WACHS Finance/Accounts payable are responsible for:

- Assisting with setting up the consumer representative as an Oracle Supplier with payment terms inline with the WA Heath Financial Management Manual – s613
- Subject to receiving a compliant payment record, processing payment request forms in line with standard WACHS Accounts Payable Business Rules

Tier 4 Manager

The Tier 4 Manager as per the [WACHS Authorisation Schedule](#) is responsible for:

- approving participation payments and reimbursement of expenses prior to the engagement process taking place; and
- providing evidence of records of consumer participation payments for reporting purposes.

Secretariat or Administrative staff

The secretariat or administrative staff supporting the engagement activity is responsible for:

- ensuring appropriate approvals have been sought from the Regional Director
- ensuring that the consumer representative is reimbursed appropriately and efficiently
- ensuring that all documentation, including evidence of out of pocket expense (receipts etc) is provided to WACHS Accounts Payable when claiming for reimbursement
- keeping accurate records of consumer participation payments for reporting purposes.

Consumer Representative

Participation payment claims for approved consumer participation and travel costs is to be initiated by the consumer representative within six months of the approved activity. Consumer representatives are responsible for:

- timely applications for reimbursement for consumer engagement activities.
- providing evidence of out of pocket expenses (receipts etc.)
- personal reporting obligations to other entities. For example the Australian Taxation Office, Centrelink etc.

Exemptions

Where health service staff would like to provide reimbursement which differs from this policy, a written exemption is to be sought from the Regional Director or Executive Director. Careful consideration is to be given to any payment not compliant with the policy, and the impact of setting precedents. Any exemptions must be in alignment with existing Accounts Payable and/or Finance related requirements.

Reporting

Annual reporting to WACHS Central Office of participation payments provided to consumer representatives is the responsibility of the local health service/region.

All Staff are required to work within policies and guidelines to make sure that WACHS is a safe, equitable and positive place to be.

5. Compliance

It is a requirement of the WA Health [Code of Conduct](#) that employees comply with all applicable WA Health policy frameworks.

A breach of the Code may result in Improvement Action or Disciplinary Action in accordance with the [WA Health Discipline Policy](#) or Breach of Discipline under Part 5 of the *Public Sector Management Act*.

WACHS staff are reminded that compliance with all policies is mandatory.

6. Records Management

All WACHS corporate records must be stored in the approved Electronic Documents and Records Management System and in accordance with the [Records Management Policy](#).

7. Evaluation

Evaluation of this policy is to be undertaken by the Patient Experience and Community Engagement (PEaCE) team every five years, or earlier if required, ensuring alignment with other established guidelines and recommendations.

8. Standards

[National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards \(Second edition 2017\)](#) – Standard 2.6, 2.7, 2.9, 2.11, 2.14,

[Australian Aged Care Quality Agency Accreditation Standards](#) – Standard 8

[National Standards for Mental Health Services](#) – Standard 3.1, 3.7,

[National Standards for Disability Services](#) – Standard 2

9. Legislation

[Australian Taxation Office 'Claiming A Deduction for Car Expenses'](#)

10. References

[Western Australia Mental Health Commission Consumer, Family, Carer and Community Paid Partnership Policy.](#)
[East Metropolitan Health Service Aboriginal Cultural Protocols Guidelines](#)
[WA Health Sustainable Health Review Framework](#)
[Health Consumers Council Engagement Policy and Procedure](#)
[Welcome to country and acknowledgement of traditional ownership. Guidelines and protocols for WA Health](#)

11. Related Forms

[AP3 Consumer Participation Payment Request Form or Kilometer Allowance K1 Form](#)

12. Related Policy Documents

WACHS [Consumer and Carer Engagement Policy.](#)
WACHS [Consumer Engagement Strategy \(in Draft\)](#)
WACHS [Partnering with Consumers guideline](#)
WACHS [Records Management Policy](#)
WACHS [Volunteer Policy](#)
WACHS [Authorisation Schedule](#)

13. Related WA Health System Policies

[Welcome to country and acknowledgement of traditional ownership. Guidelines and protocols for WA Health](#)

14. Policy Framework

[Clinical Governance, Safety and Quality](#)

**This document can be made available in alternative formats
on request for a person with a disability**

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