

Consumer and Community Engagement Strategy

2026 – 2028

About this strategy

We recognise that meaningful consumer engagement is essential to delivering safe, high-quality and person-centred care, and to achieving better health outcomes for our community. This strategy is a clear commitment to building strong partnerships with consumers—whether in the design and planning of services or at the point of care itself. It positions engagement not as a one-off activity or the responsibility of a few, but as a core expectation embedded across our entire health service.

At the heart of this strategy is the knowledge that consumers, families, carers and communities bring invaluable insights through their lived experiences. These voices are critical for shaping how we provide care, design systems, and foster a culture that continually learns, improves and responds to the needs of those we serve.

We acknowledge that improving people's ability to understand and act on health information is essential to delivering quality care. We value the strength and adaptability of our community in navigating diverse health and social circumstances. To support the needs of our community, we are committed to fostering improved health literacy through clear, accessible communication; empowering individuals to make informed decisions about their care; promoting transparency in our practices and services; and continuously building the capability of our staff to engage meaningfully with consumers, ensuring care is culturally responsive, person-centred, and aligned with the values and needs of those we serve.

Developed through consultation with consumers, staff and our community, the strategy articulates our direction for consumer engagement over the next three years and commits to transparent reporting on achievements and areas for improvement. Alongside the Metro North Employee Engagement Strategy, this strategy provides a practical pathway for operationalising engagement across the health service while remaining adaptable to the evolving needs and expectations of our community and staff.

This strategy aligns with, but is not limited to the [Hospital and Health Boards Regulation 2023](#), the [National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards](#) and is integral to achieving the goals and approach outlined in the [Metro North Health Strategic Plan](#), [Health Equity Strategy](#) and the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities Community and Engagement Framework](#). It also reflects our commitment to respecting, protecting, promoting and fulfilling human rights—principles that are central to the way we engage with consumers and build a health system where everyone has a voice.



Integrated Consumer Engagement

- Embedded in Everyday Activities
- Leadership and Organisational Support
- Clear Processes and Frameworks



Build Capacity

- Staff Training
- Consumer Training and Support



Equal Partnership

- Person-Centred Care
- Meaningful Co-design
- Listen and Respond to Feedback



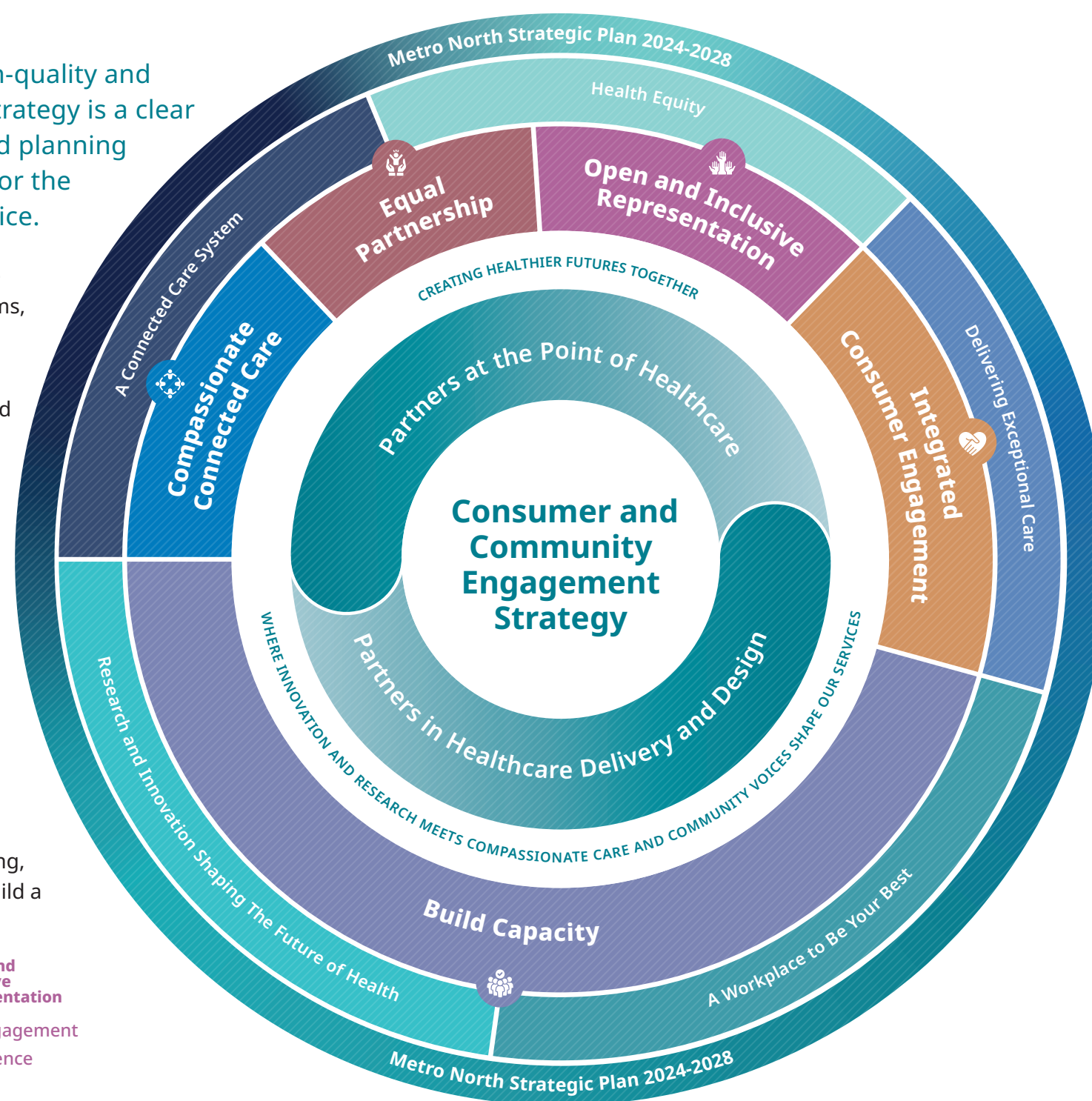
Compassionate Connected Care

- Holistic, Integrated and Coordinated Care
- Service Accessibility and Support
- Communication and Information Sharing



Open and Inclusive Representation

- Inclusive Engagement
- Lived Experience Integration
- Diverse Community Connections



Integrated Consumer Engagement

Objective

Consumer engagement is embedded in how we plan, deliver, and evaluate services—supported by strong leadership, clear processes, accessible frameworks, and dedicated funding.

Embedded in Everyday Activities

Key Strategies:

- 1.1 Build an inclusive, relational culture where consumer partnership is a fundamental part of practice.
- 1.2 Consumer engagement is built into all aspects of design and delivery of health services at all levels.

Leadership and Organisational Support

Key Strategies:

- 1.3 Leadership will set expectations and role model the organisation's commitment to sustainable consumer engagement.
- 1.4 Support inclusive and genuine engagement by allocating sufficient time, budget, and resources.

Clear Processes and Frameworks

Key Strategies:

- 1.5 Co-develop a research-informed framework to guide effective consumer and community engagement across the health service.*

Success Targets

- Annual Check in Survey results show an increase in the variation of activities that consumer representatives are involved in.
- Annual Check in Survey results show that over 80% of consumers report feeling valued.
- Annual health service wide reporting on the number of activities occurring with active consumer representation.
- Reporting reflects programs of work with the resources necessary to foster meaningful partnerships.
- A Metro North approach to engagement is in place to guide meaningful and flexible engagement processes.

Build Capacity

Objective

Strengthen staff skills in consumer engagement, support consumers, and apply existing knowledge to drive improvement.

Staff Training

Key Strategies:

- 2.1 Equip staff with the knowledge and skills to partner meaningfully with consumers.
- 2.2 Foster environments that promote safety, trust, choice, collaboration and empowerment.

Consumer Training and Support

Key Strategies:

- 2.3 Provide support for consumer representatives to partner effectively with the health service in formal arrangements.
- 2.4 Build systems to transparently promote and match consumer representative skills with engagement and partnering opportunities.

Success Targets

- Information and training to support communication and consumer engagement is available to staff.
- A trauma-informed approach to care is embedded into healthcare training.
- An approach to orientation and training for consumer representatives is co-designed to support role clarity, shared responsibilities, and meaningful engagement.
- Establishment of a centralised database of consumer representatives including areas of interest and expertise.

Equal Partnership

Objective

Consumers are respected as equal partners in care, with their rights upheld through compassionate, person-centred approaches, meaningful co-design, and transparent feedback that drives real change.

Person-Centred Care

Key Strategies:

- 3.1 Empower people to participate in decisions about their care in the way that they choose.
- 3.2 Acknowledge in our service delivery and systems that people are multifaceted, with cultural experiences, values, and beliefs all playing a role in shaping wellbeing.

Meaningful Co-Design

Key Strategies:

- 3.3 Enable a flexible, practical, participatory approach to co-design.

Listen and Respond to Feedback

Key Strategies:

- 3.4 Feedback is encouraged and received from consumers that represent the diversity of our community.
- 3.5 Consumer knowledge and feedback is used to inform improvements.

Success Targets

- Consumer reported experience data demonstrates an improved percentage of patients reporting high-quality interactions, feelings of respect, participation in shared decision-making, and satisfaction with care and treatment.
- A collaborative review of the Metro North co-design framework to ensure it empowers staff and consumers to meaningfully identify and engage in co-designed activities is completed.
- Reporting processes show evidence of consumer feedback informing organisational changes and improvement projects.
- Evidence of a variety of participatory, accessible and inclusive feedback mechanisms are in use to enable timely and ongoing feedback.

Compassionate Connected Care

Objective

Strengthen healthcare engagement by partnering to co-design coordinated services, informed by lived experience and supported by respectful communication and shared information.

Holistic, Integrated, and Coordinated Care

Key Strategies:

- 4.1 Partner with consumers to ensure services are designed for accessibility and usability.

Service Accessibility and Support

Key Strategies:

- 4.2 Maximise the use of technology that supports communication and connection to services.
- 4.3 Strengthen cultural support and inclusion for consumers accessing services.

Communication and Information Sharing

Key Strategies:

- 4.4 Expand how consumer preferences such as communication, support and care needs are communicated.
- 4.5 Provide clear, relevant information that consumers and communities trust as their preferred source.

Success Targets

- Number and type of co-designed activities consumers are involved in across the health service.
- Increased use of digital solutions and sensory technologies to improve access and communication.
- Increased number of lived experience workforce roles embedded in healthcare operations and training.
- Increased numbers of services integrating the use of health passports such as Julian's Key.
- Increased number of co-designed resources and engagement rates with public facing materials.

Open and Inclusive Representation

Objective

Enhance inclusion and representation by actively engaging with diverse communities and vulnerable people ensuring meaningful involvement in decisions that affect them.

Inclusive Engagement

Key Strategies:

- 5.1 Services are welcoming, easy to navigate environments that support access to information and care.
- 5.2 Build a better understanding of the needs and experiences of consumers who are more susceptible to poor health outcomes.

Lived Experience Integration

Key Strategies:

- 5.3 Purposefully partner to strengthen the involvement of vulnerable and underrepresented consumers.

Diverse Community Connections

Key Strategies:

- 5.4 Expand engagement options to ensure that we hear the diverse voices within our community.
- 5.5 Strengthen partnerships across health, disability, education, and community sectors.

Success Targets

- Improvement in the rate of consumers reporting positive experiences with service accessibility, navigation, and environment through feedback and surveys.
- Consumers impacted by intersecting health determinants and at greater risk of poor outcomes are engaged in health service initiatives.
- Number of engagement activities specifically designed to connect with underrepresented groups in the community/service area.
- Increased participation in consumer and community engagement events within and external to the organisation.
- Evidence of cross-sector partnerships and joint initiatives in place across the health service.