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30 August 2014

Hon Jay Weatherill MP
Premier of South Australia
State Administration Centre
200 Victoria Square
Adelaide SA 5001

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Dear Premier

Please find enclosed copies of submissions from Whyalla, Port Augusta and Hawker Health Advisory Councils in response to your correspondence of 8 July 2014, regarding the reform of the South Australian government boards and committees.

Although our communities face many common aspects we have each tried to indicate the complexities and differentials that we each face. While we accept there is a need to diversify and evolve, we also need to remain true and relevant to the local communities that we represent.

The combined Port Augusta, Roxby Downs and Woomera Health Advisory Council have the highest representation of Aboriginal people in our region. Their active engagement within these communities is supported by the Northern CHSA Aboriginal Health Advisory Committee, a long standing member of the state peak body for Aboriginal Health, AHCSA.

As volunteers we have given countless hours to access and consider how we can address some of the issues facing our local communities. We do not receive sitting fees when we attend our local meetings or travel expenses to attend the quarterly combined Health Advisory Council for the Eyre, Flinders & Far North Rural Region throughout our region. We utilize teleconferencing where and whenever we can.

We accept that the South Australian Government is striving to achieve better health outcomes for the state population, but would see the abolishment of the local Health Advisory Council's as a step backwards. The government policy proposes to engage consumers in the decision making process, but surely by dismissing the engagement of the local Health Advisory Council this would be seen as a contradiction of this process.

As part of the **National Safety and Quality Standards, Standard 2, Consumer partnerships in service planning: Governance structures are in place to form**

partnerships with consumers and /or carers Health Advisory Council members have been invited and are encouraged to participate in workgroups.

In government we need people who will stand and speak up for their community, the Health Advisory Councils try to effectively engage and converse with and for their local community. We are local people understanding local issues.

In closing we ask that you give our submissions your valued consideration and allow us to continue in our role as advocates for our communities.

Yours sincerely

Sandra Plew
Presiding Member
Whyalla Hospital and Health Services Health Advisory Council

CC: Minister for Health and Aged Care, Hon Jack Snelling



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31 July 2014

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Dear Premier

Thank you for your correspondence of 8 July 2014, with regard to the reform of South Australian government boards and committees.

In response to your letter I would offer the following information on behalf of the Whyalla Hospital and Health Services Health Advisory Council;

- We live in a rural city and engage with the local community at a community level.
- Other than costs for travel to the Combined Health Council meeting in Adelaide, for up to 2 members, our costs are very minimal to the government.
- All unused funds are transferred back to the government each financial year.
- We give our time voluntarily and are committed to making a difference in our community.
- The government approach appears to encourage more consumer involvement and input but appears to offer very little support in this area.
- Several HAC members have been involved at a consumer level in the Nationals Standard 2, Partnering with Consumers.
- At our planning and orientation workshop held on 20 February 2014, members identified 5 priority areas to focus on in 2014. The priority areas selected are; Cancer Services, Mental Health, Obstetrics/Paediatrics, Chronic Disease and Health Advisory Council Promotion. We are currently working through at a local level, with local understanding and involvement.

We have contacted our local Member for Giles, Eddie Hughes, and have asked him to support our submission to remain independent and local. I am enclosing a copy of his response for your reference.

Our Health Advisory Council contains a broad and diverse membership, with representatives from all walks of life and experience. Should the need to amalgamate with

other Health Advisory Councils be the way of the future, as has been suggested, we feel this will dilute the strategic involvement and understanding at a local level.

Copies of our bi-monthly meeting minutes are forwarded to the Hon Jack Snelling, Minister for Health and Aged Care, for his information. Our yearly report enables us to reflect on our achievements to date and what areas we still need to direct our attention and engage with consumers.

We understand there may be boards and committees that are long past their use by date and have become a burden to the people and government departments involved. We replaced the old hospital boards in 2008 with broad sweeping changes and took some time to feel comfortable and understand how these changes would affect our community engagement.

As we head forward we need to have a clear understanding that our involvement is valued and is to be taken seriously so that we can approach our community with confidence, and that we still advocate on their behalf.

Yours sincerely

Sandra Plew
Presiding Member
Whyalla Hospital and Health Services Health Advisory Council
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CC: ~~Minister for Health and Aged Care, Hon Jack Snelling~~