

Empowering research through consumer voice: Andrea Pinto's story

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At Cabrini, we recognise consumers' invaluable role in shaping our research and improving patient care. As we strive for excellence in healthcare and prepare for accreditation against the National Clinical Trials Governance Framework, we are proud to highlight the importance of consumer involvement in our research initiatives.

Andrea Pinto, a dedicated Cabrini Consumer Advisory Committee member, demonstrates the power of lived experience in guiding research design. As a nurse for 30 years, Andrea brings a unique perspective to our research projects.

"Being a consumer representative at Cabrini allows me to give back to the community and help shape the future of healthcare," Andrea shares.

Andrea recently contributed to the Back Pain Pathways Project led by researcher Jason Wallis. Andrea explained when asked about her input, "I was interested in providing my perspective as I'm a nurse and have a history of chronic back pain. I provided insights from a patient's perspective, helping to ensure that the research design considered the real-world challenges faced by those living with back pain."

The improvements made based on Andrea's feedback were significant. "We refined the study's communication materials to be more patient-friendly and suggested ways to make participation less burdensome for patients," Andrea notes. These changes aim to enhance participant engagement and the overall quality of the research.

"You don't want the patient to produce a lot of verbal answers. They can give short, precise, tick-the-box answers, but then if they want to expand upon something that was meaningful for them along the journey or that was negative or positive, there's a space they can do that, too," adds Andrea.

Reflecting on her experience, Andrea expressed great satisfaction with the consumer engagement in the research process: "I enjoyed it. I felt listened to, and it was satisfying to know that I could help people on their journey."

Cabrini is developing a comprehensive Partnering with Consumers in Research Guideline to strengthen our partnership with consumers in research further. This two-part guide aims to:

- Assist researchers and organisations in implementing person-centred research and building consumer partnerships throughout the research process.
- Empower consumers and community members to be active partners in research design, delivery, dissemination, and evaluation.

By prioritising consumer involvement, Cabrini is not only meeting accreditation requirements but fostering a culture of collaborative, patient-centred research.

As we evolve our healthcare approach, the voices of consumers like Andrea will remain at the heart of our mission to provide exceptional care and drive meaningful research outcomes.

For those interested in learning more about consumer involvement in research, we encourage you to attend an upcoming webinar. **On 22 August, the Consumers Health Forum of Australia is hosting a webinar titled [Consumers in Research: What's Our Role?](#)** This event provides an excellent opportunity to deepen your understanding of consumer participation in research.

