November 8, 2013

Wide Bay Hospital and Health Board asks the public to help shape future

The Wide Bay Hospital and Health Board has launched a community consultation project on an unprecedented scale to give locals the chance to shape the future of the public health system.

Health advocacy groups, club movements, service organisations and the media are all partners in the ambitious Your Hospital Your Say campaign that will canvas Wide Bay residents from November 8 about the direction of their health service.

The campaign centres on a strategic plan consultation document which sets out the health challenges people of the region face and a vision for how the Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service plans to respond across the next five years.

“Our disease prevalence and levels of disadvantage highlighted in the consultation document are a concern for our community,” WBHH Board Chair Dominic Devine said.

“For example, research tells us our rates of asthma, mood disorders and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease are among the highest in Australia.

“What the Your Hospital Your Say consultation process is all about is giving the public the chance to add to the health service’s understanding of our health problems and what solutions they envisage.”

The consultation document was developed over several months during a structured consultation process involving community leaders, clinicians, WBHHS staff and the WBHH Board.

Out of this exercise five pledges were developed: to provide patient focused health care, to engage with the community, to develop staff and to provide value for money and to encourage innovation.

“These pledges are the cornerstone of the consultation document and reflect our approach to meeting the healthcare needs of the people of the Wide Bay,” Mr Devine said.

“What people can be confident about is that no health service has ever undertaken such a comprehensive consultation campaign.

“If strong trends emerge from the community we will acknowledge this in planning for the future.”

Residents can have read the consultation document and have their say on health services by doing the online survey at www.health.qld.gov.au/widebay.
Regional newspapers will carry the survey periodically from November 9 until November 29.

**FAST FACTS**

- The WBHHS region has the highest proportion of people aged 65 and over in Australia.
- 45% of income earners receive less than $400 a week which makes private health care less affordable.
- The WBHHS region is first in Australia for obesity prevalence in females and third for males.
- Wide Bay residents rank second in Australia for physical inactivity rates.

ENDS

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