

Consumer Information Package

Researcher Teams

Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research

WEHI Consumer Program



Thank you for expressing interest in the WEHI Consumer Program.

WEHI is seeking Consumer volunteers who are interested in engaging with medical research scientists. If you are interested in becoming a valued part of our community, we invite you to learn more about this partnership between the community and our scientists. Our Consumer program has helped produce some amazing discoveries and resulted in dramatic improvements in disease prevention, diagnosis, and treatment in the areas of cancer, immune disorders, Parkinson's disease, infectious diseases and much more.

The WEHI Consumer Program was launched in 2013 to create a better link between Institute research the community with the aim to improve research by enabling Consumers to support scientific research. Through forming effective working relationships with Consumers, our researchers continue to make new discoveries that we hope to be able to translate into therapies.

Who is a Consumer?

Consumers are members of the community who have experienced an illness, cared for someone with an illness, or have a passion to help medical researchers. Consumers provide a community perspective. Their role is to bring a broad, informed view to research projects and grant applications, reflecting their experiences and the needs of the community where appropriate.

Why are Consumers so important?

Consumers often have valuable knowledge of the way a medical condition effects themselves, their family and friends, and the broader community that otherwise our scientists would not be aware of. When consumers partner with our scientists they can influence and enhance research at the Institute and provide a powerful voice for the communication of scientific and research issues to the community. Without consumer support, researchers would not be able to understand the practical, social, physical, and emotional sides of the medical conditions they are working to find cures for.

What do our Consumers do?

Volunteers in the WEHI Consumer Program provide a link between the researcher and the community, as well as providing unique insight into the disease type. Consumers partner with a researcher on a project relating to their own medical condition, or around their medical interest.

Consumers:

- act as advocates for the research to the public and provide information to the community
- inspire research scientists by contributing personal life experiences
- review grant applications for research funding
- develop or review plain language summary documents for various purposes
- provide insights into how research undertaken at the Institute can make a difference in the community

Joining a Research Team

We are looking to recruit Consumers who will be part of a research team.

- You will be one of four consumers who will be matched with researcher/s, developing a partnership will help enhance the research.
- Your role is to share your lived experience of a disease and Researchers share their research ideas and plans, specific projects and proposals and explore communication strategies and ways of sharing science with a lay audience.
- You will also contribute and draw on skill sets from your working life.
- You may work with a research team to support dissemination of outcomes, deliver presentations, support publication and engage the wider community or guide research direction and priority.
- You may also review of grant applications – particularly where a granting body required direct consumer involvement.

Consumer Commitments

As a Consumer volunteer you will be expected to make these basic commitments:

- To undertake induction support training to assist you in your Consumer experience
- To meet with your researcher four times a year for project updates and grant reviews (There will also be opportunity to review documents and provide feedback outside of these meetings).

Meetings will be held in person, online or hybrid (a combination of both).

If attending in person, meetings are held at WEHI, 1G Royal Parade, Parkville. Link to map: <https://www.wehi.edu.au/about/contact-us/find-us>

As well as the basic commitments, as a volunteer you may be invited to attend varied seminars, lab tours, lunches, and institute events.

WEHI Commitments

In return for volunteering your time and insights, we will support you by committing to:

- Provide ongoing support via the WEHI Consumer Program Manager and coordinator
- Deliver workshops for Consumer education and training
- Invite Consumers to events and seminars as part of the Institute community

Support and resources



- Your role is to bring a lived experience and consumer perspective to the research. You **do not** need to understand the science.
- Education and training will be provided to support you in your role
- Kelly Trueman (Consumer Program Coordinator), will be your contact and support person.
- While this is a volunteer role, all consumers joining a Team shall be reimbursed for all approved out of pocket expenses incurred.
- We understand consumers are busy and may be dealing with health issues/caring for someone with health issues or have work and family commitments. We greatly appreciate your commitment and will do whatever we can to support you in your role, including offering flexible meeting arrangements where needed.