

Background History

This Framework builds on the existence of community participation activities within SWSAHS before the development of the Framework. Prior activities include involvement in hospital auxiliaries, volunteer programs, local advisory groups and community development programs etc. Throughout its history, SWSAHS has engaged communities in a variety of ways (e.g. the *Macarthur Health Strategy Report*). The development of this Framework reflects a stronger and more structured commitment to community participation through incorporation of the Framework within our systems. This new direction is also a response to the NSW Health commitment outlined in the *Partners in Health Report*. It means engaging the active involvement of communities across the range of activities and throughout all levels of SWSAHS.

A number of actions have been taken to increase community participation activity in SWSAHS leading up to the development of the Community Participation Framework. These include:

- an audit of community participation activity;
- the establishment of the SWSAHS Community Representatives Network and Community Participation Staff Network;
- the appointment of community representatives to a number of committees within SWSAHS;
- employment of a number of staff to work in community participation;
- training programs for staff and community representatives; and
- the collection of data for evaluation purposes.

A Draft Community Participation Framework document was developed the assistance of members of the SWSAHS Community Representatives Network, members of the Community Participation Staff Network, senior staff of SWSAHS and Board members.

A detailed consultation strategy was developed, implemented and evaluated for the Draft Community Participation Framework.