

## OPEN ACCESS BOARD MEETING

Western Health held its annual Open Access Board Meeting on 5 June 2014 at the Williamstown Town Hall, with close to 70 people in attendance.



The purpose of these meetings is to provide an opportunity for members of the community to learn more about key areas of focus for the Board and have an input into plans and decisions.

The evening involved hearing from consumers who have experienced the services of Western Health and learning about Western Health's Best Care Framework.

Former Western Health patient, Sharon Newall and her husband Mark addressed those gathered, sharing their various experiences throughout Sharon's treatment after suffering a stroke in December 2012.

All up, it has been calculated that Sharon worked with 46 Allied Health staff on her road to recovery.

Add to that the nurses, doctors and specialists that attended to Sharon during her three months at Western Health and continued outpatient appointments since she was discharged and Mark estimates Sharon would have come into contact with close to 400 staff members.

"All of those people made a difference, no matter how big or small their role was in my recovery," Sharon said.

"Every (staff member) has a role to play in caring for patients and every patient is as important as the next person."

Attendees also had the opportunity to talk with Board members in small groups about their own experiences and suggestions for how Western Health could provide Best Care.

The following themes were identified through group discussion and questions raised by consumers. The

themes and details of group discussions have been forwarded to Western Health's Best Care Committees to compare against planned areas for improvement.

- Clearer communication between staff, patients and carers
- Vigilance and accountability in paying attention and responding
- Specific care pathways from adolescents to adults and people with disabilities
- Acknowledging and understanding cultural sensitivities and meeting the needs of specific communities, for example, transgender
- Transition to the home environment through greater support
- Emergency care and what happens at the first point of care
- Upgrading ageing buildings and facilities

Attendees were invited to complete an evaluation questionnaire, which revealed a positive response on the value of the meeting:

- 100% of respondents thought the focus of the meeting on Best Care was good or excellent
- 88% of respondents felt that the way the meeting was structured (consumer question and answer, presentation, group discussions) was good or excellent
- 83% of respondents rated their opportunity to contribute to discussions or share their thoughts as good or excellent but asked for more time to be allocated to group discussions with the board.