

# Community & Partnerships

## Open Access Board Meeting

More than 50 people joined the Western Health Board on 19 June for our 2013 Open Access Board Meeting. 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 Board plans and decisions.

The theme of this meeting was listening and responding to the voice of the patient.

The evening involved hearing from a panel of consumers who have experienced the services of Western Health, either directly or through family and friends. The panel answered questions regarding their 'voice of the patient' experiences and how we could improve the way we listen.

Attendees also had the opportunity to talk with Board Members in small groups about their own experiences and suggestions for how we could improve the way we listen and respond to patients and carers.

A strong message from the night was the importance of "seeing the person in the patient". This message will be a key focus of planned activity over the next year to develop and implement a new strategy to improve the patient experience of care at Western Health called "See Me".



*Volunteer June Hansen speaks with Board Director Bob Mitchell at the Open Access Board Meeting.*

The Hon Ralph Willis, Board Chair, reflected that "We, as Board members need to take heed of the fact that sometimes it is the smallest things that are the most important for our patients and their families. The time taken to listen at the bedside; refilling the water jug; moving a tray closer to the bed so the meal is within reach; even a smile can make a difference. Listening and communicating – time and again, we are informed about the importance of these elements if we are to continuously improve the way we do things in a major health service."

Attendees were invited to complete an evaluation questionnaire, with a positive response on the value of the meeting as shown by the following feedback:

- 95% of respondents thought the focus of the meeting ("listening to & responding to the voice of the patients") was good or excellent
- 100% of respondents thought that the way the meeting was structured (consumer panel, presentation, group discussions) was good or excellent
- 89% of respondents rated their opportunity to contribute to discussions or share their thoughts as good or excellent.



*Three consumers take part in a panel discussion at the Open Access Board Meeting.*