

27 September 2018

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary,

Re: Further details on the financial relationship between the Consumers Health Forum of Australia (CHF) and the Australian Digital Health Agency (ADHA)

We are writing to give further clarification on the financial relationship between CHF and the ADHA as outlined whilst giving evidence and detailed in our submission to this inquiry

At the second hearing for the inquiry into the My Health Record system, CHF was asked by Senator Keneally;

Has the Consumers Health Forum taken any money from or signed any contracts with the ADHA?

Our response included referring the Senator to our submission to this inquiry. That section of our submission is reproduced below, then some further information is provided.

CHF is a primarily government funded organisation with core funding provided under the Department of Health's Health Peak and Advisory Bodies Programme. Other funding is sourced from government and other agencies seeking to engage CHF's expertise and advice, and membership fees. CHF has received funding from the Australian Digital Health Agency (ADHA) for:

- the engagement of a digital health adviser to support CHF's engagement in digital health policy and national development (\$105,600);
- the design and delivery of an independent roundtable to consider key elements for the successful implementation of digitally enabled models of care under the National Digital Health Strategy and its Framework for Action, and an associated report, (\$57,750); and
- the design and delivery of six webinars on a range of issues in relation to My Health Record (MHR) and its opt-out period (\$64,600):.

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CHF and the ADHA also signed a Memorandum of Understanding¹ in relation to support of consumer and community engagement in furthering a digitally enabled healthcare system. This includes recognition of CHF's independent status.

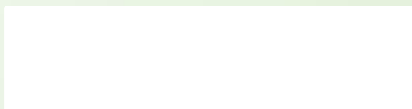
Further to what we said in our submission to the inquiry and given in evidence, and in the interest of transparency and providing the Committee with a clear and complete response to the question, we reviewed our contract register and found we had not produced information on a small number of contracts and payments that should be disclosed. They are;

- the development, organisation and delivery of a consumer focus group on digital health (\$28,700)
- part sponsorship of our recent Youth Health Forum (\$16,500) and last years Consumer and Carer Leadership Colloquium (\$5,500), and
- CHF staff travel to a small number of ADHA meetings or events (\$2,292.70) that our budget would otherwise not have enabled us to attend.

Senator Keneally also asked for the full quantum of our funding from the ADHA. That sum is \$280,942.70.

CHF believes it is appropriate to question government expenditure and to interrogate whether that expenditure has been in service of influencing organisations and individuals who the community and health sector expect to give full, frank and independent advice. We believe we have maintained our independence on this matter, and thank the committee for their focus on this issue.

Yours sincerely,



Leanne Wells
Chief Executive Officer

¹ The MoU is available at <https://www.digitalhealth.gov.au/news-and-events/news/consumers-voice-drives-digital-health/CHF%20-%20Memorandum%20of%20Understanding.pdf>

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