

Executive Sponsor	Mercy Health Community Advisory Committee and Mercy Perinatal Advisory Committee
Chairperson:	Alex Tighe
Secretary:	Mercy Perinatal Events and Communications Assistant
Frequency:	Bi-Monthly in 2025, with possibility of quarterly in 2026.
Time Limit:	2 hours
Venue:	Mercy Hospital for Women in Heidelberg (Zoom if requested)

Purpose

The Consumer Advisory Steering Group (CASG) is a key governance group that provides strategic direction for community engagement with the activities of Mercy Perinatal.

The purpose of the CASG is to;

1. represent and advocate for the community,
2. advise Mercy Perinatal and the Advisory Committee about patient and community views on Mercy Perinatal's clinical service development, education and research, and provide insight into the experience of patients, their families and carers at Mercy Perinatal,
3. define and develop consumer roles, engaging across diverse communities and stakeholders,
4. recruit consumers to the Mercy Perinatal consumer network, who may participate in focus groups, discussion forums regarding research themes and other Mercy Perinatal initiatives
5. oversee training, remuneration and support for consumers participating in focus groups/ research.

Functions / objectives

The CASG is responsible for advocating on behalf of our community to the Mercy Perinatal Advisory Committee on issues relevant to consumer research and experience. The Mercy Perinatal Advisory Committee is comprised of the co-directors, project officers, researchers and clinicians responsible for the clinical, education and research agenda for Mercy Perinatal. The MPAC reports to Mercy Health Executive through the Mercy Perinatal Governance Group.

- The CASG supports the delivery of quality care, research and education in Mercy Perinatal. It aligns with
 - Mercy Health's values of compassion, hospitality, respect, innovation, stewardship and teamwork.
 - the four Quality Health Service Goals, (1) Person Centred Care, (2) Safe Care, (3) Integrated Care and (4) Effective and Appropriate Care,
 - Goals of the National Clinical Trials Governance Framework in partnering with consumers.

The functions of the steering group are to support:

(1) Person Centred Care

1. Assist Mercy Health, Mercy Perinatal and its Governance Committees with community engagement, communication and consultation with its consumers and the community.
2. Build a Consumer Network and develop a Community Engagement Plan for approval by the Mercy Perinatal Advisory Committee. Monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the approved plan.
3. Participate in the development and review of information which is used by the Consumer Network.
4. Provide input and feedback on research projects at all stages of development.

(2) Integrated Care

1. Ensure the CASG's priorities are informed by and aligned with the Mercy Perinatal Strategic Framework.
2. Advise Mercy Perinatal on opportunities to support the integration of consumer and community views into all levels of Mercy Perinatal's operations.

(3) Safe Care

1. Provide advice on how to communicate with the community in a safe and transparent way about both research and clinical work.

(4) Effective & Appropriate Care

1. Consider matters referred to the committee by the Mercy Perinatal Advisory Committee, Mercy Health or through the Chair.
2. Participate in Mercy Perinatal's strategic planning process.
3. Informing, developing, directing and designing research within Mercy Perinatal

Membership

The members of the Steering Group will collectively have qualifications, skills and experience to meet the responsibilities of the CASG.

The Mercy Perinatal Advisory Committee shall approve all community member nominations to the CASG.

- A Consumer Advisor member of the CASG will act as Chairperson.
- Where possible there will be 3 research members and 3 additional consumer members inclusive of a minimum of one position held for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Members represent patient, family and community perspectives on the committee; they are selected to represent and advocate for the community regardless of their professional, career or personal affiliations or experience.
- Community members should be able to support and enable representation of the diversity of the community served.

By invitation of the Executive Sponsor or Chairperson, others may attend for all or part of one or more meetings of the Committee as a resource or in an advisory capacity.

Terms

Community members will have a term of two - three (2-3) years (specified at application), with the potential of renewal for two additional terms of 2 years (maximal time served of 7 years).

Frequency of meetings

- The meeting frequency is bi monthly (every second month) for 2025, with the possibility of every 3 months in 2026 and onwards.
- Meetings may be held in person, by teleconference, by videoconference or by any other electronic means of audio or visual communication.

Decision making, quorum and frequency of meetings

- A quorum shall comprise no less than half the membership plus one.
- The absence of a quorum shall not invalidate the proceedings of a meeting.
- A meeting without a quorum may not make a decision without that decision being ratified by the next meeting with a quorum **or** by circulation of the appropriate documentation to the members who were absent and obtaining their rectification in writing.
- Any member can propose matters for consideration by notifying the Chair and copying in the Secretariat.
- In the event of their absence, the Chairperson will nominate another Consumer Advisor member/ Deputy Chair to chair the meeting.
- As an advisory body, the CASG interacts with and makes recommendations to the decision- making bodies of Mercy Perinatal on matters pertinent to its purpose and functions.
- The CASG encourages discussion, exploration of divergent views and consultation with the community, relevant personnel or departments to inform decision-making within its terms of reference,
- Achieving consensus is preferable and processes to reach consensus will be followed where possible (and appropriate). Nevertheless, when consensus is not reached, decisions will be made by majority vote.
- In the case of a tied vote, the Chair will have the casting vote.
- Where decisions involve a tie, recommendations made to decision-making bodies should include reference to the significant divergent view.
- Documents and correspondence relating to the committee are confidential. While communication of decision making is an important component of management, the basic principles of confidentiality apply to documents relating to the committee.

Reporting

The CASG reports to the Mercy Health Consumer Advisory Council and the Mercy Perinatal Advisory Committee.

The CASG will report on its activity and the progress of the Mercy Perinatal CASG and any working groups on an annual basis to the Mercy Perinatal Advisory Committee, as well as every 4 months to the Mercy Health Consumer Advisory Council.

The CASG is responsible for communicating information to any business, site-based. This will be done through communicating items of significance or tabling of minutes for information where relevant.

Agendas and minutes

An agenda and meeting papers will be circulated at least one week before each meeting to ensure that members have time to consider the contents and raise questions they may have before the meeting date.

Meeting papers will include a one-page brief detailing purpose of presentation at CASG, key points and outcome sought.

Minutes of each meeting will be prepared, circulated and retained as the complete and formal record of each meeting of the Group.

Minutes of each meeting will be confirmed, with or without amendment at the next ordinary meeting of the Group.

Minutes of the CASG are provided to the Mercy Health CAC and Mercy Perinatal CAGs for information.

Committees / working parties that report to this committee

Mercy Perinatal Consumer Advisory Groups (CAGs)

Key performance indicators

- Members attend a minimum of 75 per cent of meetings held each year. Where this is not possible an apology must be forwarded to the Committee Chair and Secretariat.
- Undertake annual evaluation of performance of the Community Engagement Plan and communicate results to the Mercy Perinatal Advisory Committee.
- Undertake tri-annual review of Terms of Reference and performance of the committee.
- All minutes must be verified as correct by the Chairperson at the next meeting.

Prepared by:	Isabella Preston
Authorised by:	Mercy Perinatal Co-Directors
Date:	8/1/25
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