

About the Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Research Centre (ANZIC-RC)

The ANZIC-RC is a bi-nation clinical research centre based at the Monash University School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine. Established in 2006, the Centre comprises many experienced critical care researchers who work collaboratively towards the goal of improving clinical outcomes for patients requiring intensive care.

Much of the research conducted at the ANZIC-RC includes large-scale clinical trials and observational studies, feasibility projects and qualitative research projects. The ANZIC-RC is supported by funding from the National Health and Medical Research Council, as well as the School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine.

ANZIC-RC CONNECT

Consumer and community involvement (CCI) has played a pivotal role in the way research is run across several disciplines, including intensive care research. Researchers bring the resources, expertise, and methods to generate and share evidence. Consumers, through lived experience, add valuable insights by interpreting findings from a personal perspective. Effective partnerships between researchers and consumers leads to higher quality research and more meaningful outcomes - especially in areas that matter most to patients.

CONNECT is the central consumer engagement program of the ANZIC-RC, established in 2022 to strengthen partnerships with consumers and the community. CONNECT was initiated by A/Professor Emma Ridley as a means of making intensive care research more meaningful to both the patients and clinicians. Emma, as Academic Co-Chair, leads the CONNECT program together with Ms Ann-Marie Baker (Consumer Co-Chair), a highly experienced consumer who plays a central role across multiple ICU research projects in Australia. The CONNECT committee is a collaboration between experienced critical care researchers in critical care and a passionate group of consumers from Australia and New Zealand. Together, they champion the value of consumer engagement in the development and implementation of ICU research.

Since its establishment in 2022, CONNECT has developed a strong framework that includes:

- A Steering Committee comprising 8 academic/clinical members, 2 research coordinator representatives, an external advisor and a Consumer Liaison,
- A Consumer Advisory Committee comprising 7 consumers with lived experience of intensive care, and
- A Consumer Member Registry with an additional 7 consumers contributing lived experience across ICU research projects.

To date, the CONNECT steering group has finalised key documents including the **Terms of Reference** and **Remuneration Guidelines**. The consumer advisory group, in collaboration with the steering committee, developed an **Acknowledgement of Lived Experience Statement** – now featured at the beginning of all ANZIC-RC presentations and consumer engaged projects. Our CONNECT consumer members actively contribute to a wide range of activities, including co-authoring successful grant applications, reviewing consumer engagement guidelines and documentation, as well as participating in conferences and seminars.

CONNECT regularly engages with consumer stakeholders across Australia and New Zealand to share updates, discuss emerging issues, and explore opportunities for collaboration. Since 2024, CONNECT resources have been promoted across 14 ICU sites in Australia, expanding awareness and strengthening consumer involvement in critical care research.

Since its inception, all activities undertaken by the CONNECT initiative are generously supported by funding from the Intensive Care Centre of Research Excellence (CRE-ICU) at the ANZIC-RC.

Establishing the CONNECT model

Due to the support provided by the ANZIC-RC Board and the CRE-ICU, the CONNECT initiative has sparked interest in partnering with consumers across all ANZIC-RC research projects in just a few years. Key steps in developing the CONNECT Program included:

1. Defining the purpose and vision of CONNECT prior to commencement, with clearly defined aims and a governance structure.

- The CONNECT Steering Group developed the preliminary documentation for the CONNECT Program: Terms of Reference and Remuneration Guidelines.
 - The Terms of Reference outlined the vision and aims of the CONNECT program, as well as a defined governance and structure of the entire CONNECT group. It covers communication, correspondence and how often meetings for each group are held.
 - The Remuneration Guidelines were developed to outline payments for consumer contributors, based on the nature and level of their engagement.

2. Recruitment of consumer members for the CONNECT program

- The ANZIC-RC initially advertised for consumers through the Health Issues Centre (now known as the Health Consumers Centre) and the Health Care Consumer Association Australia.
- Since 2024, CONNECT brochures, flyers and business cards have been displayed in the Intensive Care Unit waiting areas across 14 Australian hospital sites. These materials invite individuals with lived experience of intensive care to join the Consumer Member Registry.

3. Onboarding a consumer.

- Individuals with lived experience of intensive care—or those who have cared for someone who has—can express interest in joining CONNECT by completing the **Expression of Interest (EOI) form**, accessible via QR code or link in CONNECT promotional materials.
 - The EOI form collects only basic contact details - person's name and phone number/email to allow CONNECT to follow up.
- Once CONNECT receives an EOI, an acknowledgement email is sent to the applicant. This email includes information about the CONNECT Consumer Member Registry, the purpose and value of consumer engagement, and what to expect as a CONNECT member. This ensures potential members are well informed before joining.
- The Terms of Reference and Remuneration Guidelines are also attached to the email, together with an official registration form to capture more information about the applicant (i.e., their reason for joining the CONNECT group and any previous experience in consumer engagement).
- After a person submits their registration form, CONNECT sends a Welcome Email (with the Academic and Consumer Co-Chairs copied), that includes a CONNECT Welcome Pack and the Honorarium Preference form.
 - In this email, new consumer members are asked to complete the **Honorarium Preference Form**, which outlines their preferred method of remuneration—such as **e-gift card**, **direct deposit**, or **no remuneration**—and includes a section to declare any **conflicts of interest**.
- Once CONNECT receives the completed Honorarium Preference form, the onboarding is finalised. From that point forward, relevant research opportunities are shared with the consumer member.

Key success factors

Over the past few years, the CONNECT initiative has significantly increased interest and demand for consumer involvement across ANZIC-RC research projects. Some of our key success factors include:

- **Initial support from the ANZIC-RC to establish processes**
 - To begin establishing the program, seed funding was required from the CRE ICU and the ANZIC-RC
 - The program now aims to establish an effective funding model via successful grants and payment for external activities.
- **Building meaningful relationships with consumers**
 - Consistent and personalised communication: From sharing research updates to acknowledging birthdays and special occasions), CONNECT builds trust and strengthens consumer confidence in research processes.
 - Clear and inclusive engagement: Information is shared in plain, accessible language (avoiding academic jargon) and consumers are encouraged to ask questions and provide feedback – creating a collaborative learning environment for both consumers and researchers.
- **Flexible and inclusive meeting arrangements**
 - Offering consumers the option to attend meetings in-person or virtually, and accommodating accessibility needs such as accessible parking and building entry for in-person attendees.
 - Providing meeting agendas and reminders in advance, and offering to provide a briefing. Sharing a summary of the meeting with the opportunity for further clarifications.
- **Balanced consumer experience.**

The CONNECT Consumer Advisory Committee includes a diverse mix of members, some with prior experience in consumer engagement, and others who are new to the process. This balance brings fresh perspectives while also benefiting from the insights of experienced contributors.



Meaningful partnerships with researchers



Active participation in research



Sharing your experiences

Contact us today



Web link:
<https://forms.gle/EXDm7nGSHUm298>

Address:
Level 3, 553 St Kilda Road,
Melbourne VIC 3004

Phone number:
03 9905 9499

Email:
anzic-rc.connect@monash.edu



ANZIC-RC CONNECT
Australian and New Zealand Intensive
Care Research Centre Consumer and
Community Connection Committee



Join us today to make a difference





Have you been
A patient in intensive care in
Australia or New Zealand?
OR
A family member, carer, or
partner of someone who
has been in intensive care?

**What is the ANZIC-RC
CONNECT?**

ANZIC-RC CONNECT is a
member registry of consumers
with lived experience of intensive
care.

Consumer engagement
enhances research and aids in
improving care for future
patients. Your experiences and
thoughts are valued in this
process.



What is involved?

If you agree, we will communicate
with you potential opportunities.

Topic areas may include:

- Blood products collaboration
- Nutrition
- Recovery
- Rehabilitation
- Sepsis
- Transfusion
- Traumatic brain injury

CONNECT Tri-Fold Brochure



ANZIC-RC CONNECT: Expression of Interest

Thank you for expressing your interest in joining the ANZIC-RC CONNECT Consumer Member Registry.

sheraya.desilva@monash.edu [Switch accounts](#)

Not shared


* Indicates required question

The ANZIC-RC CONNECT are looking for people with experience of intensive care to help shape the future of research and improve care.

CONNECT's Expression of Interest

V2.0 08-05-2025




Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Research Centre

ANZIC RC Consumer and Community Connection Committee (ANZIC-RC-CONNECT) Terms of Reference
Version 2.0, 8th May 2025

Consumer engagement and involvement in research is essential to ensure that research meets the needs and expectations of the population included (DeBortoli et al., 2022). The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) describes that involvement of

V3.0 1st May 2025




Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Research Centre

ANZIC-RC Consumer and Community Connection Committee (CONNECT) Remuneration Guidelines

Introduction:
Financial recognition for your consumer contribution is acknowledged by health consumer organisations across Australia. Referred to as *remuneration*, this can take the form of sitting fees for committee membership or hourly rate dependent on the level of participation.

CONNECT Terms of Reference and Remuneration Guidelines



Thank you for joining us as a consumer representative for the Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Research Centre (ANZIC-RC) in our CONNECT committee.

All contributors to the ANZIC-RC, including consumer representatives, must provide details of any conflicts of interest, by completing the form below. You can learn more about what a conflict of interest is, in our Conflict of Interest Procedure.

To show our appreciation for your participation, we offer consumer representatives an *honorarium* payment. You can let us know how you would like to receive the honorarium in the form below.

For information regarding the handling of your personal information refer to the [Monash University Data Protection and Privacy procedure](#) and the [privacy collection statement](#).

Consumer Representative
Honorarium preference and declaration of interest

Please complete and return this form **only** if you agree with the following statements:

- I am participating as a consumer representative and am not legally obligated (i.e. contracted) to Monash University, the ANZIC-RC CONNECT or any associated programs in regards to involvement.
- I will choose how regularly and how much I participate in any ANZIC-RC CONNECT or associated program activities that I am invited to attend.
- I acknowledge that my involvement can be ended at any time, either by me or Monash University.

Honorarium Preference and Declaration of Interest