

Consumer and Community Involvement Program Honarium Guidelines

The Consumer and Community Involvement Program (CCIProgram) aligns its honarium guidance with [best practice policies nationally](#) conducting an annual review to ensure relevance and accountability to the broader research sector.

What is an honarium?

An honarium is a gesture of appreciation for voluntary contributions and is not typically regarded as assessable income by the [Australian Taxation Office](#) (ATO). However, individual circumstances may vary. Consumers are encouraged to seek personal tax advice if unsure.

Centrelink does consider honarium payments as reportable income. Consumers receiving Centrelink benefits must report these payments.

Other terms sometimes used to describe monetary payment for involvement and expertise include stipend, sitting fee, reimbursement, speaker fee, or token of appreciation. While the wording may differ, all refer to recognition of people's time, lived experience, and contributions.

Who is eligible?

Consumers, families, carer and community members are offered an honarium payment when they have been invited to significantly contribute and/or inform research and/or relevant work with the CCIProgram. This includes:

- **Consumers:** people with a lived experience of health issues, who may or may not access health services and supports.
- **Family:** people who may or may not be related to a consumer but who identify as being close enough to be recognised as a family member or next of kin.
- **Carers:** (unpaid) families, friends and others, who have experience of providing ongoing care and support to someone experiencing health issues. Carers may or may not be in receipt of a Carers Allowance but are not in formal paid employment as a support worker.
- **Community members:** people who may not identify as consumers, family members or carers but who can contribute to the work of the CCIProgram through their community involvement and cultural heritage experience, knowledge and understanding. This is particularly important to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples and peoples from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) backgrounds or diverse groups.
- **Children and young people (under 18 years):** who meet any of the above criteria.

Honouring Cultural Knowledge and Community Leadership

We recognise the unique cultural authority and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders and cultural leaders. Additional or higher-tier payments may be offered in acknowledgment of their cultural knowledge, leadership, and responsibilities. Engagements involving cultural protocols—such as a Welcome to Country, Smoking Ceremony, or sharing of cultural knowledge—should be remunerated in accordance with community expectations, cultural protocols, and local Aboriginal organisations' guidance.

Consumer and Community Involvement Program Honorary Guidelines

The CCIP Program approach aligns with:

- [AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research](#)
- [NHMRC's Ethical Conduct Guidelines](#)
- [WACOSS Lived Experience Framework](#)

Involvement Activities

Involvement Activities include but are not limited to:

- Involvement in committees (steering, advisory, reference, working groups, or similar planning and decision-making groups).
- Contributing to forums, Community Conversations, workshops, or roundtables (in-person or online).
- Involvement in selection and recruitment panels for staff, researchers, or consumer roles.
- Being involved in approved activities, including those held online or teleconference.
- Contributing to written materials such as reports, resources, articles, brochures, or newsletters.
- Helping co-design or co-facilitate a discussion group, activity, event, or feedback session.
- Sharing lived experience or community insights as a speaker or panelist.
- Reading background information, documents, or materials in preparation for an involvement activity.
- Gathering information or perspectives to better understand the issue or context being addressed.
- Connecting with peers or community members to bring broader views to an involvement activity.
- Having discussions before or after an activity to prepare, clarify, or reflect.
- Reviewing or providing input on materials, reports, proposals, resources, strategies or plans.
- Assisting with preparation or logistics for involvement activities.
- Collaborating to co-design or co-produce activities, resources, or projects.
- Providing lived experience advice to help shape inclusive and respectful involvement practices.

Involvement Payment Table

Active Consumer/Community member* i.e. members of a committee or any groups with Terms of Reference. Members must be aged +8 years old	Advisor i.e. Member or co-chair of a strategic or executive-level group, with additional contributions outside meetings (e.g. agenda setting, ongoing feedback)	Involvement Event (Part Day) i.e. attending a 2-hr Community Conversation (Standard or Micro)	Involvement Event (Full day) i.e. attending a Research Priority Mapping Workshop	Presentations i.e. co-presenting at an undergrad tutorial on lived experience, co-presenting at Masterclass or Research Conference
\$50 per hour	\$80 per hour	\$80 one-off payment	\$150 one-off payment	\$80 - \$300 one-off payment depending on duration and role

Note: all involvement activities require a minimum of 2hrs payment.

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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Can a consumer decline payment?

Yes, a consumer or community member can choose to decline an honorarium if they wish. However, offering payment is considered good practice and strongly encouraged. It reflects the value of the contribution being made, helps to equalise opportunities for involvement, and ensures participation is accessible to people from all financial and social circumstances—not just those who can afford to volunteer their time.

Accepting an honorarium also reduces the need for researchers or organisations to seek unpaid input, which can inadvertently lead to inequity or place undue pressure on individuals with lived experience to continually give without recognition or recompense.

If a consumer or community member feels strongly about not receiving personal payment, they may choose to redirect their honorarium as a donation to a charitable organisation or research initiative they wish to support. This allows them to uphold their values while still acknowledging the importance of valuing all contributions equally.

We respect individual preferences and are committed to ensuring that the process remains transparent, inclusive, and flexible to accommodate a range of perspectives and personal values.

How can honorariums be paid?

Honorarium payments may be made via:

- Direct bank transfer
- Electronic gift cards
- Other culturally appropriate methods upon request

Researchers will need to refer to their organisation's financial guidelines to see what is supported. Honorarium payments managed by the WAHTN CCIPProgram can be supported by either direct debit bank transfer or electronic gift card.

The offer of retail vouchers can be an effective means of acknowledging people's time, involvement and small out of pocket expenses. This method is particularly suitable for involvement activities that involve children and young people, a short duration or one-off.

Acknowledgements

The WAHTN CCIPProgram Honorarium Guidelines have been informed by a review of relevant policies and practice guidance including the following organisations:

- *Mental Health Commission of Western Australia*
- *Western Australian Department of Health*
- *Health Consumers' Council of WA*
- *Western Australian Council of Social Service (WACOSS)*