

Jules Ferguson

How did you start your advocacy journey?

I started in the Healthy Cities movement at Onkaparinga in 1987 when it came to Noarlunga as one of three World Health Organisations pilot projects.

Healthy Cities Onkaparinga is a coalition of agencies and community members who address the social view of health, now known as the social determinants of health.

This was the vehicle that provided opportunities to bring issues to the table and work together to address those issues. It was the very beginning of my advocacy journey.

How has advocacy enriched your life?

From using the Healthy Cities approach which is underpinned by the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion I developed my personal skills as we all worked to achieve the Charter's main goal of building healthy public policy.

This helped broaden my experience, developed my relationships and expanded my networks as we worked on different projects and with different inter-sectorial agencies.

Why is advocacy important to you?

Advocacy to me is about achieving better health outcomes for all.

It is a way to help consumers take control of their health and take ownership of various issues that impact on them, their family or community. It helps empower consumers to set priorities, make decisions, plan and implement strategies to achieve this.

What has your involvement with HCA looked like?

My involvement with HCA has been rewarding and the door opener to my advocacy journey. HCA has provided many opportunities on various issues I'm passionate about as well as giving me the skills, tools and credibility as a consumer.

How long have you been involved with HCA?

I first became involved with HCA in 2003 as a consumer support to Dr Anne Johnston from the Discipline of Public Health Flinders University. Anne was undertaking research for HCA on the support and training needs of consumers involved in the health system. A report was prepared in 2004 called "Involving consumers in the health system: support & training needs-a consumer's perspective"

What sort of advocacy work have you been involved in?

I'm currently advocating for increased consumer involvement within the health system as I believe that we all need to be part of the solution and not the problem. I champion the need for the health system to encourage consumers' involvement while enabling them to take ownership of their own health needs and health issues. I'm passionate about Primary Health Care, the Social Determinants of Health and Cancer survivorship.



How do you think your advocacy work has made a difference?

I always hope that my participation and advocacy has made a difference. I'm sure in some small way it has by:

1. supporting, encouraging and mentoring others along a similar journey
2. providing a consumer's voice within cancer survivorship
3. assisting to direct better health services.

I do know that my involvement with the Dr Sharon Lawn Researcher at Flinders University cited my contribution in getting together, leading and helping to facilitate a consumer forum "The Cancer Survivor's Voice" that discovered priority issues for cancer survivorship research. From that forum survivorship research themes were developed and now directs the research at Flinders Centre for Innovation in Cancer.

