

Public Health Forum Advisory Group Meeting

Deakin+ DHS Partnership

Thursday 17th September 2009
DHS State Government Offices

Minutes

Co Chairs:

Mr John Hedditch (Manager of Public Health, DH BSWR)

Associate Professor Mardie Townsend, (Associate Dean, Development and Partnerships), Faculty of HMN&BS, Deakin University.

Present: Mr John Hedditch, Assoc Prof Mardie Townsend, Mr Grant Hamilton, Ms Anne Somerville, Ms Janette Lowe, Ms Kay Mills, Dr Cathryn Carpenter, Mr Chris Loughnan, Mr Matthew Ebden (phone link), Ms Sue Morgan

Apologies: Ms Irene McGinnigle, Ms Libby Mears, Ms Karen Pritchard, Mr John Devereaux, Ms Karen Oliver, Mr Tom Van Etten, Mr Adrian Schoo, Ms Rosie Rowe, Prof Anne Taket, Ms Carol Micallef, Mr Tim Moore, Ms Karen Valentine, Ms Kathleen Doole, Ms Kate Nelson, Ms Adrienne Campbell, Mr Mark Brennan, Mr Peter Day, Mr Chad Foulkes, Mr Andrew Scott, Mr Gerry Sheehan, Prof Boyd Swinburn

1. Welcome and Introduction:

John Hedditch welcomed group members to the Public Health Forum Advisory Group meeting. Matthew Ebden was welcomed by phone linkup. John commented on the successful role out of the Public Health Forum presentations since our last meeting. John invited key Forum organizers to provide an overview of events to date.

See also Deakin + DHS Partnership Webpage events section for further details of each of the Forums.

<http://www.deakin.edu.au/dhs/news-events.php>

2. Summary of 2009 Public Health Forums:

2.1 South West PCP

Grant Hamilton and Matthew Ebdon reported on the Warrnambool Public Health Forum, 4 March 2009 "*Local Challenges, Local Solutions*" which explored the effects of climate change on the environment, communities and human health.

Rob Gell (Environmental Geographer), **Associate Professor John Sherwood** (Deakin University School of Life and Environmental Sciences) and **Mark Wootton** (Farmer and Chair Climate Institute) each presented and stimulated discussion regarding issues influencing our health, wellbeing and survival including water shortages, food security, bush fire, floods, disease, financial hardship, psychological stress, mental health and sustainable farming practices.

The forum was well attended by over 80 people with feedback from participants being very positive with strong interest expressed in participating in further forums looking at solutions to the challenges that threaten our health and ability to live a sustainable lifestyle. Kay Mills represented the Partnership and Matthew Ebdon provided local support to this event. A strong presence of local residents and environmental volunteers was observed. A representative from the Environmental Health branch at DHS Central Office in Melbourne attended.

Matthew reported that the Health Forum has been a catalyst for developing a range of health-promoting, community-based projects in South West Victoria. As a result of the feedback from the event further monthly public forums coordinated and facilitated by Deakin University and the South West Sustainability Partnership brought together people from various community sectors to workshop ways Warrnambool may become more environmentally, socially and economically sustainable.

The monthly meetings have been well attended and very productive, resulting in the formation of **Smart Living Warrnambool, a Transition Community** that has commenced work actioning 4 key initiatives in the following areas:

- improving biodiversity and active transport infrastructure in local parks
- developing permaculture, composting, grow and swap programs to secure and share healthy food
- developing a public demonstration house that showcases sustainable design, products and features
- exploring local options for producing alternative energy to fossil fuels

Deakin University has also developed inter-sectoral links with health and community services, environmental agencies, transport providers and service clubs to support people marginalised in south west Victorian communities to become volunteers in environmental management activities. The three year program is due to be launched at the beginning of 2010 with funding sought from various sectors. Previous Deakin University research has demonstrated the environmental, community and individual benefits of environmental volunteering. Local communities are very keen to launch this **Environmental Volunteering** program to support people affected by mental illness, disability, long term unemployment and social isolation.

Evaluation key points

- The Forum was a successful event with excellent participation and interest in the topics presented by a range of speakers. In particular it was a great success as a catalyst for developing a range of health-promoting, community-based projects in the South West.
- Key note speaker Mr Rob Gell was of high level standard but very expensive absorbing most of the budget. Future speakers may increase the focus on local speakers

- Mardie noted potential for GP partnership on future climate change forums with its recent emphasis as a key health issue.
- John noted that the Regional Managers Forum is running a climate change forum later in the year
- Grant noted a meeting with the Climate Change Unit with DHS in Melbourne had not resulted in follow up action.

2.2 SGGPCP

Janette Lowe reported on the Southern Grampians & Glenelg Primary Care Partnership Public Health Forum in Portland titled "Can't Stand the Heat" which focussed on healthy aging and climate change in Portland on Wednesday, 25th March. The day addressed health and wellbeing in a changing climate with the focus particularly on providing the elderly with positive tips and information in relation to climate change. Around 25 community members 60 years and over attended to hear an excellent array of speakers including Rebecca Phyland from Thornbill Eco Education, Peter Reefman from the Portland Sustainability Group as well as representatives from Wannon Water and Centrelink. Mayor Geoff White opened the day and participants enjoyed a day out with friends whilst increasing their knowledge of practical ways to adapt to climate change. The day was a great success with enthusiastic engagement and discussion among participants.

Evaluation key points

- Participants were particularly engaged with the practical and "hands on" elements of the program and reported that they would adapt many of the helpful hints to keep cool and save water during heat wave periods
- The local speakers on building and gardening topics were especially well received while the information talks from agencies were not as popular

2.3 Peter Quail Oration

The Peter Quail Oration is an annual initiative of the Deakin + DHS Partnership and is held in memory of Mr Peter Quail who was a valued DHS colleague and champion of the Partnership. Peter had great foresight and from an early stage could see how partnership collaboration between Deakin and DHS would benefit people in the local community.

In 2009, the Peter Quail Oration "Addressing Racism in Australia" was presented by Dr Yin Paradies on the 25th March at Deakin University. Dr Paradies is currently a Research Fellow jointly at the Menzies School of Health Research and the University of Melbourne. His research activity focuses on the health effects of racism as well as anti-racism theory, policy and practice. Dr Paradies has received a range of awards, including a Fulbright scholarship to study at the University of California (Berkeley), the Australian Day Councils's 2002 Young Achiever of the Year award and the Scholar of the Year in the 2007 National NAIDOC Awards.

Dr Paradies' address reviewed the relationship between racism and its potentially devastating effects on the health of individuals and communities. Dr Paradies' presentation was both thought provoking and solution focused providing an outline on recently developed frameworks to address racism in Victoria.

Evaluation key points

- Overall the Oration ran smoothly and was a successful event enjoyed and of value to participants. Members of the Quail family were very appreciative and pleased with the event and the recognition it gives to Peter's valuable work with DHS and an early champion of the Deakin + DHS partnership concept.

- 23 evaluation forms were completed with the majority indicating the Forum topic and speaker was most interesting and informative. In particular respondents were pleased with the positive focus on how to address racism in Australian society not just a focus on the symptoms. A number of respondents indicated that the forum provided valuable ideas to inform their work practice.
- Some participants felt the presentation was too academic not addressing local examples or providing enough opportunity for interactive audience participation. There is a need to encourage future speakers to engage more with the audience and discuss local applications regarding presentations.
- Suggested improvements included more advertising prior to the event, start the Forum earlier time in the day, less formal and more interactive presentation
- The main disappointment on the night was the audience numbers which were lower than RSVP's indicated prior to the event. This could be improved we believe next year by more and earlier advertising in the Geelong Advertiser and an email invitation to include all Deakin and Gordon students as well as staff.

2.4 G21 Public Health Forums

Anne Somerville has finalised plans for the final two Public Health forums to be held in October at the Deakin Waterfront Campus. G21 has used the Deakin +DHS Partnership funding as leverage to draw high-profile speakers and pay for large venues that can hold several hundred people. An additional master class will be held for invited guests immediately following the public lecture providing key business and community leaders with the opportunity to respond and consider potential for leadership action. Details are as follows:

Agency	Public Health Forum Topic	Speakers / Partners	Date/Venue
G21	"How does a healthy lifestyle build a wealthier community"? and linkages to Headspace "Are you OK?" day	Professor Rob Moodie	5 October 2009
G21	Child Health & Wellbeing: Are we really regenerating for our next generation?	Bernie Geary, Clare Martin and Mark Kennedy	12th October

3. Review Scope of Public Health Forum process:

John Hedditch noted the excellent work being undertaken by Primary Care Partnerships (PCPs) in delivering Public Health Forums across the region and the model's success in giving local area ownership and control over topics as well as following up on issues arising from the forums.

John noted a number of issues for Advisory Group consideration which were raised at the last **Deakin + DHS Partnership Executive** meeting, namely:

- **Widening intervention approaches** to promoting health and wellbeing engagement in the community. The Executive encourages media partnership to promote best practice health research and literacy.
- **Considering a broader name** for the Advisory Group to incorporate the widest range of mediums to deliver public health information and education

The Advisory Group noted that the intervention approaches and ideas being generated by PCPs at a local level were already widening up from a strictly Public Forum approach. Grant and Matthew were keen to continue to support the range of community based meetings and projects currently developing in the South West. Similarly Anne has added value to G21 Forums with the master class model and podcast ideas which could be further enhanced. Members also agreed that the group name needs to reflect a wider range of health education delivery options. The group felt that the Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group was best placed to help set out and identify new health priority issues.

After detailed discussion the group made the following recommendations:

- **Wider Funding criteria:** The partnership team to broaden the Advisory Group's funding criteria to include a wider range of flexible approaches in delivering health literacy information. This would allow PCPs to continue to develop and support new delivery ideas.
- **Re name Advisory Group:** to **Community Engagement in Public Health Advisory Group** to cover a the broadest range of health education delivery options
- **Advisory Group restructure:** Members requested the Partnership team seek Executive advice at the planning day on Advisory Group's position and operational structure within the Partnership.

Public Health Form/Education ideas for 2010:

The Advisory Group will reconvene next year to confirm the revised group funding criteria and its governance position in the Partnership structure. PCP representatives are encouraged to consider possible Forum topics for next year as well as broader Public health promotion proposals for funding. eg ongoing support for health promoting, community based projects in Warrnambool.

Evidence to inform public health topics for 2010 is available from a range of sources including:

- A summary of key Deakin research activity relating to priority public health issues (Mardie Townsend).
- A summary of DHS priority public health issues to inform Advisory Group (Sue Morgan/ Paul Gladigau).
- G21 Health and Wellbeing priority areas.
- Other relevant Departmental plans.

Other Business:

Deakin + DHS Partnership focus on the region

Grant and Matthew emphasized the importance of the Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group having a focus on the whole region. John noted that the Partnership's Beacon Project to facilitate a Farmer Health Conference in Hamilton is particularly aimed to support the wider region. Mardie outlined other possible

avenues of support for community engagement discussed at the last Health and Wellbeing meeting including:

- DHS Central assistance in an evaluation of these community programs. Mike Ackland to meet with Sue Kilpatrick to discuss opportunities for DHS head office staff to engage with Warrnambool community projects
- Public Health Fellow at National Centre for Farmer Health engagement with community projects
- Investigate a Public Health Trainee placement in Warrnambool
- Project leads from PCP's for Honours and Masters students of Public Health at Deakin

Deakin + DHS Partnership Planning Day

The Partnership is conducting a planning day in late November to review priorities and objectives for 2010.

Next meeting date:

The Partnership team and Executive is reviewing Advisory Group activities throughout 2009 and key objectives for 2010 at the next Executive/Planning day in mid December. Schedules for Advisory Group meetings in 2010 will be confirmed and circulated as soon as possible after this meeting.