



**Deakin University/DH/DHS Strategic Alliance (Barwon - South Western Region)
Research/Evidence/Evaluation Advisory Group**

Minutes

**1145-1230hr 16 August 2011-08-22
Rm AD1.122, Deakin University, Geelong-Waterfront**

Members: Professor John Toumbourou (Associate Dean-Partnerships and Workforce, Faculty of Health, DU) (Chair), Dr Anita Peerson (DU Coordinator-Deakin/DH/DHS Strategic Alliance), Dr Kathryn von Treuer (AHoS-Partnerships, School of Psychology), Clinical Associate Professor Susan Brumby (Director, NCFH, Hamilton), Dr Tim Baker (Director, CREM/ED, Southwest HealthCare, Warrnambool), John Hedditch (Manager, Public Health and Regional Planning, DH), Sue Morgan (Regional Health Promotion Adviser, DH).

Guest: Professor Bridie Kent (Acting Associate Dean-Research).

Apologies: Associate Professor Steven Allender (WHO Collaborating Centre for Obesity Prevention, DU), Professor Trisha Dunning (Chair-Nursing, DU-Barwon Health), Michelle Verso (ADRI, DU), Wanda Korndoffer (Director-Innovation, Gordon TAFE), Professor Rob Carter (Foundation Director-DIfHR), Veena Vather (Research Partnerships-Health).

1. Deakin Institute for Health Research (DIfHR), Faculty of Health, Deakin University

Bridie Kent related Professor Rob Carter (Foundation Director) will work towards amalgamating 5 Strategic Research Centres (SRCs) to become a research institute with a physical or virtual location. The aim is to provide a better coordinated approach to health research and play on current research strengths at Deakin University, involving health and other disciplines. Consultations are currently underway with Faculty of Health staff members engaged in research, as well as current SRC members, to determine a suitable model. The funding arrangements for the DIfHR are still to be determined, given the SRC currently have 18 months of funding. They are also facilitating research training through Higher Degree by Research (HDR) and other postgraduate students (international and Australian). The DIfHR will also serve as a bridge between health and other faculty/university-wide research.

2. Progress report on the Regional Research and Information Centre (RRIC) report

In Michelle Verso's absence, Anita Peerson gave a brief overview of the RRIC. This is a G21 priority project, involving Deakin University and other Victorian universities with regional campuses (Monash University, University of Melbourne, La Trobe University) and the Department of Planning and Community Development. The proposed RRIC

has federal and state government interest, and a business case has been submitted for consideration. Funding is being sought for the RRIC.

3. Deputy Chair

John Hedditch (DH) was nominated as Deputy Chair on an interim basis. A new Deputy Chair will need to be nominated in the new few months.

4. Discussion paper – Research/Evidence/Evaluation Advisory Group, Deakin/DH/DHS Strategic Alliance (BSW Region)

The discussion paper (John Toumbourou and Anita Peerson 2011) recommendations were accepted, with some changes (see below the suggested meeting timetable). The discussion paper provides an overview of the Deakin/DH/DHS Strategic Alliance (BSW Region), Faculty of Health (DU) initiatives as well as research priorities identified by the Community Capacity-Building AG and Workforce Development AG, and referred to by the Corio Norlane Development Advisory Board (CNDAB), G21 and Great South Coast (GSC).

Supplementary information is provided on recent and current research being undertaken by Research AG members, including: National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH), Alfred Deakin Research Institute (ADRI), Centre for Rural Emergency Medicine (CREM) and Centre for Nursing and Allied Health Research.

The discussion paper has been circulated to Research AG members, as well as Professor Rob Carter, Professor Bridie Kent, Veena Vather and Sandra McClelland (Research Partnerships Office, DU) for comments. These will be collected and circulated to Research AG for further consideration.

Discussion amongst Research AG members considered the limited resources available to undertake research in the BSW Region. Videoconferencing for meetings is not always functional/reliable but is a helpful medium for engaging colleagues across the BSW Region and beyond. Suggestion to rotate the Research AG members between Geelong, Warrnambool and Hamilton, with videoconferencing to other campuses and including Burwood (to better engage public health colleagues based at Burwood)

The Local Government Authorities (LGAs) are currently preparing their Municipal Public Health Plans, which may require evaluation. Deakin University is currently collaborating with Department of Health, Eastern Metropolitan Region, and there is potential for a joined effort with BSW Region colleagues.

Research priorities should support and facilitate the link between population health and health services design, planning and delivery. Available funding opportunities to address this focus needs to be considered.

An ongoing concern is recruitment and retention of health workforce with research skills/experience and postgraduate qualifications (eg. evaluation, statistics). This requirement is important to enable design of research proposals, development and submission of grant applications, production of reports, and publication of research in peer reviewed journals (international and Australian) to enable wide dissemination of project findings. The DIfHR is considering research staff skills and experience, including areas of expertise (eg. epidemiology, biostatistics) as part of the planning.

Looking ahead to October-November 2011, it was suggested the focus could be on evaluation and end-users of research (ie. knowledge translation) such as paediatrics and coronary care, with possible links to the Workforce Development AG and Community Capacity-building AG. The Workforce Development AG is developing a Regional Workforce Strategy (planning agenda), seeking a better link between health and education, plus a Clinical Placement Network (involving multi-disciplinary members and representing various organisations).

The research priorities for the Research AG should perhaps also consider the available evidence and its application. This would then better inform the required membership of the Research AG to also include colleagues from G21, GSC and health services in the BSW Region.

4. Next meetings: 2011-12

Research Priorities – October-November 2011

Research Capacity-building – February-March 2012

Suggestion that Research AG meetings be rotated between Geelong, Warrnambool and Hamilton to retain a regional focus and collegial engagement. Presentations could be delivered at each site using videoconferencing facilities linkages, and to Burwood. Some Research AG members would welcome a tour of the BSW Region and visits to regional cities: Warrnambool and Hamilton. A bus tour could be organised and include members of the GSC board.