



**Deakin University/DH/DHS Strategic Alliance
(Barwon - South Western Region)**

Research/Evidence/Evaluation Advisory Group Meeting

MINUTES

1100-1300hr Tuesday 6 July 2010
Rm D4.205, Deakin University, Geelong-Waterfront

Members: Associate Professor Mardie Townsend (Chair), Dr Shelley Bowen (Deputy Chair), Professor John Toumbourou, Sue Morgan, Clinical Associate Professor Susan Brumby, Dr Wanda Korndoffer, Dr Kathryn Von Treuer, John Hedditch, Grant Hamilton, Associate Professor Steven Allender, Dr Anita Peerson (Secretariat)

Apologies: Dr Shelley Bowen, Associate Professor Steven Allender, Grant Hamilton, Dr Kathryn Von Treuer

Welcome

Mardie Townsend welcomed all members to the newly formed Research/Evidence/Evaluation Advisory Group. Susan Brumby dialled in to the meeting via teleconference (Hamilton).

1. Minutes previous meeting – 14 September 2009

The minutes were accepted.

2. Terms of reference

The objectives of the terms of reference were revised. [See Attachment A.](#)

3. G21 - Health and Well-being Priorities

Anne Somerville (Director – G21 Health and Well-being Pillar) was invited to attend the meeting, providing a verbal report on the G21 Executive priorities. These are:

- Establishment of the Regional Research and Information Centre (RRIC) at the Alfred Deakin Research Institute (ADRI), DU, Geelong-Waterfront. The RRIC will also become a central repository for datasets on indicators in the BSW Region. That the datasets could potentially be used by other researchers. This could be potentially attractive for other DU faculties and external researchers.
 - Susan Brumby suggested that the National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH) datasets could also potentially be lodged in the RRIC repository in the future.
 - A written report on the RRIC by Professor David Lowe helped inform the discussion. [See Attachment B.](#)
 - This initiative requires internal DU support (other than ADRI)
 - There is potential for student internships at RRIC, ADRI, DU
 - Regional Development Victoria (RDV) also has an interest in the RRIC, and is a potential funding source for projects
 - Regional Development Victoria (2010) *Regional Blueprint – Ready for Tomorrow* report addresses development of regional Victoria (Victoria state government) - released June 2010. Website: www.rdv.vic.gov.au
 - The G21 Environment Pillar is addressing sustainability indicators (including the Warrnambool area)

- Addressing social disadvantage and inequity (interventions and particular sectors)
- Children (Early Years – 0-3 years)
 - Initial focus is on children (0-3 years), to determine what interventions work to improve children's health and well-being, with subsequent data analysis and system design addressing children (0-8 years)
 - Department of Education and Early Childhood (2008) *The State of Victoria's Children* report (Victoria state government), focuses on children. Website: www.education.vic.gov.au
 - *State of the Region* (G21) report focussing on children - early years (in progress)
 - Similar work is being undertaken in Bendigo (with La Trobe University) and Gippsland Region (Monash University)
 - Links with DU initiatives – A scoping proposal is underway to establish a Children's Centre at DU, Geelong-Waterfront (Level 1, Dennys Lascelle building), involving some DU staff members. There is an opportunity to build multi-disciplinary students' skills (eg. occupational therapy, psychology)
- National health reform (including primary care) is likely to impact on the current governance and funding arrangements of G21 (health and well-being pillar) and other PCPs in Victoria; to become 'Medicare Locals' and linked to newly defined health and hospital networks, and including some functions of current Divisions of General Practice. This proposed reform is currently creating some uncertainty in the primary care field.

Anne Somerville reported that G21 was successful in obtaining a grant (\$3.2 million) for 2 years from VicHealth as a demonstration project to address healthy eating and other health-related issues in 100 sporting clubs in the Geelong Region. The project will also include some evaluation. There is an opportunity for DU staff to be involved.

Action

- John Toumbourou - request timeframes from David Lowe regarding establishment of the RRIC and the use of publicly available datasets, and potentially other datasets (eg. service use)
- Mardie Townsend - to follow-up with the Associate Dean (Research), Faculty HMNBS regarding encouraging DU researchers' use of available datasets held at RRIC
- Mardie Townsend – to follow-up with the Deans of all Faculties (HMNBS, Science and Technology, Business and Law, Arts and Education) to encourage a cross-faculty response and support for any datasets addressing indicators of the BSW Region, to be lodged at RRIC, ADRI (a central repository) and made available to other researchers. Each dataset is in an accessible form. RRIC could also be commissioned to undertake further data analysis.
- Executive – Deakin/DH/DHS Strategic Alliance – discussion that it might be possible for all Department of Health and Department of Human Services contracts for research projects involving data collection in the BSW region, to include a clause/condition that all datasets at the end of a project are to be lodged at ADRI, DU and available for use by other researchers
- Research AG members - offered to assist/support G21 efforts with initiatives addressing Children in the region
- Anne Somerville – to provide updates to Research AG on the impact of national health reform on G21 Health and Well-being Pillar
- John Toumbourou - to invite David Lowe to coordinate a DU response/assistance with the VicHealth-funded project and identify any research-related opportunities

4. Great South Coast - Health and Well-being Priorities

John Hedditch referred to draft documents outlining the health and well-being priorities for the Great South Coast, Victoria. These are:

- producing a community profile of the region, involving 6 LGAs (in a similar form to the one produced for G21 in 2009). This involves the Department of Health (BSW Region) undertaking data analysis
- developing a health and well-being plan, to be formalised in September-October 2010. Any research projects undertaken in the area will require alignment with the goals, objectives and strategies

- workforce planning and development, recruitment and retention
- student support for clinical and non-clinical placements
- the Department of Health (BSW Region) has recently advertised 2 regional workforce positions (Geelong-based): Project Manager – Clinical Placement Network and Senior Project Officer, Allied Health Workforce Development and Planning.

There is potential for Honours and Masters students, Fac HMNBS to address research topics in the Great South Coast region.

Action

- Mardie Townsend – to encourage Faculty HMNBS, DU staff (Geelong and Warrnambool) to undertake research in alignment with G21 and Great South Coast priorities
- Mardie Townsend – to follow-up with the Dean, HMNBS that the next Faculty Day (Research) includes a plenary session or presentations from G21 and Great South Coast colleagues on the health and well-being priorities, and potential research topics that could be undertaken by DU staff and students
- Mardie Townsend, John Toumbourou and Anita Peerson – to encourage Fac HMNBS staff (and students) to become engaged in research projects in the G21 and Great South Coast regions

5. Repository of research/evaluation studies

Sue Morgan reported on the Evaluation Support Project Team which held 2 meetings in 2009. Executives of 3 PCPs in the BSW Region indicated their need for staff professional development in evaluation skills. The identified priorities of the PCPs are: health promotion and chronic disease prevention and management; food security, social connectedness. What is required are literature reviews that could inform evidence-based decision-making, plus interventions and evaluation at the sub-regional level. There is currently a gap in PCP staff skills to undertake evaluation of programs and initiatives.

Sue discussed the need for a central repository of research/evaluation studies that could be accessible to all PCP members, and other health professionals and researchers. The RRIC could also potentially fulfil this role.

Development of evaluation skills of PCP health promotion practitioners and agency managers, plus local government officers (cross-program areas) in the BSW Region, to enable them to undertake their own evaluations, was considered a priority.

Anita Peerson noted a recent report by the World Health Organization (2010) addresses 'interprofessional education and collaborative practice'. The aim is to address global health workforce issues at the country and local level, to resolve concerns about health systems being adequately able to provide care. The aim is to foster and support multi-disciplinary health care professional learning and working together to achieve better health outcomes for patients/clients, specific population groups and communities. In Australian, clinicians and public health professionals have distinct languages, discourses and practices. A synthesis of their approaches would lead to better health outcomes.

Action

- Sue Morgan - to provide background information on professional development requirements on evaluation in the BSW Region. The Department of Health (Population Branch, Melbourne) has links with LGAs.
- Sue Morgan – to provide a proposal to the PCPs about the next steps for professional development on evaluation, given the specific needs of the BSW Region
- Mardie Townsend and Sue Morgan – to provide a proposal to the Executive - Deakin/DH/DHS Strategic Alliance, next meeting 4 August 2010. A short course on evaluation could be developed and provided for 3 cohorts: PCP health promotion practitioners and agency managers, plus local government officers (cross-program areas) in the BSW Region. The

short course could potentially consist of a 1 day workshop, online learning plus a 1 day workshop, tailored for the different audiences.

6. Discussion – regional research priorities

There was general discussion about research priorities for the BSW Region (2010-13) will need to link in priorities of Department of Health and Ageing (national), Department of Health and Department of Human Services (Victoria and BSW Region), G21 and the Great South Coast. The process of undertaking research will require awareness of federal and state (Vic) government priority-setting as well as the health sector (preventive health, services), plus identifying available grants.

Potential research topics for BSW Region are:

- Youth
- Low socioeconomic status
- (Health) workforce
- Children (0-3 years)
- Educational pathways (eg. low primary school attendance, non-completion rates of secondary education, future workforce needs, economic implications)
- Health literacy (eg. health workforce, health promotion, specific population groups)
- Preventive health (eg. children's social environments, exposure to alcohol)

Anita Peerson indicated that project funding addressing health literacy is currently almost non-existent in Australia. Despite being a national health priority (given recent national health reform papers), there is no health literacy program with attached project funding available at national or state/territory levels. Determining potential sources of project funding for even small scale projects on health literacy is difficult.

John Toumbourou and John Hedditch suggested that the Advisory Group include a DU staff member with Education expertise.

There was general discussion that schools (BSW Region) require DU support and involvement perhaps through greater community leadership and engagement, and including students where possible. This would encourage greater youth aspirations in the wider community to complete their education and improve their employability, and help resolve local workforce issues (eg. recruitment and retention). Anita Person indicated that 3rd year students (2) are undertaking their placement in the Corio-Norlane community (with a focus on youth activities and social disadvantage), through the City of Greater Geelong, as part of the human services major, Bachelor of Health Sciences degree.

Any health interventions and outcomes of all research projects would need to consider the social determinants of health.

Action

- Mardie Townsend, John Hedditch and Shelley Bowen – to prepare a discussion paper for the next Research/Evidence/Evaluation Advisory group meeting regarding research priorities for the BSW Region.

7. Research grants/funding opportunities

Anita Peerson provided an overview of available sources of information on grants/funding opportunities for research and other projects, and had attended a seminar on Philanthropy Australia at DU, Burwood, 5 July 2010.

- **Community of Science (CoS)** research grants database. This database includes information on Australian and international grants/funding sources in multiple disciplines. The database is accessible via a username and password, but can be cumbersome and difficult to navigate. DU staff members have access to this database.

- **Philanthropy Australia** (www.philanthropy.org.au) – ~3000 foundations are operating in Australia, providing funds for charitable and other purposes (~\$0.5-1 billion/year). Overall, it is difficult to locate and access many foundations, and to identify their sources of funding.
 - However, ~350 foundations are listed on the Philanthropy Australia register. An alphabetical listing provides details of their fields of interest, contact information, summary of purpose, geographical scope, legal limitations, grant restrictions and application procedures. There is also information on preparing submissions and applying for grants, international foundations which fund in Australia plus a list of further resources for grant-seekers.
- **Our Community** (www.ourcommunity.com.au) – has various community resources available to members. DU is a corporate member, but staff members do not individually receive the electronic *Easy Grants* newsletter (monthly) which provides details on available grants. This newsletter is also protected by copyright.

Georgie Kelly (Research Services Division, DU) has requested the DU library purchase a copy of the online directory of the ~350 foundations listed with Philanthropy Australia. The online directory will become available via the DU library catalogue.

Action

- Anita Peerson – to follow-up with Research Services Division, DU about DU staff members having access to the electronic *Easy Grants* newsletter (monthly), perhaps via a link to the RSD website, DU.

8. Other Business

Membership of the Research/Evidence/Evaluation Advisory Group

- John Toumbourou and John Hedditch suggested that the Advisory Group include a DU staff member with Education expertise.

Action

- Anita Peerson – to follow-up with David Lowe regarding his nominee (eg. Demography and Social Analysis) to represent ADRI, DU on the Research/Evidence/Evaluation Advisory Group and attend future meetings
- Mardie Townsend – to liaise with the Dean, Faculty of Arts and Education, DU regarding a nominee with Education expertise to be invited to become a member of the Research/Evidence/Evaluation Advisory Group.

9. Next meeting date: 1100-1300hr Wednesday 6 October 2010. Rm D4.205, DU, Geelong-Waterfront

- John Toumbourou will be away on leave, and suggested that Associate Professor Evie Leslie attend the next meeting as his nominee
- The meeting will be held via videoconferencing with Susan Brumby, NCFH, Hamilton.

Reference:

World Health Organization 2010 *Framework for Action on Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Practice*. Geneva: WHO.

Attachment A

Deakin University/DH/DHS Strategic Alliance

(Barwon South West)

Revised 6 July 2010

Research, Evidence and Evaluation Advisory Group

Terms of Reference

Chairperson: Assoc. Prof Mardie Townsend, Deakin University

Suggested Deputy Chair: Dr Shelley Bowen Department Health

Alliance team member responsibility: Dr Anita Peerson, Deakin Co-ordinator, DU/DH/DHS Strategic Alliance

1. Vision

To improve BSW health and well being outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged people and places, by brokering research and evaluation activity which is closely aligned with strategic health and wellbeing priorities at national, state, regional and local levels and to contribute to the evidence base of health and human service practice.

2. Purpose

To foster innovative and collaborative research activity at Deakin University that aligns with the strategic objectives of Deakin University, DH and DHS and the G21 and Great South Coast communities). The Advisory Group aims to strengthen the link between evidence, policy and practice related to health and wellbeing, building community capacity and reducing disadvantage and inequality. The Advisory Group will also work to position the region to build strategic research alliances and identify opportunities for research aligned to the COAG National Partnerships agendas.

3. Objectives

- To develop a holistic understanding of the research and evaluation environment of the Barwon-South West region by mapping current and future projects.
- To develop a 3 year Barwon-South Western Region research and evaluation plan that is linked to state and national funding mechanisms.
- To work with Deakin University/DH/DHS and local partners in the establishment of the Regional Research Centre.
- To support the National Centre for Farmer Health as a leader in innovative research, policy and practice
- To facilitate Corio Norlane Development Advisory Board links to a Deakin cross-faculty research team, building on achievements of 2009 Research Forum.
- To provide specific support and expertise in research and evaluation to the health and community services sector.
- To promote a research and evaluation culture across the BSW health and community services sector
- To focus on developing evidence-informed strategies for the Barwon-South Western Region.
- To broker Alliance research collaborations.
- To investigate further evaluation opportunities for Alliance evaluation (stage 2 in 2010).

4. Communication

AG to report to Deakin University/DH/DHS Strategic Alliance Executive at the Executive meetings or more frequently as the need arises. This communication will occur via the AG Chair.

5. Expectations

Members will commit to function to:

- Create a supportive and challenging working environment
- Undertake transparent and informed decision making
- Promote and support a fair and equitable discussion without prejudice
- Engage in high level strategic thinking and planning across the health and community services sectors
- Develop robust and respectful relationships
- Facilitate open and constructive communications
- Accept diversity in individual, agency or sector positions, and
- Engage with colleagues in a reliable and responsible manner.

It is expected that members will attend all scheduled meetings.

6. Membership

Assoc. Prof Mardie Townsend, Deakin University (Chair)

Dr Shelley Bowen, DHS (Deputy Chair)

Dr Anita Peerson, Deakin University Strategic Alliance Coordinator

Appropriate representation from:

- Deakin University
- Departments of Health (regional and central) Human Services and other relevant departments (RDV,DPCD,DEECD),
- G21 Health and Wellbeing Pillar
- Great South Coast LGA
- PCPs
- National Centre for Farmer Health
- Gordon Institute of TAFE
- South West TAFE
- NGO sector

Additional representation as determined by the AG.

7. Chair

This AG will be chaired by Assoc. Prof Mardie Townsend, Deakin University.

8. Secretariat

Minute taking to be rotated amongst AG members. A set of action notes in dot point form will be an acceptable record of the meeting.

9. Meeting frequency

The Group will meet as determined by the AG.

10. Dispute resolution

If a member of this AG considers there is an outstanding issue or serious contravention of the terms of reference, the member is to approach the Chair to seek resolution.

11. Review of Terms of Reference will occur at the first meeting of the year.

Attachment B

Regional Research and Information Centre, Alfred Deakin Research Institute

David Lowe, 4 July 2010

The Regional Research and Information Centre (RRIC) at ADRI continues to take shape as an identified priority project of ADRI, G21 and by the Great South Coast Strategic Plan Control Group. These groups share the goal of creating a "proof of concept" Regional Research and Information Centre. Such a centre will meet a need for rural and regional data management and related planning at a new level of co-ordination; facilitate new ways of assessing the effectiveness of current programs and identifying future needs and opportunities; and make better use of government resources through integration of regional, sub-regional and local area plans.

The development of the RRIC continues in the context of recent developments:

- The allocation of \$80,000 to the RRIC by the Health and Well-being Pillar of G21 to data set development and analysis, as specified in coming discussions of priority research tasks;
- The advertisement, in coming weeks, of a three-year level C/D position in Demography and Social Analysis at ADRI, in part, to provide leadership and specialized skills to the RRIC;
- Stronger co-ordination of Warrnambool-based research teams with emerging Geelong-based researchers on regional research projects;
- The commissioning of preliminary research on regional scenario three environmental sustainability planning, by DSE and G21;
- Discussions with Regional Development Victoria and the Department of Planning and Community Development about State Government support for the RRIC, including the possibility of secondments to the Centre, and reciprocal student internships in branches of the Public Service;
- Similar discussions with Enterprise Connect, Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, at Federal Government level, for secondments.