



**Research and Evidence based Practice Advisory Group Meeting  
Deakin + DHS Partnership**

Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2009  
Deakin Waterfront Campus

**Minutes**

**Chairperson:**

**Professor David Lowe, Director, Alfred Deakin Research Institute, Deakin University.**

**Present:**

Professor David Lowe	Director of Alfred Deakin Research Institute, Deakin University
Professor Trisha Dunning	Chair in Nursing, Barwon Health
Mr John Hedditch	Manager, Public Health, DHS (BSW)
Ms Anne Somerville	Director, G21 Health and Wellbeing Pillar
Professor Mardie Townsend	Associate Dean, (Development & Partnerships), Faculty of HMN&BS , Deakin University
Ms Karen Pritchard	Manager Aged & Disability Services, City of Greater Geelong
Professor Sue Kilpatrick	Pro Vice Chancellor, (Rural and Regional), Deakin University
Mr Chris Loughnan	Project Officer, Deakin + DHS Partnership
Ms Kay Mills	DHS Coordinator, Deakin +DHS Partnership
Ms Sue Morgan	Regional Health Promotion Officer, DHS (BSW)
Dr Anita Peerson	Lecturer, School of Health and Social Development, Deakin University

**Apologies:** Ms Christine Ferguson, Ms Libby Mears, Ms Irene McGinnigle, Ms Carole Micallef, Prof Joseph Graffam , Mr Greg Waddell, Mr Tim Moore, Mr Steven Sawyer, Mr Mark Brennan, Prof Rob Carter, Mr Steven Boyle, Ms Michelle Courtney, Mr Peter Day, Mr Chad Foulkes, Mr Ron Frew, Ms Sharlene Gillick, A/Prof Louise Johnson, Mr Kim McGough, Ms Anne O'Callaghan, Dr Darren Palmer, Ms Michelle Plane, Mr Terence Reed, Dr Sally Savage, Mr Andrew Scott, Dr Paul Talman, Ms Virginia Todd, Mr Tom Van Etten, Dr Kathryn Von Treuer, Ms Juliet Williams



## Welcome and Introduction

Professor David Lowe (co-chair) welcomed the group to the meeting and invited a round table introduction from members. New participants to the group included Professor Sue Kilpatrick, Professor Mardie Townsend and Ms Sue Morgan.

## Deakin Cross Faculty Team to support Corio Norlane Major Projects

Professor Sue Kilpatrick reported that she has met with Christine Ferguson who provided an excellent briefing and overview of Corio Norlane Major Projects and the governance input of the Corio Norlane Development Advisory Board. Sue outlined the next steps to facilitate Deakin's wider engagement with these projects. Work is in progress to map out a clear picture of what is happening now and Deakin's current research activity with Corio Norlane Projects. The next step is to identify gaps and opportunities for Deakin research input and to develop an overarching approach to coordinate collaboration. Project links with Deakin are encouraged on a broad front, with small projects building into larger projects as well as large projects and grant potential being identified (eg potential for ARC linkage Grants)

Kay Mills advised the group that Corio Norlane Research Projects was one of the Deakin + DHS Partnerships three beacon initiatives for this year, the other two being developing Workforce Strategies and a Farmers Health Conference.

David Lowe noted that the work of the Corio Norlane Development Advisory Board has relevance to activity across the Deakin + DHS Partnerships advisory groups.

## Workforce Strategy Research

Mr John Hedditch provided background information on two recent research submissions developed by the partnership team for **DHS Workforce Innovation Grants**. (see attached **Workforce Innovation submissions**)

- To develop an innovative, overarching Rural Human Services Workforce Planning and Development Framework
- Review and modernize DHS Student Placement systems and practices in the Barwon South West Region

These submissions highlight the need to develop a Strategic Framework for DHS Workforce planning (with an emphasis on capacity, capability, sustainability) as well as develop a Student Placement model with the capacity to map and enhance student placement opportunities across the region. The applications were unsuccessful in the latest highly competitive funding round but the Partnership has been advised to further develop and resubmit these proposals.

Kay Mills advised that a small regional working group has been set up to rework these proposals and develop a Position Paper around Workforce Planning and Student Placement issues for Deakin and DHS Executive consideration. The group will be looking at National frameworks, research and policy for guidance on developing these Workforce issues (Membership of this group: Mr John Hedditch, Ms Kay Mills, Ms Anne Somerville, Ms Therese Gerber, Mr Chris Loughnan, Professor Sue Kilpatrick, Robyn Everist)



**Professor Sue Kilpatrick** noted that well developed and promoted **Vet Pathways** are a vital component in training local students for positions in the regional workforce. VET training provides key training across a range of para- professional and allied health areas as well as providing a pathway to higher education degree courses. Sue is looking to further develop these pathways in the South West region and increase the local student intake at the Warrnambool Campus. Sue is already engaged in conversation with the South West TAFE. Similar engagement regarding VET Pathways exists in the Geelong region with the Gordon Institute of TAFE. Chris Loughnan noted that Greg Waddell (Executive Manager, Director Education Enterprises, Gordon TAFE) an apology for today's meeting, is an important contact to help facilitate wider VET Pathway options. (Chris will provide Sue with Greg's contact details.)

**Anne Somerville** advised the group that **G21** is currently developing a **Discussion Paper** with a focus on the Health Workforce's skills gaps and needs and is interested in pursuing the G21 region's potential to position itself for opportunities in health, education & training including articulation and training competency frameworks. The paper will be presented at the end of May to the Executive and later to the Board of G21. (Mr Jim Higgins, Regional Director DHS BSW is also a member of this group). Anne will table it to the partnership advisory group at a later date.

**John Hedditch** advised that DHS is developing a Greater South Coast Workforce Strategy. John noted that a significant amount of new material and discussion is currently being developed around Workforce issues and that the advisory group could consider acting as a think tank to identify key workforce issues and projects. **Professor Mardie Townsend** also referred to new models of Workforce Strategy being developed by the National Workforce Taskforce. Their recommendations favour a regional rather than national strategy focus.

**David Lowe** suggested that Anne Somerville and John Hedditch review the National Workforce agenda and identify possible projects for advisory group discussion and development.

## **Centre for Population Health**

**David Lowe** indicated that The Alfred Deakin Institute is now open and that the Business Plan includes increasing capacity in the collection and analysis of regional social demographic data. David is keen to further develop the potential for the Alfred Deakin Research Institute hosting database information for a Centre of Population Health or Centre for Regional Development.

Momentum and the need for a Centre for Population Health seem to be developing across the region. G21, DHS and a range of planning groups are increasingly seeking access to a shared body of data relevant to regional issues. A Centre for Population Health to coordinate local regional data has re-emerged as a G21 priority through the Health and Wellbeing Pillar. DHS is also continually developing its social demographic data for reports such as its four year cyclical Population Health Survey. John Hedditch proposed the aim of a not for profit collaborative approach to developing a Centre for Population Health. The group discussed range of issues that need to be addressed in order to put together the jigsaw of a Data Power House.

**Anne Somerville** indicated that as a preliminary step to revisit this proposal that G21 was hosting a meeting of immediate stakeholders in May to agree on the scope of the proposal prior to re-developing a business case. Anne indicated G21 may have the resources available to undertake the initial feasibility study on this project. There has been considerable interest from state departments and local government bodies as well as political interest from local MPs.



## Deakin Research Project

**Sue Kilpatrick** briefed the group regarding a current Deakin project conducting research into Non Government Organizations (with a Youth focus) developing a social entrepreneurial model. Sue will circulate a summary paper on this project for advisory group feedback and comment. In particular she asks for a review of questions and possible additional areas of interest to investigate. **(see attached Research summary document)**

## Data Linkage Research

These research issues were widely covered by the preceding discussions regarding the Centre for Population Health. David Lowe outlined developing a concept to undertake ongoing research around a key issue. eg. How do people understand the concept of community and developing indicators of community? Annual publications of result on a topic of relevance to the community would help increase the profile of the Alfred Deakin Research Institute. The Thinker in Residence proposal is being revisited by G21 and a meeting has been planned to which David Lowe and Anne Somerville have been invited. This will inform how further discussion progresses about this concept, particularly in relation to links with the Alfred Deakin Research Institute and Deakin + DHS Partnership.

## Research matters arising

### Building capacity of the primary health sector to conduct research in a health promotion context

**Kay Mills** tabled a topic for advisory group discussion and feedback regarding building capacity of the primary health sector to conduct research in a health promotion context. This issue arises from primary health workers requests for up skilling support to conduct research projects in their program areas. **(see attached discussion paper)** The advisory group considered ways to assist research projects and develop mentoring support at the primary health worker level.

Structured ideas included:

- Sue Kilpatrick suggestion to explore Commonwealth Up skilling funding through the University Department of Rural Health. Contact Rachael Boake
- Mardie Townsend suggested investigating support through the Masters of Public Health pathways

Less structured ideas could also be considered:

- Running workshops and staff development on research methodology and mentoring
- Stronger promotion of current research seminars to primary health workers
- Upskill practitioners on the ground, investigate and support what and how they evaluate
- Link developing research evaluation skills to existing staff training and accreditation

The challenges include knowledge, time and support for staff to develop research skills. Sue Morgan and Kay Mills will further refine proposals suggested above.



## Evaluation of the Deakin +DHS Partnership

**Dr Kathryn Von Treuer** has been funded to develop relevant performance indicators and evaluation tools to track the partnerships progress and outcomes. Kathryn has asked for three or four performance indicators from each advisory group. Kay Mills tabled the original performance indicators which have now become dated and need to be reviewed by advisory group members. David Lowe recommended the tabled performance indicators be taken on notice and suggested changes forwarded by email to the Partnership Project Officer, Chris Loughnan. **(see Research and Evidence based practice document)**

Membership of the four Advisory Groups is also being reviewed as part of the Partnership Evaluation process. David Lowe and Kay Mills will under take this review for the Research and Evidence based Advisory Group in conjunction with Chris Ferguson.

## Reports from advisory group members

**Sue Kilpatrick** recently visited Sue Brumby, the Director of the Farmers Health Centre in Hamilton. This new Centre offers exciting potential including developing web based advisory resources (incorporating information from the Sustainable Farm Families program) and social networking capabilities for farming communities. A priority of particular interest to this advisory group is to improve the research evidence base on Farmers health.

**Kay Mills** outlined the proposed Deakin + DHS Partnership project to present a Farmers Health Conference in collaboration with the Farmers Health Centre. A prelude to this event envisioned for 2010 is to explore relevant Farmers Health issues at a symposium event held in conjunction with the official opening of the National Centre for Farmers Health in July.

**Anne Somerville** will table at our next meeting details of two G21/Partnership Public Health lectures to be held later in the year.

## Thankyou to Iain Butterworth

Advisory group members would like to record our thanks to Iain for his outstanding work and commitment to the Deakin + DHS Partnership. We wish him all the best in his future adventures and endeavours.

## Schedule for next meeting

Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June

10am to 12pm

Seminar Room Ad 1.122

Alfred Deakin Institute

Deakin Waterfront Campus, Geelong

David Lowe invited all members to a tour of the Alfred Deakin Institute following the meeting