

Business Plan 2007–2010

for the

+ Deakin University
+ Department of Human Services
(Barwon-South Western Region)

Partnership



Deakin University and the Department of Human Services (Barwon-South Western Region)

An engaged partnership

The collaboration between Deakin University and the Department of Human Services (Barwon-South Western Region) was initiated in 1998 following the identification of regional and rural public health needs, recognition of the potential mutual benefits to each organisation, and a desire to respond by building capacity to meet identified needs. A shared geographic region and similar professional and academic interests, as well as the need to operate within a shared environment of broader reform, has stimulated and directed the development of the collaboration. It is a partnership that seeks to bring together the knowledge and resources of Deakin University and the Department of Human Services (Barwon-South Western Region) for the benefit of the people living in the region, as well as for the mutual benefit of both organisations.

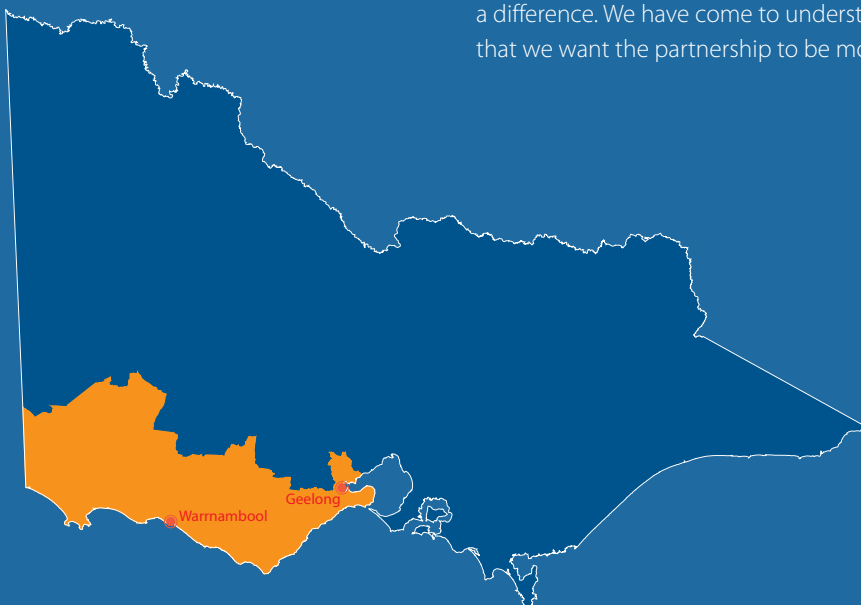
This Business Plan was developed during 2006 and 2007 through a detailed program of consultation and planning. The Plan represents a renewed effort to strive for a deep form of university-community engagement. Community engagement is simply a different way of doing familiar things, including learning differently; working together differently; and making a difference. We have come to understand that we want the partnership to be more

than just a network for sharing information. Through this partnership, Deakin University and the Department of Human Services are working to bring together the resources of an entire community. To do this, we have acknowledged the need to achieve several key outcomes. These include: moving from an opportunistic to a strategic way of working; developing a deep sense of purpose; developing symbols for this relationship; and presenting a set of clearly articulated values.

Development of this Business Plan has already helped to influence the development of both Deakin University's new Strategic Plan and the Strategic Plan for the Department of Human Services (Barwon-South Western Region). We have come to appreciate better the different core tasks that we must perform: the Department of Human Services in developing policy and delivering health and human services; and Deakin University in teaching and research. Engagement and service to our communities, through education, research and professional practice, is the thread that links us both. In view of this, we have reformulated the Partnership Vision and Mission, which are now linked to each organisation's strategic objectives.

Vision

The Partnership will be recognised as a leading innovator in brokering and conducting relevant research, fostering a skilled workforce, and improving the overall vitality, equity and quality of life of the Barwon-South Western Region by engaging the health and human services sector.



Mission

The Partnership between Deakin University's Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences and the Department of Human Services (Barwon-South West Region) exists to protect and enhance the health and social wellbeing of all people living in the Barwon-South Western Region. To achieve this, our organisations work together to support each other in conducting our core business. The Partnership integrates research, teaching, and practice to help create supportive environments, strengthen community actions, develop personal skills, ensure quality services and build healthy public policy.

We achieve our Mission by:

- brokering and collaborating in innovative interdisciplinary research across faculties that: engages members of the community; supports evidence-based practice and policy; and encourages intersectoral action on the social determinants of health
- ensuring a skilled and responsive local workforce through the provision of dynamic professional development programs and industry-based student placements and internships
- providing public health forums, accredited training courses for workforce teams, short courses, community education and other opportunities for lifelong learning
- facilitating cross-partnership representation on audit panels, course advisory committees and other strategic planning activities
- developing useful community resources.

Our stakeholders

Many people and organisations have an interest in the activities and achievements of the Partnership. These include:

- The residents and communities of the Barwon-South Western Region
- Deakin University's Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences and the schools within the Faculty
- Research clusters within Deakin University's health and wellbeing portfolio research areas
- Other faculties at Deakin University with an interest in health and wellbeing issues
- Program areas within the Department of Human Services (Barwon-South Western Region)
- Staff of Deakin University and the Department of Human Services (Barwon-South Western Region)
- Students of Deakin University
- The workforce within the Barwon-South Western Region
- Barwon-South Western planning bodies, including G21
- Barwon-South Western Primary Care Partnerships
- Barwon Health

Other relevant partnerships with current memoranda of understanding (for example, the Deakin University–City of Greater Geelong Partnership).

Strategic objectives

Over the next three years, the Partnership will:

- be instrumental in harnessing the skills, experience and research capabilities of Deakin University staff to contribute to service planning and development within the Department of Human Services (Barwon-South Western Region)
- create alignment between Department of Human Services (Barwon-South Western Region) regional priorities and Deakin University research priorities in order to identify evidence which might inform policy and practice to build community capacity and reduce disadvantage and inequality
- contribute to the development of major government initiatives
- harness the opportunities that arise from the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) National Health Reform agenda by focusing on diabetes and mental health
- emphasise early intervention by focusing on local risk factors and promote a shared understanding of 'health and wellbeing'
- develop a coordinated and strategic approach to student placements which addresses the needs of Deakin University, the Department of Human Services and the health and community sectors.

Governance

Organisational structure

Partnerships can range across a continuum of engagement, from informal networking through to formal collaboration. Figure 1 depicts a model for the various levels of partnership (VicHealth 2005). The Deakin University + Department of Human Services (Barwon-South Western Region) Partnership is quite complex and there are various elements and stakeholders that are at different levels of the continuum. The degree of engagement varies from 'Associate Membership', which is a networking group for stakeholders external to the formal partnership, through to the Partnership Executive, which collaborates and shares resources and strategic goals.

The actual structure of the Partnership is adapted from the governance model for the World Health Organization's 'Healthy Cities and Communities' and 'Health Promoting Universities' initiatives. The structural organisation of the Partnership reflects the various degrees of commitment based upon our strategic objectives and the various levels of partnership required to fulfil them (see Figure 2).

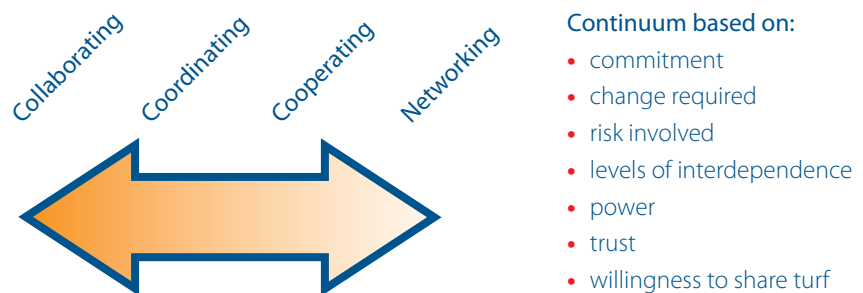
Executive

The Executive consists of six positions and is supported by the Partnership staff. They represent the two formal partners who have contributed financially and are formally committed to the Business Plan; hence they operate at the **collaborating** end of the spectrum.

The Partnership Executive consists of:

- Regional Director, Department of Human Services (Barwon-South Western Region)
- Dean, Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences, Deakin University;
- Manager, Strategic Support and Performance Unit, Department of Human Services (Barwon-South Western Region)
- Associate Dean (Development), Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences
- Deakin University + Department of Human Services (Barwon-South Western Region) Partnership Coordinator, Deakin University
- Deakin University + Department of Human Services (Barwon-South Western Region) Partnership Coordinator, Department of Human Services.

Figure 1: Partnerships continuum (VicHealth 2005)



Core Members

Core Members are those who perceive their core business to be directly linked to the Partnership activities. Core members will **cooperate** with Partners mainly by participating in the advisory groups that will form for each of the Partnership strategies.

faculties, human services agencies, businesses, government departments and even interested members of the community. They are willing to have their contact details registered, and are typically interested in the Public Health Forums and other activities of the Partnership, including research.

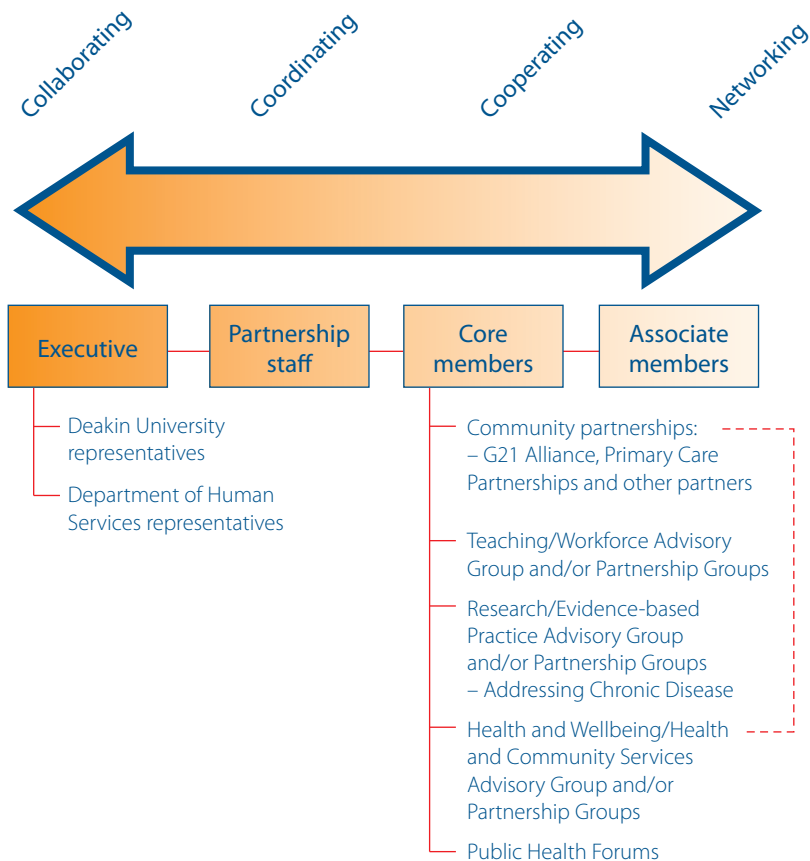
Associate Members

Associate Members may be interested in the Partnership activities and value the **networking** opportunities, but as the activities do not relate to their core business, they may not want to invest time in contributing to the implementation of the Business Plan. Associate Members of the Partnership can include academic staff from other

Strategic Advisory Groups

Strategic Advisory Groups assist Partnership Coordinators in planning and managing the ongoing business of the Partnership. These groups are convened to help the Partnership achieve the outcomes identified in its strategic goals. Strategic Advisory Groups meet as required, and can be established for direction and planning on specific initiatives.

Figure 2: Partnership organisational structure with overlay of VicHealth partnerships continuum



Staff

Deakin University and Department of Human Services (Barwon-South Western Region) *cooperate* on various projects that have a common link with each other's priorities. A Strategic Management Team has been established, comprising a Coordinator role within Deakin University and within the Department of Human Services (Barwon-South Western Region), and a Project Officer.

Deakin University Coordinator

The Deakin University Coordinator provides academic leadership in promoting research, education and professional practice, with a strong emphasis on encouraging intersectoral collaboration to promote health and wellbeing in the Barwon-South Western Region. The Deakin University Coordinator contributes to the Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences' research, program development and service at a national and international level.

Department of Human Services Coordinator

The Department of Human Services Coordinator builds collaborative relationships between regional business units and Deakin University across the Business Plan's strategic areas. The Department of Human Services Coordinator supports the development of regional university partnerships to enhance regional capacity to develop, plan and evaluate service models and systems.

Project Officer

The Project Officer provides executive support to the governance structure of the Partnership. The key role includes building and managing significant relationships within the Partnership structure and with external stakeholders. The Project Officer spends up to one day per week working in the Strategic Support and Performance Unit at the Department of Human Services, and is based at Deakin University for

the remainder of the working week. The position is 0.6 EFT and is co-funded for the life of this Business Plan.

All positions are pivotal in linking each organisation to the Business Plan Strategies and fostering sustainable collaborative efforts between the business units. Both the Deakin University and Department of Human Services Coordinator roles are situated in a strategic location within the respective organisations (at the Faculty level at Deakin University, and within the Strategic Support and Performance Unit at the Department of Human Services).

Strategy: Public Health Forums

AIM: Enhance the public's awareness and knowledge of public health matters by promoting professional development and knowledge via public health forums.

Public health forums aim to enhance the health of people living in the region by promoting professional development and knowledge, and by improving the public's awareness and knowledge of public health matters. The free forums have been held since 1999. These are an important service of the Partnership. The popular forums will be held quarterly, with at least one of the forums held on the Warrnambool Campus.

Over the next three years, the forums will focus on health promotion and prevention in a wide range of topical public health areas such as:

- Health inequalities
- Addressing disadvantage
- Access and equity
- Remote and rural health
- Tobacco, alcohol and other drugs
- Active and resilient communities
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Modifiable lifestyles and chronic illness
- Disability
- Nutrition
- Dental health
- Physical activity
- Injury prevention
- Sexual and reproductive health
- Early years
- Women's, men's and family health
- Healthy ageing
- Environmental sustainability
- Indigenous health
- Other population health issues.

Strategy: Teaching and Workforce Development

AIM: Improve the capacity of the human services sector workforce to respond to changing sector and professional needs by collaborating on professional training and placement activities.

The Department of Human Services (Barwon-South Western Region) is eager to develop and support a workforce that is responsive to the rapidly changing human services sector. Department of Human Services rural health workforce planning guidelines show that there is an inextricable link between effective workforce planning and achieving the directions and goals of rural health services (Department of Human Services 2006b). Workforce shortages in rural areas create a challenging environment for health services to manage. Assessing workforce gaps and designing the strategies is a key feature of the department's workforce strategy. The benefits that will be achieved by the Teaching and Workforce Development Strategy include:

- increasing the likelihood that student graduates will develop the necessary skills and knowledge which will support the directions of the department.
- ensuring health and community services have the right people, with the right skills, at the right time.
- providing a platform for professional development (by informing professionals of the most recent developments in their field).
- providing professionals with the opportunity to contribute to the next generation of the workforce by strengthening their preceptorial skills and thereby increasing job satisfaction and increasing retention rates.

This strategy has three key parts: student placements, graduate fieldwork and workforce training.

Student placements

Enhancing the delivery of student placements is a priority identified by the partnership review. A student placement program has the potential to equip senior students with valuable applied experience, thus integrating theory and practice. It also enables students to assess their interest in the sector.

Deakin University students are a major source for the future Department of Human Services regional workforce and as such, we need to ensure that students have positive experiences in their placements. Therefore, the strategy will develop a structured and multidisciplinary centralised approach for student placements across the region. The focus will initially be on Department of Human Services service delivery areas such as child protection and disability and will later extend to the funded sector as appropriate. The strategy will be developed in conjunction with relevant schools within the Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences and will lead to the establishment of a protocol that defines expectations, policy and procedures, inductions process and rights and responsibilities of all parties.

A distinction needs to be made between student placements and fieldwork. The latter will require due consideration to professional accreditation requirements. The personal and financial costs to the student will also need to be addressed.

Since not all areas are able to place students early on in their education, the Department of Human Services (Barwon-South Western Region) will provide an opportunity to link in directly with Deakin University students by providing educational modules to be offered on an annual basis on various topics introducing students to matters of government, such as policy making and how it operates.

Other student placement opportunities that are not necessarily related to professional accreditation, but that can enhance a student's learning opportunities, will be explored with personnel from schools within the Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences.

Graduate fieldwork

Fieldwork provides graduate students with an opportunity to use their newly acquired skills first hand in a working environment. A graduate fieldwork program has the potential to provide Deakin University with an opportunity to capitalise on and potentially inform the state and local government policy and program environments. It can also lead to new partnerships in areas such as applied research, education and publication. Placements under the program will only be available to research students conducting their fieldwork activities in Department of Human Services (Barwon-South Western Region) program areas or funded human services within the region.

A graduate fieldwork program will also provide an opportunity to consider expanding placements of graduate students with a strong emphasis on industry partnerships. A consistent program across the Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences would ensure that each academic stream would place students in substantive applied roles with host agencies for a full academic year.

Workforce training and sharing

A third opportunity exists to support the regional workforce by developing the abilities and skills of employees, stakeholders and the community. The Partnership can provide educational leadership and promote inter-professional training for staff by developing short courses or modules for professional development that are potentially accredited to build toward formal qualifications.

Conversely, there is the opportunity to share workforce expertise with schools at Deakin University by facilitating Department of Human Services (Barwon-South Western Region) staff or human services agency staff to deliver guest lectures or provide representation on audit panels and course advisory committees.

Strategy: Research and Evidence-based Practice

AIM: Improve health and wellbeing outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged people and places, by brokering action research activity which aligns with the Department of Human Services' strategic priorities and which contributes to the evidence base of human services practice.

The Partnership works to identify and foster innovative and collaborative research activity at Deakin University that:

- aligns to Deakin University and Department of Human Services (Barwon-South Western Region) strategic objectives, with emphasis on chronic disease research and evidence-based practice occurring in the region
- identifies evidence that informs policy and practice, builds community capacity, and reduces disadvantage and inequality
- centres upon the National Reform Agenda (COAG), with a focus mainly on mental health and diabetes.

The Partnership's main area of activity is to engage substantively with Deakin University's health and wellbeing research portfolio areas and their associated research clusters to establish research that will be conducted by the research clusters. The Partnership Coordinators will also use the Partnership as a vehicle for leading innovative research on university–community engagement.

The Partnership's Research and Evidence-based Practice Steering Group will work to achieve a strategic integration of research into three areas of enquiry:

- Clinical practice
- Health-promoting systems (such as holistic service delivery models, workforce development and models of intersectoral collaboration)
- The broader determinants of health.

To achieve this, the Research and Evidence-based Practice Strategy will:

- (i) develop a holistic understanding the particular research environment of the Barwon-South Western Region
- (ii) identify and promote research activity within the parameters defined by Department of Human Services (Barwon-South Western Region) strategic objectives.

Department of Human Services (Barwon-South Western Region) Objectives for 2007–2010

Department of Human Services (Barwon-South Western Region) interests focus on the planning and delivery of human services that are person- and family-centred, based in community settings, and plan for the needs of local populations.

The parameters within which the Department of Human Services (Barwon-South Western Region) can support research are reflected in the region's own objectives for 2007–2010:

- To strengthen client's capacity to meet their needs
- To reduce inequalities by improving the health and wellbeing of the community, particularly for disadvantaged people and communities
- To build a sustainable, well-managed and efficient human service system
- To increase the involvement of the region in the development of policy and program initiatives
- To increase employees' capacity to maintain or exceed performance.

Deakin health and wellbeing research portfolio areas

The Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences recently established the health and wellbeing research portfolio areas. This initiative responds to a number of recent internal and external drivers, including the Research Quality Framework assessment exercise, and the University's Strategic Plan and the 2007 Operational Plan.

The research portfolio areas aim to encourage, promote and support research programs that improve health outcomes and wellbeing for all people. To achieve this, the health and wellbeing research portfolio areas will facilitate:

- areas of research concentration that focus on major national and international priorities in health and social issues
- communication and networking between clusters and research teams to develop coordinated activities to address common health problems using systematic and evidence-based approaches
- multidisciplinary research programs and teams which develop or utilise innovative methodologies
- development of partnerships with the health and human services sector in Australia, especially Victoria, and internationally, especially the Asia-Pacific region
- knowledge transfer of research findings both internally and externally to inform policy, practice and teaching
- building of capacity for the health and human services sector including support for early career researchers and higher degree by research students.

Research clusters

Seven initial research clusters have been established as part of Deakin University's health and wellbeing research portfolio areas. As of early 2008 these include:

- Biomedical and food science innovations
- Environments for health and obesity prevention
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Physical activity and nutrition
- Promoting equity and social justice
- Safety and risk management in clinical and aged care
- Chronic conditions.

This strategy will identify the directors, researchers and other members of the cluster and link them into the appropriate Department of Human Services (Barwon-South Western Region) programs.

Strategy: Health and Wellbeing/Health and Community Services

AIM: Establish the Partnership as a key player in the formulation of regional health and wellbeing initiatives by engaging with key bodies responsible for planning and policy development.

This strategy relates to the role played by the Deakin University + Department of Human Services (Barwon-South Western Region) Partnership as a change agent in its own right in contributing to health, wellbeing and community capacity of the Barwon-South Western Region. The challenges facing the diverse communities across the region must be taken into account and addressed. These include changes in demography and the population shifts that occur differently across the region, with some areas growing and expanding in population and service demands while others are declining (Department of Human Services 2005).

Authentic university–community engagement will result in mutual benefits that flow not only to each partnering institution, but also in the form of enhanced capacity and competence of all stakeholders (Ramaley 2005). This strategy is about the Partnership contributing to local and regional community development and capacity building, through activities such as networking, participating in local advisory groups or partnership groups and think tanks, collaborating in local intersectoral initiatives, helping to build up local and regional partnerships, becoming a signatory to new and existing partnerships, and generally acting as a catalyst for improving community capacity. The Partnership will become nationally recognised for its contribution to theory

and practice on university–community engagement, and will serve as a benchmark for Deakin University’s community engagement agenda. A key driver for this strategy is the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Healthy Cities approach.

Healthy Cities and Communities

Healthy Cities and Communities is an approach that seeks to place health on the agenda of cities, municipalities and communities around the world, and build a local constituency of support for public health (Tsouros 1995). Thousands of initiatives worldwide have used the concept since WHO championed the Healthy Cities concept in 1986. A Healthy City/Community has been defined as ‘one that is constantly creating and improving those physical and social environments and expanding those community resources which enable people to mutually support each other in performing all the functions of life and in developing their maximum potential’ (Hancock and Duhl 1988, p. 24).

Characteristics of Healthy Cities projects

(Duhl and Sanchez 1999)

- 1 Commitment to health
- 2 Political decision making
- 3 Intersectoral action
- 4 Community participation
- 5 Innovation
- 6 Healthy public policy

The Healthy Cities approach is based on the recognition that urban – and rural – environments affect citizens' health, and that healthy municipal public policy is needed to effect change (Ashton 1992). Health and wellbeing must be planned and 'built into' municipalities. It is a process that needs to be promoted as everyone's business, and political endorsement is crucial to ensuring intersectoral collaboration. Systems for participatory decision making must be developed to ensure that all voices are heard, especially those of marginalised people (Baum 1993). The Healthy Cities approach has provided a practical guide for implementing the Ottawa Charter (Dooris 1998). For example, to drive intersectoral collaboration, health-promoting public policy across all sectors and government portfolios must be identified as a key goal. High-level political endorsement is crucial to ensuring a viable and sustainable intersectoral approach. In order to promote intersectoral collaboration, Healthy Cities initiatives need champions who are skilled in acting as catalytic leaders and social entrepreneurs (Butterworth and Duhi, 2007).

In working to achieve broad community health and wellbeing, the Partnership is working to form alliances with key regional structures. Some desired outcomes include:

- The Partnership will lead the development of a region-wide Health and Wellbeing Profile, which will include indigenous perspectives.
- G21 becomes a key partner in the formulation of regional health and wellbeing initiatives.
- The Partnership plays a key role in the development of Deakin University's new Health and Wellness Precinct.
- The Partnership will be identified as a key player in the formulation of regional planning and policy.
- The Partnership will be integrated with other Deakin University partnerships in the region, for example the Deakin University/City of Greater Geelong Partnership.
- The Partnership establishes a formal memorandum of understanding with the Institute for Koori Education at Deakin University.
- The Partnership engages with the Regional Managers Forum.
- The Partnership is a key player in Deakin University's Rural and Regional Engagement Strategy.

Monitoring and evaluation framework

An essential component of the Business Plan is a monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of the Partnership in contributing to the overall health and wellbeing of the Barwon-South Western Region. A monitoring and evaluation framework is needed to generate evidence that the Partnership is meaningful, substantive, generates 'currency' that is useful to each organisation and the wider community, and has adequate leveraging resources (Ramaley 2006). A university–community partnership devoted to promoting healthy and sustainable communities needs to 'enrich and expand the learning and discovery functions of the academic institution while also enhancing community capacity' (Ramaley 2005, p. 2).

Community capacity framework to assess community engagement

Community capacity has been defined as 'characteristics of a community that enable it to mobilize, identify and solve community problems' (Goodman et al., cited in Kegler, Norton and Aronson 2003, p. 3). Community capacity has been used

to assess the impact of Healthy Cities initiatives by including measures of:

- civic participation
- mechanisms for community input and for the distribution of community power
- skills and access to resources
- sense of community and social capital/trust
- social and inter-organisational networks
- community values and history
- capacity for reflection and learning.

Changes in community capacity can be assessed by mapping change across five interconnected levels of analysis. These are:

- changes in individuals
- changes in civic participation
- organisational development
- inter-organisational activity
- community level changes, including changes in social policy and community norms (Kegler et al. 2003).

This framework, illustrated in Figure 3, maps closely with the common characteristics of engaged universities (Ramaley 2005).

The Partnership's monitoring and evaluation framework, developed during 2007, attempts to integrate community capacity and community engagement frameworks. For example, if its three-year

strategy were successful, outcomes at the level of the individual person might include new skills and knowledge for students, Deakin University staff, Department of Human Services staff, research partners, citizens and other stakeholders. In particular it would include skills to encourage civic participation, with key stakeholders increasingly participating in the governance of the Partnership, and students taking on service learning and related leadership roles in the community. An organisational-level change already under way is the development of a Department of Human Services Student Placement Protocol to streamline the process of placing and supporting Deakin University students in positions with the Department of Human Services and its funded agencies. Inter-organisational changes might include new and extended linkages between the Partnership and a diverse range of public, private, non-profit and community-based organisations. Finally, community-level changes might include evidence that the Partnership has played a contributing role in the adoption of new public policies that encourage community wellbeing, such as new urban planning regulations that promote sustainability, walking and public transport.

Figure 3: Community capacity framework (Kegler et al. 2003, p. 17)



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