



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

Research/Evidence/Evaluation Advisory Group Meeting

MINUTES

1100-1300hr Tuesday 6 October 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, Michelle Verso, John Hedditch, Grant Hamilton, Professor Trisha Dunning, Dr Tim Baker, Associate Professor Steven Allender, Dr Anita Peerson (Secretariat)

Chair: Dr Shelley Bowen

Apologies: Associate Professor Mardie Townsend, Sue Morgan, Dr Tim Baker, Evie Leslie (on behalf of Professor John Toumbourou)

Welcome

Shelley Bowen welcomed Trisha Dunning and Michelle Verso to the Advisory Group. Susan Brumby dialled in to the meeting via teleconference (Hamilton).

1. Minutes previous meeting – 6 July 2010

The minutes were accepted following discussion and follow-up on the following actions.

- 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. Note: Anita Peerson has been liaising with various Fac HMNBS staff members as well as other faculties/schools regarding partnership development and contacts with colleagues in the BSW Region.
- 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.
- 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.

2. Preventative health - Public Health Branch, Department of Health

Shelley Bowen provided an overview on current population-level initiatives of the Prevention and Population Health Unit, Department of Health, Victoria

- Release of *Victorian Population Health Survey 2008* data (n=34,000, 79 LGAs) from October 2011.
 - Full report and fact sheets for each LGA/Region (Victoria) contain data on: health and lifestyle, self-reported health status and selected health conditions, body weight status,

asthma, diabetes, mental health, connections with others, and social inequalities in health.

- Website: www.health.vic.gov.au/healthstatus - with potential interest for regional issues and the agricultural sector.
- The survey data has generated media interest in Australia and overseas.
- Establishment of the Centre of Excellence in Intervention and Prevention Science (CEIPS) from 2011. The focus will be on intervention research and policy to inform community engagement in the prevention agenda.
 - The Centre will be lead by Professor Alan Shiell (Executive Director) from February 2011. He is currently located at the University of Calgary, Canada and has experience in health economics, social determinants of health, and knowledge translation.
 - The Centre will be established in a similar to the Sax Institute at University of Sydney.
 - Role is to broker research partnerships, make the links between policy and research, foster research at multiple sites with a multi-disciplinary and systems approach.
 - A wishlist of research priorities has not yet been determined.
- The Commonwealth/State National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health (NPAPH) - \$81million (2011-15) has been established to address the rising prevalence of lifestyle related determinants of chronic disease, focussing on children, communities, workers and families
- Research Partnership Fund – provides grants for projects involving joint research teams with Department of Health and University academics (\$50,000 and \$100,000). These projects are to inform development of larger projects (eg. NHMRC funding)

General discussion

The NHMRC CEO, Professor Warwick Anderson, is currently undertaking consultations with Australian researchers during September-October 2010, to provide NHMRC information and feedback.

Steven Allender - the National Institute for Clinical Evidence (NICE), Britain undertakes consultations with clinicians and patients/community members about various diseases/medical technologies to inform guidelines and scale up to system-level interventions.

Steven Allender - The National Institutes of Health (NIH), United States

Important to develop education pathways for preventive health workforce (school to TAFE/university).

There is significant social disadvantage in Geelong and BSW Region.

Geospatial mapping can indicate patterns of some conditions in the same LGA across Victoria.

Action

- Steven Allender to provide Anita Pearson with links to NICE (Britain) and NIH (United States) regarding system-level interventions – for circulation to AG members

3. Regional Research Information Centre (RRIC), ADRI, DU – update

Michelle Verso provided an update on establishment of the RRIC. As a concept, the RRIC will have statewide (Victoria) reach with collaboration with other universities and communities beyond Geelong and BSW Region, as well as Deakin University, to also include University of Ballarat, Monash University (Churchill, Gippsland), **La Trobe University (Bendigo)** and Gordon TAFE (Geelong). This initiative is being supported by Regional Development Victoria (RDV). Meetings are currently underway to develop and approve a business plan. More details are forthcoming.

Stage 1 – develop a business plan outlining the collaboration with each university and ADRI as the host organisation, with funds from RDV

Stage 2 – establish RRIC as a not-for-profit entity with a CEO and Board

The Vice Chancellor, Professor Jane den Hollander and the DVC (Research), Professor Lee Astheimer at Deakin University, are supportive of RRIC being established.

Michelle Verso has been appointed as Project Manager to establish the RRIC, from November 2010. An academic (Level B-C) with expertise in social demography will be appointed during late 2010-early 2011.

General discussion

John Hedditch and Anita Peerson confirmed the prior history of the local PCP/G21 health and well-being pillar in the Geelong area (around 2005) seeking to establish a Population Health Unit that could undertake and be a repository for research in the local/regional area. Steven Allender suggested the RRIC would provide an opportunity for potentially linked datasets, and better inform regional and sub-regional planning.

Action

- Anita Peerson – to seek an update from Professor David Lowe (Director, ADRI and Michelle Verso following RRIC meeting, 8 October 2010 – to inform AG members.

4. Centre for Rural Emergency Medicine, DU, Warrnambool

Tim Baker away (apology)

Action

- Item held over for next meeting.

5. Nursing research – DU-Barwon Health

Trisha Dunning provided a verbal report on nursing research (eg. diabetes, palliative care) and professional development of nursing and allied health workforce' research skills (especially to undertake initial small scale projects related to their clinical areas).

Personal research focuses on diabetes (end of life, aged care) and secondary prevention, use of medicines (RCT) addressing individuals medicine (education and intervention, use and risks) and development of end-of-life diabetes guidelines. This could be linked to palliative care and aged care settings and inform nurse managers' practice.

General discussion

Overall health system – addressing the interface between acute, primary and aged care sectors.

John Hedditch suggested there was a need for scoping of current primary, secondary and tertiary prevention activities in the BSW Region.

There are often missed opportunities for brief interventions in general practice/primary care due to time, communication skills and other factors (eg. mother and child)

6. National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH)

Susan Brumby provided an overview on the NCFH (n=10 staff) and 5 pillars

1. *Professional training and education* – development of an agricultural medicine course. 1st graduates in 2010, and to include as an elective for nursing and health promotion students from early 2011
2. *Applied research* – receipt of Gardiner Foundation grant (2010-12) to revisit an earlier cohort of 210 farmers (11 sites, Victoria) from 2005-07, to examine health literacy and gender issues related to their participation in the *Sustainable Dairy Farm Families* program. Rural Industries and Research Development Centre (RIRDC) – 6-year follow-up of a longitudinal study addressing sugar, cotton and pastoral farmers, yielded a 73% return rate after 6 years. Of the 2003-04 cohort considered at risk for chronic disease, the majority continued making improvements to their health and well-being. An ARC Linkage grant is address alcohol consumption in farming families.
3. *NCF website* – providing information for farmers and on farmer health and NCFH activities/resources, concluding forthcoming conference. It is possible to submit photos for the conference exhibition via the website.
4. *AgriSafe program* – new appointment to manage the program, in November 2010

5. *Service delivery* – Sustainable Farm Families (SFF) program has yielded much data. The program has been externally evaluated by i) Roberts Evaluation Pty Ltd (2009) and ii) the Victorian Auditor-General (2010) with report tabled in Parliament of Victoria in September 2010. 4 recommendations: a) continue with external evaluation of the program, b) Western District Health Service (WDHS) to do 6-monthly financial reporting of NCFH activities. (currently 3-monthly), c) embedding the SFF program into the health system, by partnering with local health services, and d) **program has instigated improvements in individual farmers' knowledge of farm safety**

Forthcoming inaugural conference – Opening the Farm Gates, 11-13 October 2010, Hamilton. Professor Evelyn de Leeuw (DU) will develop a *Hamilton Charter for Farmer Health* based on health messages received from 50 conference presenters.

General discussion

The SFF program is an excellent example of making the links between theory and practice, and successful community engagement.

Action

- Susan Brumby – provide Anita Pearson with a link to the Victorian Auditor-General's report, for circulation to AG members.

7. Requests for professional development or assistance (BSW Region) – evaluation

- Anita Pearson and Sue Morgan have jointly prepared a briefing paper regarding these requests for Mardie Townsend and Professor John Catford (Dean, Fac HMNBS), to inform decision-making around Fac HMNBS staff capacity to provide assistance. Briefing paper includes examples of professional development of evaluation skills in other areas (universities, LGAs, government) (Victoria)

General discussion

- Workforce gaps in social planning qualifications/skills (BSW Region)
- Grant Hamilton would like to see more evaluation being undertaken in BSW Region, as increasingly a reporting requirement for projects/programs and need to demonstrate benefits/outcomes
- Steven Allender indicated the Obesity Prevention short course (DU) x 5 days includes evaluation of physical activity and nutrition interventions. Anita Pearson has liaised with Chad Foulkes (Knowledge Broker) regarding networking opportunities in BSW Region. Mel Nicholls (evaluation)
- Existing resources – national clearinghouse on community-based interventions (best practice, current evaluation tools)
- Kathryn von Treuer (and colleagues) undertook evaluation of the DH-DHS Partnership (2009-10)

Action

- Decision-making by John Catford and Mardie Townsend about briefing paper, and update AG members when more information available
- Steven Allender to provide Anita Pearson with links to national clearinghouse on community-based interventions for circulation to AG members
- Shelley Bowen to provide Anita Pearson with details of the VicHealth evaluation short course for circulation to AG members
- Anita Pearson to follow-up with Chad Foulkes and Mel Nicholls regarding obesity prevention short course/evaluation skills

8. Research grants/funding opportunities

Anita Pearson 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.
 - The online directory is now available on the DU library catalogue
- **Our Community** (www.ourcommunity.com.au) – has various community resources available to members. The Research Services Division (RSD), DU has arranged DU membership and is preparing to make the electronic *Easy Grants* newsletter (monthly) which provides details on available grants available to DU staff via the RSD website. This newsletter is also protected by copyright. Grant Hamilton indicated that many community groups have membership/access to the newsletter

General discussion

- Trisha Dunning and Anita Peerson noted the difficulty of successfully obtaining a Category 1 grant (ARC, NHMRC ~20% funded). Seek alternative sources of funding, even for small grants/projects, which still result in publications/presentations

Action

- Steven Allender - to provide Anita Peerson with details on other funding sources/databases.

9. Advisory Group priorities for 2011

Mardie Townsend has tabled a brief overview of a potential research priority

General discussion

- Suggestions for a workshop (March 2011) following next meeting (February 2011) – dates/venue TBC
- Workshop to map current activities and consider the gaps – this will help determine research priorities for the BSW Region and provide a focus for the AG

Action

- Dates for next meeting and workshop to be determined

10. Membership of the Research/Evidence/Evaluation Advisory Group

Action

9. Next meeting date: February, June, October 2011 - to be confirmed

- The meeting will be held via videoconferencing with Susan Brumby, NCFH, Hamilton.
- Date/venue for workshop to determine research priorities for the Advisory group – March 2011 TBC
- Provide DU (Geelong-Waterfront) car parking permits for AG members where required