



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

**Research Partnership Funding:
How do we ensure the important research gets identified and funded?**

**1030-1140hr 16 August 2011
AD1.122, Deakin University, Geelong-Waterfront
Videoconferencing - Rm WD2.30, DU, Warrnambool**

Notes

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)

Guests

Waterfront: Elaine Carbines (G21), Anne Somerville (Health and Wellbeing, G21), Veena Vather (Research Partnerships-Health, DU), Dr Santosh Jatrana (ADRI, Geelong), Dr Sarah Leach and Julie Stefanoff (on behalf of Grant Boyd (Bethany/CNDAB), Marjo Roshier-Taks (Nutrition-Medicine, DU), Cathy Cooper (EO-C-PAN) on behalf of Professor David Crawford, C-PAN SRC/ADRI, DU), Shona Twining (on behalf of Petrina Conway – Manager-Disability services, DHS-BSW Region, Geelong), Deborah Kay (Community Health-Rehabilitation Services, Barwon health, Geelong), Professor Sue Kilpatrick (Rural and Regional Issues, ADRI, Warrnambool), Professor Bridie Kent (Acting Associate Dean-Research/Chair-Nursing, Southern Health), Cate Mercer-Grant (National Centre for Farmer Health).

Videoconferencing-Warrnambool: Matt Ebdon (HSD, DU, Warrnambool), Mark Brennan (SWPCP, Warrnambool), Karen Foster (GSC, Warrnambool)

Apologies: Wanda Korndoffer (Director-Innovation, Gordon TAFE), Michelle Verso (ADRI, DU), Associate Professor Steven Allender (WHO Collaborating Centre for Obesity Prevention, DU), Professor Trisha Dunning (Chair-Nursing, DU-Barwon Health), Vicki Mason (Community Services, City of Warrnambool), Izabela Sulek (Health, DU), Professor James Dunbar (UDRH, DU, Warrnambool – Greater Green Triangle); Professor David Crawford (C-PAN SRC/ADRI, DU), Petrina Conway (Manager-Disability Services, DHS-BSW Region, Geelong); Professor Megan-Jane Johnstone (AHoS-Research, Nursing and

Midwifery/Quality and Patient Safety SRC, DU), Associate Professor David Cameron-Smith (AHoS-Research, SENS, DU); Professor Bev O'Connell (Acting HoS, Nursing and Midwifery, DU); Steve Sawyer (Health, DU), Rosie Rowe (Primary Care, WDHS, Hamilton); Janette Lowe (SGG PCP, Hamilton), Professor Evelyne de Leeuw (Medicine, DU), Professor Ann Taket (CHASE, DU), Professor Richard Osborne (AHoS-Research, HSD, and Chair-Public Health, DU), Professor Boyd Swinburne (Population Health SRC/ADRI, DU), Professor Alister Ward (AHoS-Research Medicine/Centre for Molecular and Medical Research SRC, DU), Associate Professor Steven Allender (WHO Collaborating Centre for Obesity Prevention, DU), Professor Trisha Dunning (Chair-Nursing, DU-Barwon Health), Professor Rob Carter (Foundation Director-DIfHR/Population Health SRC, DU), Professor Harry Weisinger (Optometry Studies, Medicine, DU, Geelong), Professor David Lowe (Director-ADRI, DU), Dr Peter Miller (Psychology, DU, Geelong).

1. **Professor Bridie Kent**

Indicated her role as Associate Dean-Research/Chair-Nursing and Midwifery, Eastern Health, and related the Faculty of Health's approach to research. She provided an overview of the establishment of 5 strategic research centres (SRCs) which have a particular research program (3-year funding) that is multi-disciplinary and aligned with particular schools, with a focus on extending the skills of early career researchers (ECRs), developing research partnerships. The Faculty of Health also has researchers undertaking individual research projects or programs. The School of Nursing has a hub and spoke approach to research involving academics and clinicians/health services. Other Schools may be either Melbourne or Geelong-centric, but are widening their focus to include other geographical locations.

2. **Presentation - Matt Ebdon, Mark Brennan, Karen Foster, Janette Lowe and Vicki Mason (Great South Coast) (GSC)** (apologies from Janette Lowe and Vicki Mason)

Presented on health and wellbeing priorities and research priorities. The GSC regional priorities are: position for economic growth; improve our connections; sustain our natural assets; strengthen our communities; and increase collaboration.

Some statistical data was provided on GSC area compared with the Victoria average: skills, jobs and education; health and wellbeing; healthy liveable communities. Factors affecting the catchment areas of the South West PCP, Southern Grampians and Glenelg PCP, City of Warrnambool were also presented. Research needs to address the overall GSC, 6 LGAs and 28 communities/townships.

They also indicated the urgent need to research capacity-building (including evaluation skills) in the Great South Coast area. There is a current health workforce gap given there are few colleagues available with research skills who could contribute to/undertake research projects, prepare/submit grant applications, and publish papers in peer reviewed journals. It has also been difficult to recruit research staff to the Great South Coast area.

A proposal to establish a GSC Health and Wellbeing Unit at Deakin University, Warrnambool and involving other GSC partners (SWPCP, SGGPCP, City of Warrnambool) was presented. The Unit will entail: student support, project action, research and resources, project evaluation, workforce and policy development, meeting administration as part of its infrastructure. The governance arrangements will include a

Population Health Steering Committee and a GSC Advisory Group. This Unit will enable a new approach to student learning: 'community-based learning' grounded in real world situations, and facilitate input from local colleagues in the field to have input into health course design and delivery.

3. **Presentation - Elaine Carbines and Anne Somerville (G21)**

Provided on an overview of the health and wellbeing priorities, current projects and research priorities in the G21 region: involving 5 LGAs and a rapidly growing population. The G21 pillars are: arts and culture; economic development; education and training; transport; planning and services; health and wellbeing; environment; sports and recreation.

Two regional priority projects related to the health and wellbeing pillar are: Regional Research and Information Centre (to be auspiced by the Alfred Deakin Research Institute (ADRI) at Deakin University, Geelong, and addressing disadvantage.

The health and wellbeing pillar has a PCP role, with current projects addressing health promotion, service coordination, integrated chronic disease management and service development.

4. **Presentation - Veena Vather (Research Partnerships-Health, DU)**

Related details of her role at Deakin University, providing an overview of health research (DU) and examples of potential funds available for research partnerships

An approach to (research) partnerships needs to consider the following factors: position research to needs of client; match DU research capabilities to client needs; flexible arrangements; well established successful long-term relationships; range of stakeholders.

A proposed model for research partnerships includes: the link between health services and population health; right skills base; economic development – while taking into account research and investment opportunities. These could be facilitated and supported by the Research Partnerships Office, DU.

5. **General discussion**

After the presentations, the following issues were discussed.

- Importance of identifying current gaps in research, potential research partners and determining research priorities (Bridie Kent)
- GSC area - High need for research capacity-building (Matt Ebdon, Mark Brennan)
- Community service perspective – early years, housing and social disadvantage should be considered (Sarah Leach)
- Research partnerships office could perhaps offer some strategic research support. A focus on strengthening and liveable communities (John Hedditch)
- G21 view is to expand the evidence base on available data relative to the G21 catchment area (x 5 LGAs), to better inform decision-making and persuade political will. Would like more research academics to be involved in local research projects that could yield valuable data for G21 members (Anne Somerville, Elaine Carbines)
- Research translation is important, so that evidence can inform program and service planning, and better enable community-capacity-building (Sue Kilpatrick)

- Faculty of Health seeks to support and extend research activities by DU academics and facilitate evidence dissemination (Bridie Kent)
- The National Centre for Farmer Health (NCFH) is undertaking research addressing farmers' health and wellbeing (across Australia and including the Western District, Victoria) (Susan Brumby)
- Farmers and rural populations experience difficulties in access health services. Health research needs to be applied to consider the implications of service delivery in real world settings. There are opportunities for postgraduate training and including the VET sector (Cate Mercer-Grant)
- Evaluation is a particular research method. It is also increasingly important to undertake evaluation of services and programs (Bridie Kent)
- GSC Health and Well-being Unit – a partnership between the SWPCP, SGG PCP, LGAs and NGOs in the local area. They are seeking greater rigour around evaluation. The Unit could involve students and provide them with exposure to real work experiences. Senior DU researchers are needed to enable research capacity-building (Mark Brennan)
- Faculties other than Health (DU) could be involved, given the importance of addressing social determinants of health. There is increasing Victorian state government attention to the importance of urban design, and the connection between place and health (eg. recent parliamentary committee inquiry, April 2011) (John Hedditch)
- Funding research is an ongoing issue for academics and other research partners. VicHealth has recently advertised Innovation Grants (applications open 1 September 2011) (Sue Kilpatrick)
- Questions were raised whether the Department of Health funds research projects or provide support for regional priorities (Sue Kilpatrick, Matt Ebdon)
- The Department of Health (BSW Region) can play an advocacy role in supporting research proposals and grant applications, which also demonstrate active collaboration between research partners (John Hedditch, Sue Morgan)
- 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 (John Hedditch).

In summary, 2 research streams could accommodate the top BSW Regional priorities:

- **Stream 1: prevention/population health and wellbeing** (as set out by G21 and GSC presenters). This stream needs to align with the priorities of the partners beyond the health sector, DH regional office and also with Deakin faculties beyond the Faculty of Health, to determine the regional prevention/population health research priorities. The revised Research AG membership needs to be inclusive of these partners.
- **Stream 2: health system development** (which includes the health services, health workforce, farmers' presentations to EDs with chest pain type research) needs to engage the health services sector, DH regional office and the Deakin University-Faculty of Health.