



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

Friday 22nd August 2008
DHS State Government State Offices

Minutes

Co Chairs:

Professor David Lowe, Head of School, History Heritage and Society, Deakin University.

Ms Christine Ferguson, Manager, Neighbourhood Renewal, Department of Human Services, Barwon South West Region.

Present:

Professor David Lowe	Head of School, History Heritage and Society, Deakin University
Ms Christine Ferguson	Manager, Neighbourhood Renewal, Department of Human Services, Barwon South West Region
Ms Wendy Allen	Community Engagement Manager, Department of Planning and Community Development
Ms Sandy Austin	DHS Coordinator, Deakin +DHS Partnership
Mr Steven Boyle	Project Director, Corio/Norlane Regeneration project, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Dr Iain Butterworth	Deakin Coordinator, Deakin +DHS Partnership
Prof Rob Carter	Chair in Health and Human Services Economics, Deakin University
Ms Jan Golden	Executive Manager, Gordon Institute of TAFE
Prof Joseph Graffam	Head of School(Psychology) + Deputy Dean Faculty of HMNBS, Deakin University
Mr Chris Loughnan	Project Officer, Deakin + DHS Partnership
Mr Tim Moore	Project Manager Population Health, Barwon Health
Ms Karen Pritchard	Manager Aged and Disability Services, City of Greater Geelong
Mr Terence Reed	General Manager, Community Support Services, St Laurence
Dr Sally Savage	Research Fellow, School of Nursing
Mr Steven Sawyer	Manager Collaborative Programs and Research, Faculty of HMNBS, Deakin University



Apologies: Ms Michelle Courtney, Mr Peter Day, Mr Chad Foulkes, Mr Ron Frew, Ms Sharlene Gillick, Mr John Hedditch, A/Prof Louise Johnson, Ms Irene McGinnigle, Mr Kim McGough, Ms Libby Mears, Ms Carole Micallef, A/Prof Anne O'Callaghan, Ms Michelle Plane, Mr Andrew Scott, Dr Paul Talman, Mr Tom Van Etten, Ms Juliet Williams

Welcome and Introduction

Professor David Lowe (co-chair) welcomed the group to the inaugural Research and Evidence based Practice Advisory group meeting. David invited members to introduce themselves to the group.

Deakin + DHS Partnership Business Plan and Terms of Reference

Ms Sandy Austin (DHS Coordinator, Deakin + DHS Partnership) and Dr Iain Butterworth (Deakin Coordinator, Deakin + DHS Partnership) thanked attendees for their interest and participation in the Research and Evidence based practice meeting.

Iain provided a summary of the new Partnership Business Plan¹ He identified the specific partnership strategies and organizing action around four main advisory groups- Health and Well Being, Teaching and Workforce, Research and Evidence based practice, and Public Health Forums.

Iain and Sandy outlined the aim of the partnership research strategy to broker action research between Deakin and DHS which aligns to both organizations strategic priorities and which contributes to the evidence base of human service practice. The approach is to develop a holistic understanding of the research environment of the Barwon-South West region to help shape future research directions which inform policy and practice, builds community capacity and reduces disadvantage and inequality. The advisory group has been convened to advise the partnership set an agenda to develop research connections in the next 12 months.

DHS Regional Priorities

The DHS Regional priorities are similar in many ways to Deakin's strategic objectives, with a priority on partnerships and engaging with the region. They are:

- 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 performance².

DHS direct and funded services aim to address disadvantage and inequity by providing timely, accessible and relevant community services throughout the region. An important consideration is to link DHS and Deakin research activity to the forefront of the burgeoning National Reform Agenda.

¹ <http://www.deakin.edu.au/dhs/publications.php>.

² See <http://www.deakin.edu.au/dhs/objectives-clusters.php>



Alfred Deakin Institute

David Lowe provided an overview of the new Alfred Deakin Institute which will have its headquarters in the Waterfront campus in Geelong. This institute is based on a European model to inform public policy and engage the public in policy debate. David tabled a summary document outlining the Institutes vision, research foci and emphasis on capacity building. (See Prof. Lowe's attached document).

Sandy Austin commented that these priorities are very similar to DHS and exciting synergies exist to work together on research to analyse and share data to better understand and service our region. Similarly Professor Rob Carter observed that the work undertaken in his area of Health and Human Services Economics would be of particular relevance to DHS, especially in relation to its research expertise on efficiency, equity and affordability. Wendy Allen (Community Engagement Manager) for the Armstrong Creek Development also recognized critical research connections in relation to urban design and sustainability.

Christine Ferguson (Manager, Neighbourhood Renewal Projects, DHS-Corio/Norlane) and Steven Boyle (Project Director, Corio/Norlane Regeneration Project, Dept of Education and Early Childhood Development) are very keen to link into Deakin's extensive research capabilities in an organized and sustained way and see extensive potential linkages with the major urban regeneration projects to be undertaken in Corio and Norlane.

Deakin Health and Wellbeing Research College

Professor Joe Graffam, (Deputy Dean, Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Science+ Chair, Deakin Health and Wellbeing Research College) presented an overview of the **Health and Wellbeing Research College** where translational research is undertaken by **six foundation groups**, namely

- The Centre for Mental Health and Wellbeing Research (MHW)
- The Centre for Physical Activity and Nutrition Research (C-PAN)
- The Molecular Medicine and Nutrition Research Group (MMNR)
- The Promoting Equity and Social Justice Group (PESJ)
- The Public Health Research, Evaluation and Policy Group (PHREP)
- The Quality and Risk Management in Clinical and Aged Care Research Group (QRM)

Translational research by these six foundation groups has been within **four themes or pillars** of the College as indicated below

- Preventing chronic diseases
- Managing complex health conditions
- Optimising health service delivery
- Enhancing community wellbeing

Professor Graffam also provided details for the **Research Institute of Prevention and Health** which proposes to undertake research including:

- **Behavioural Epidemiology**- led by Professor David Crawford in association with Professors Bass and Nowson with research focused on identifying physical activity and nutrition behaviour
- **Mental Health Promotion and Intervention**- led by Professor Marita McCabe in association with Professors Cummins, Graffam and Toumbourou with a research focus on addressing mental health issues for "high risk groups" (eg adolescents, the aged, and disadvantaged groups)
- **Health Policy and Health Economics**- led by Professor Boyd Swinburn in association with Professor Carter with research focused on public health policy and program evaluation, as well as health economics research. (See Prof. Graffam's attached power point presentation)



Deakin+ DHS Research opportunities and collaboration

Mr Steven Sawyer (Manager, Collaborative Programs & Research Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Science) provided a precise and clear overview of Deakin and DHS Research opportunities including details on

- Deakin research timelines and calendar deadlines
- Research partnership projects
- Research Funding programs covering a range of Category grants, Australian Research Council linkage grants and student PHD/Honours research as well as fellowship opportunities

Steven noted the importance of making connections with individuals in the right area of research and advised to “think big, start small to build relationships” in a collaborative research process. Successful research relationships are built on a relationship of respect and trust as well as an understanding of the research system

In managing collaborative research Steven emphasized key features including a clear governance process, clear Memorandum of Understanding/Contracts and ongoing stakeholder review. ([See Steven Sawyer’s attached Research handout](#))

Corio Norlane Major Projects and potential links with Deakin University

Ms Chris Ferguson outlined her objective to develop a research partnership between **Deakin University** and the **Corio Norlane Development Advisory Board (CN DAB)**. The CN DAB plays a crucial role as an overarching community advisory board to a raft of major projects in Corio and Norlane. Christine provided background information on a range of projects as well as a list of potential opportunities for Deakin research involvement. These projects included:

- Corio Norlane Neighbourhood Renewal
- Corio Norlane Education Regeneration Project
- The Norlane Regeneration Project
- Corio Norlane Major Urban Renewal
- Northern Suburbs Health Services Redevelopment
- The Northern futures Project
- The Northern Water Plant Project
- North Shore Train Station as c Community Hub
- Community Advisory Panel-Shell Refinery

([See Christine Ferguson’s attached Corio Norlane Major projects handout](#))



Recommendations for brokering further research collaboration between Deakin + DHS

As Iain Butterworth noted, partnership members learned a great deal about how the University's research process works and were enthused how they could use their new found knowledge to engage strategically with Deakin. The partnership team identified a range of collaborative research **actions** to develop:

- Engaging with Deakin's new Alfred Deakin Institute and the Health and Wellbeing Research College
- Developing a Deakin across faculty research support team to participate in the Corio Norlane Development Advisory Board
- Identify opportunities to involve Honours and higher degree students in applied research from 2009
- Engaging the School of psychology's Organizational Psychology team in discussions with the Armstrong Creek partnership team, the Corio Norlane Development Advisory Board and the Deakin +DHS partnership team
- Identify opportunities to include economic perspectives in health related research

Schedule for future meetings

The meeting recommended members reconvene within the next six months to review progress on the recommendations above and in particular action on developing a Deakin research team to support the Corio Norlane Development Advisory Board.

Time: 10am to 12 noon (light lunch provided)
Date: Friday 21st November 2008
Venue: Deakin Waterfront Campus, Geelong
Room: S-D4.109