

## AHWI News June 2009

Welcome to the first Australian Health Workforce Institute (AHWI) academic network update.

This newsletter provides our research fellows, the wider AHWI research network and those interested in health workforce with regular information on progress and key events.

AHWI is a partnership between the University of Melbourne and the University of Queensland, led by the University of Melbourne. Nevertheless, we aim to establish a national network of academics and institutions interested in researching the health workforce. The University of Adelaide and the Menzies Centre for Health Policy at ANU are already close collaborators.

In its first year, AHWI has consolidated major projects and now things are on the move as the National Health Workforce Research Collaboration gets underway. This is a three way partnership between the National Health Workforce Taskforce (set up by the Council of Australian Governments), AHWI and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). AHWI and PwC won this by tender in December, and the contract is now being signed.

It is our intention through this newsletter to keep you informed of Institute activities, and to put out calls for interest in upcoming research projects.



## NHWRPC: Australian Health Workforce Research

The National Health Workforce Research and Planning Collaboration has been set up for three years. Under the contract COAG, through the Victorian Department Health Services, will provide funding of at least 1 million dollars a year for core projects (but our expectation is that the volume of work will be significantly more than the minimum). The partnership between AHWI and PricewaterhouseCoopers is matching the million a year in cash and in kind. The Universities of Melbourne, Queensland and Adelaide have committed cash to this venture.

The Collaborative Steering Committee which has representatives from AHMAC, AHWI, and PwC will determine the research strategy. A Partner Executive comprising Professor Peter Brooks, CEO of AHWI, Dr Anne-Marie Feyer, lead on this initiative for PwC and Professor Tony Scott, AHWI's Director of Research from the Melbourne Institute, the University of Melbourne, will be responsible for operationalising the strategy. A Research Committee is being established to oversee research. An

Innovation Think Tank is also to be established, and will be run by AHWI for the Collaboration. It will bring together jurisdictions, private sector, health professional and other organisations to assist to translate research into practice, organise input from industry and stakeholders into research, and to gather information on research needs.

The first year's work program is already underway, and it has 9 core and 2 supplementary projects. In the first year most of the work is workforce data modelling and analysis, with the majority of the work going to PwC; a flow on from work commenced before the Collaboration was established.

However, it is expected that the second year work program will have a greater focus on research to support the development of new models of care, and innovation in education.

## Interim Director's Update: A Vision for 2020

The Australian Health Workforce Institute was developed in 2007. It was apparent at this time that urgent action was needed to address Australia's impeding health workforce crisis.

In establishing the Institute, it was recognized that both the University of Queensland and the University of Melbourne had an important leadership role in working to ensure not only that future medical workers are well-trained, but also that the composition and structure of the health workforce will meet future demands.

### **A Growing Health Workforce Crisis**

While some sceptics express doubts about the depth of the problem, such doubts fly in the face of the facts:

- Nearly 10% of GDP is currently spent on health and this figure is likely to reach 20% by 2025
- 9% of Australians are already working in the health sector
- Australia lags behind countries such as the United States in supporting new health worker roles.
- The World Health Organization estimates a global shortfall of over 4.3 million health workers in the next decade.

As in most drastic scenarios, plenty of warning signals are available – it is imperative not only to heed these calls, but to ensure the continuance of an excellent health service for all Australians.

In the past, policy-making in the area of health workforce tended to respond to the demands of the moment, rather than looking at ways that things could be done more efficiently. AHWI helps Australian health policy makers by providing evidence on the best way to meet future workforce requirements.

### **The AHWI Advisory Board**

The AHWI Advisory Board has been established and a report on its progress to date follows.

The Board is chaired by Mr. Patrick Grier and comprises Prof. James Angus, Prof. Peter Brooks, Prof. Terry Nolan, Mr. Ian Harris, Prof. Robert Hendy, Dr. Katherine McGrath, Prof. Niki Ellis, Dr. Brendan Murphy, and Mr. William Higbie.

At its last meeting on 20 March 2009, I asked the Board to review AHWI's operating environment and strategy. The Board noted that health workforce is now a high priority research issue in Australia and recommended that AHWI should:

- Focus on providing evidence to inform policy making, both by drawing on international research and by developing and evaluating new models of care in Australia ('proof of concept')
- Use contract research opportunities afforded by the National Health Workforce Research and Planning Collaboration to build capacity, but balance this with independent investigator driven research
- Pursue funding to this end, for instance through a CRC application
- Stimulate and inform public debate, through its Think Tank function, but not advocate particular solutions.

I look forward to providing ongoing updates.

Peter Brooks  
Director (Interim)  
AHWI



*Prof. Peter Brooks  
Interim Director  
AHWI*

*"Nearly 10% of GDP is currently spent on health and this figure is likely to reach 20% by 2025"*

## NHWPRC Second Year Projects: Call for Researchers

AHWI needs to better define the capacity which exists in its network for health workforce research. Accordingly we would be interested to know of academics who are interested in working with us on:

- Developing new models of care
- Associated health workforce innovation
- Improving health workforce modelling.

*“Calls for Interest in Projects for the NHWT Second Year Projects on Education, Training and Innovation”*

If you are interested in working on any of these areas, please contact the institute [ahwi-gen@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:ahwi-gen@unimelb.edu.au) to register your interest.

### Inside AHWI: Professor Niki Ellis

Professor Niki Ellis has joined the Australian Health Workforce Institute to lead the University of Queensland Node.

Niki Ellis came back from London to Australia to take up the position of Foundation Professor and Director, Centre for Military and Veterans' Health at the University of Queensland, in April 2005..

In that role she led an exercise which was conducted over one year, working with the Departments of Defence and Veterans' Affairs and prominent futurist Professor Sohail Inayatullah. The result was a description of likely futures for military and veterans' health services delivery in 2020, and then by backcasting, determination of research and professional development priorities for now, if preferred futures are to be met, and non-preferred futures avoided.

In London from 2002 – 2005 Niki worked on health workforce innovation for London South Bank University and other aspects of health modernisation for the Department of Health.

She also had an honorary appointment at the Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine to develop work on the history of health promotion. In Australia she has been Director, Health Risk Management for PricewaterhouseCoopers; developed and run her own public and occupational health consultancy; Head, Preventive Strategies Branch, and Director, RSI National Strategy, National Occupational Health and Safety Commission, and medical officer Tasmanian Division of Public Health.

Niki was the Inaugural President of the Australasian Faculty of Occupational Medicine, has been a member of the World Health Organisation's Expert Panel on occupational health and was commissioned to write a text book by Oxford University Press: Work and health: management in Australia and New Zealand.

Niki has taken on the position of Deputy Director AHWI and will lead the University of Queensland node of AHWI



*Prof. Niki Brooks  
Deputy CEO  
Director, UQ Node  
AHWI*

## Institute Activities



For the past few months the focus of the institute has been negotiating the set up of the NHRPC; however there have been some several projects that have been conducted or commenced:

### Phone:

(03) 83449659

### Fax:

(03)93478939

### E-Mail:

gen-ahwi@unimelb.edu.au

**Sonography Workforce Project** for DHS Victoria – Prof. Peter Brooks (AHWI), Prof. Tony Scott, (Melbourne Institute), Prof. Vin Massaro (Massaro Consulting) and Ms. Lorraine Perry (Massaro Consulting)

**Foot and Ankle Elective Surgery Feasibility Study** for DHS Victoria - Prof. Vin Massaro (Massaro Consulting), Ms. Lorraine Perry (Massaro Consulting), Ms. Fiona Landgren (Project Health), Ms. Catherine Jones (Project Health), Ms. Jessie Murray (Project Health)

**A Study of the Australian Nurse Workforce for Kronos** – Prof. Peter Brooks (AHWI), Prof. Cathy Turner (UQ), Ms. Michele Sheumack (UQ), Mr. Brendan Moloney (AHWI)

**Health Career Frameworks Study** for the Health Skills Formation Strategy, Queensland - Ms. Georgia Savage (AHWI), Prof Niki Ellis, (UQ), Mr. Brendan Moloney (AHWI), Lucio Naccarella (AHWI)

### We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

<http://www.ahwi.edu.au/>

**Literature Review of Incentives for Primary Health Care Team Service Provision** (APCHRI -Dr. Lucio Naccarella)

**Perceptions of the role of the primary care generalist within multidisciplinary team care**, Victorian Cancer Agency, Dr. Lucio Naccarella

**Role of primary care organisations in primary care workforce reforms** for University of Melbourne, Dr. Lucio Naccarella)

### Recent Proposals:

**MSOD Dataset** Prof. Lesleyanne Hawthorne, (MU) Professor David Wilkinson (UQ), with input from Dr. Geoff McColl (Medical Education Unit, University of Melbourne).

**Allied Health Roles in Aged and Community Care** for Queensland Health: Prof. Niki Ellis (UQ), Prof. Helen Chenery (UQ), Prof. Len Gray (UQ) with PricewaterhouseCoopers

**Evaluation Framework For Health Services Innovation/North Lakes Project** for Queensland Health: Prof. Niki Ellis (UQ), Prof. Lynn Robinson (UQ)

## New! Upcoming Lecture Series

### University of Queensland

[Prof. Deb Humphris](#), University of Southampton, UK

Tues 4th Aug 11:00am

Interprofessional Learning: Optimising the Future Primary Health Care Workforce (APCHRI International Visiting Fellowship)  
Venue: University of Queensland

### ANU

[Prof. Debra Humphris](#), University of Southampton, UK

Wed 5th Aug, 2009, 11:00 (Provisional)

Title: Changing clinical care and primary health care workforce development  
Venue: APHCRI, Australian National University

The Australian Health Workforce Institute supports the following lectures in August:

### The University of Melbourne

[Prof. Deb Humphris](#), University of Southampton, UK

Time: Thurs, Aug 6 6pm-7pm

Title: Interprofessional Learning: Optimising the Future Primary Health Care Workforce (APCHRI International Visiting Fellowship)

Venue: Sunderland Theatre, Medical Building, The University of Melbourne

[Prof. Darlene Clark](#) and [Prof. Peter Clark](#), Penn State University

Time: Tuesday, 11th August 2009, 5:15-6:15pm

Giving Nurses' a Greater Voice in the Workplace: The Role of Nurses'

Unions In Improving The Quality Of Patient Care

Venue: TBC

## About AHWI:

**The Institute's aim is to deliver health workforce sustainability in Australia by 2020**