

## **PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION AND RESEARCH PROGRAM (PHERP)**

### **Round One Innovations: Priorities, Principles and Outcomes**

#### **Priorities**

Priority areas for the 1<sup>st</sup> PHERP Innovations round were identified by the Department – in consultation with the Australian Network for Academics in Public Health Institutions (ANAPHI) – and included:

- Locational Disadvantage;
- Health Economics;
- Health Risk Assessment;
- Indigenous Health;
- Health Social Sciences;
- Doctoral training in Public Health;
- Nutrition;
- Building applied skills in undergraduate and post-graduate education;
- Education Technology;
- Environmental Health; and
- Epidemiology.

#### **Principles**

The following principles were developed to assist with planning and preparation of expressions of interest for Innovations round 2:

- national priority;
- innovation;
- quality.
- collaboration between disciplines and between institutions;
- economies of scale;
- availability of additional funds; and
- arrangements for access and dissemination.

#### **Funding outcomes**

Following assessments, a number of proposals received funding support. That funding was not only provided through the PHERP Innovations pool, but also from supplementary funding to support projects of strategic interest to the Portfolio.

Projects offered funding in the 1<sup>st</sup> PHERP Innovations round are listed below in addition to the level of funding and the institutions involved in the projects.

### **Population Health Mentoring for General Practice Divisions**

**\$138,943**

*University of Adelaide; Flinders University of South Australia; South Australian Centre for Rural and Remote Health; South Australian Divisions of General Practice; and University of Queensland.*

The aim of the project is to enable staff from Divisions of General Practice to gain a sound understanding of public health concepts and knowledge relevant to their workplace duties using innovative mentorship arrangements that enhance their skills in problem solving and service development – there will be a particular emphasis on rural and regional divisions of general practice.

### **National Undergraduate Public Health Internship and Scholarship Scheme**

**\$356,014**

*University of Adelaide; Curtin University of Technology; University of Western Australia; and Queensland University of Technology*

The aim of the project is to enhance the responsiveness of undergraduate programs in Public Health to the needs of employers – the project aims to build a collaborative approach to undergraduate education in public health between the providers of public health education and health industry employers.

### **Providing Population Health Sectors support for the Primary Health Care Research Institute (PHCRI) \***

**\$126,000**

*Griffith University; Flinders University of South Australia; La Trobe University; University of Queensland; and University of New South Wales*

The aim of the project is to establish a network of academic Population Health expertise to provide input into the emerging Primary Care and research and dissemination agenda of the PHCRI.

The project implementation includes: the establishment of an academic Population Health network; recommendations for future directions for information dissemination; recommendations on mechanisms by which Population Health perspectives can be provided on Commonwealth Primary Care initiatives; identification of the scope of the Primary Care constituency with an interest in developing Population Health skills; recommendations for progressing an education agenda; and liaison and communication between the current disparate elements of the Primary Care sector.

### **Human Genetics and Public Health**

**\$84,683**

*University of Sydney; University of New South Wales and New South Wales Cancer Council*

The aim of the project is to develop a unique course unit on genetics and public health, providing essential genetic education to the widest possible audience of health professionals. It will provide future and current public health professionals with essential information about the role of genetics in disease, the potential for public health genetics to prevent disease and promote health, the applications of genetic epidemiology, the evaluation of genetic tests and the risks and benefits of genetic testing to individuals and populations.

**Leadership in Public Health: The Australian Curriculum \***  
**\$177,000**

*University of Western Australia*

This project has two major aims: improving Australia's research capacity and infrastructure (establishing the mechanisms and processes necessary to strengthen and enhance Australia's research capacity and infrastructure vis a vis socioeconomic health inequalities, and area disadvantage); and providing socioeconomic health inequalities work program to better inform policies and interventions.

**Regulatory Strategies in Public Health**  
**\$79,000**

*La Trobe University; Flinders University of South Australia; and Monash University*

This project will aim to contribute to improving the health of Australians through improved public health regulation as a consequence of more far-reaching and more widespread understanding of the principles and models of regulation in public health. The project includes the production of a monograph dealing with regulatory strategies in public health.

**Strengthening and Extending Australia's Research Capacity and Infrastructure as these Relate to Socioeconomic Health Inequalities and Area Disadvantage**  
**\$276,000**

*Queensland University of Technology; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare; National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health; and international partners (University of Michigan, Erasmus University, and University of Otago)*

This project has two major aims: *improving Australia's research capacity and infrastructure* (through establishing the mechanisms and processes necessary to strengthen and enhance Australia's research capacity and infrastructure vis-à-vis socioeconomic health inequalities, and area disadvantage, in particular); and *establishing a socioeconomic health inequalities work program to better inform policies and interventions*.

**National Web-based delivery of core components of a Master of Health Program**  
**\$180,000**

*University of New South Wales; University of Newcastle; and University of Sydney*

The aim of the innovations proposal is the flexible delivery of a Masters of Public Health program at a national and possibly international level, incorporating the use of web-based educational technology, a problem solving approach, collaboration and co-operation among students and teachers, a focus on teaching /learning strategies, quality assurance of content delivery; strengthening of technical, educational and academic expertise in information technology; overcoming institutional barriers; clarification of intellectual property issues; and building the workforce capacity of web-based educational technology.

\*Agreement is currently being finalised

### **Master in Health Services Research and Evaluation**

**\$150,000**

*University of Melbourne; Monash University; University of New South Wales; and Queensland University of Technology*

The proposal aims to develop a Masters degree in Health Services Research and Evaluation (MHSR&E) to be offered through distance education; to provide health services research training across Australia, and then throughout the Asia-Pacific area in order to: address the general absence of training in health services research; to support key Government policies by strengthening the national capacity of the professional health workforce in the field of health services research; and to foster innovation in education through delivery by syndicated courses and /or distance education.

### **Flexible Education Options for International Health in Australia**

**\$50,000**

*Australian Centre for International and Tropical Health and Nutrition (University of Queensland and Queensland Institute of Medical Research); and University of New South Wales*

The project aims to plan for the development of high quality coursework consistent with the best Australian and International standards in International Health that can be delivered flexibly and accessed by any Australian institution offering post-graduate training in public health. The project has the objective of documenting a strategy for the ongoing development of International Health education.

### **Locational Disadvantage**

#### **Locational Disadvantage: Strengthening the capacity of the Rural Public Health Workforce**

**\$266,440**

*University of Western Australia; Curtin University of Technology; Combined Universities Centre for Rural Health*

The project will address the need for: valid and reliable instruments to: measure public health capacity and to assess gaps; enhance workforce education and training programs for rural public health practitioners; build workforce capacity in rural public health; track and evaluate improvements in rural public health policy; enhance public health research capacity in rural areas; and “promote, develop and support actions to improve the health status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other vulnerable groups.”

#### **Locational Disadvantage: A focus on place to improve health**

**\$201,270**

*University of New South Wales; University of Sydney; University of Western Sydney; and New South Wales*

The aims of the project are: to develop a standard protocol and a generic assessment framework in order to assess workforce development needs as they relate to locational disadvantage; to describe what is known about the causes and dimensions of locational disadvantage and its impact on health; to review best practice; to identify skills and current training programs; to identify implications of these findings for workforce needs assessments; to undertake an assessment of workforce development needs to address locational disadvantage across New South Wales; to identify opportunities and constraints in developing the identified workforce; and to recommend strategies for workforce development.

## **Indigenous Health**

### **Aligning undergraduate public health education to the National Competencies Standards for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers**

**\$180,000**

*James Cook University of North Queensland*

The project aims to enhance the capacity of health services to address the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Targets through the development and provision of undergraduate and vet sector public health training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers. The training will be aligned with the core national competency standards for Aboriginal health workers, to bring about tangible improvements in the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

### **The Development of Short Courses in the Economics of Indigenous Health**

**\$36,200**

*Curtin University of Technology; Health Department of Western Australia; and Queensland Health*

The project aims to: develop a greater understanding of economic issues in the area of Indigenous health in the public health workforce; develop requisite workforce skills through presenting suitable short course materials in an appropriately packaged form; make available materials on Indigenous health and Indigenous management courses at various Australian institutions; and allow easier and better promulgation of government policies on Indigenous health.

### **Public Health Education and Training in the Northern Territory: A focus on Indigenous and Remote Health**

**\$558,000**

*Menzies School of Health Research; Northern Territory University; Territory Health Services; Centre for Remote Health; Batchelor Institute for Indigenous Tertiary Education; and Co-operative Research Centre for Aboriginal and Tropical Health*

This project seeks to develop and maintain a coordinated approach to public health education and training in the Northern Territory. It will facilitate the further development of postgraduate training in public health in the Northern Territory and rationalise current course content by providing a sharp focus on Indigenous, rural and remote public health education relevant to the specific needs of the Northern Territory and remote Australia.

### **Developing the Indigenous Health professional workforce: Career pathways for Indigenous students through the education sector**

**\$200,000**

*Australian Centre for International and Tropical Health and Nutrition (University of Queensland; and the Queensland Institute of Medical Research)*

The project aims to increase the size and quality of the Indigenous public health workforce available to communities throughout Northern Queensland, in the first instance, and later throughout Queensland and Australia generally. It will address the issue of equity of access of Indigenous people: to tertiary study; to graduation; and to appropriate career pathways.

**Northern and Central Australian Consortium Feasibility Study for Public Health Training on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Rural and Remote Health \***

**\$150,000**

*James Cook University of North Queensland; Northern Territory University; and Menzies School of Health Research*

The project aims to develop a strategic plan for public health education and research for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health, Rural and Remote health in Northern & Central Australia. It involves: an examination of existing public health education and research on Northern & Central Australia for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Rural & Remote Health; a needs analysis in relation to the establishment of a virtual faculty of public health education, training and research for Northern & Central Australia; and the provision of evidence to support the establishment of the proposed faculty.

**Health Risk Assessment**

**Australian Centre for Health Risk Assessment**

**\$600,000**

*Monash University; National Research Centre for Environmental Toxicology; Griffith University; and Flinders University of South Australia*

The project aims to develop a collaborative national Centre capable of providing national leadership in developing Health Risk Assessment for applications in the Australian policy and program environment through: facilitating partnerships in multisectoral collaborations; education and training programs to foster a critical mass of Health Risk Assessment expertise among stakeholders; critically appraising the scientific underpinning of quantitative Health Risk Assessment; assessing the relevance of overseas information for Australian settings; analysing scientific, social and economic factors required to inform policy; and building research capacity to better apply Health Risk Assessment analyses in the Australian setting.

**Health Impact Assessment: A tool for policy development in Australia**

**\$94,271**

*Deakin University*

The aim of the project is to develop an understanding of HIA as a tool for policy development in the Australian context—the strengths/weaknesses, obstacles and limitations, opportunities, lessons learned from overseas and potential appropriate applications—and to identify the training and capacity building needs of the public health workforce.

**Health Economics**

**International Health Economics: A distance education course**

**\$30,000**

*Monash University*

The aim of the project is to develop a one semester subject (80 hours of study) in International Health Economics by distance education. The subject is to be developed in 2001 for delivery in a number of public health and health economics courses within Australia in 2002. In addition to a range of subjects in health economics, the course will offer a subject in the economics of health in developing countries.

## **Development of Web-based Health Economics modules for postgraduate teaching in Public Health**

**\$70,926**

*Curtin University of Technology; University of Sydney; University of Newcastle; Monash University; New South Wales Health Department; and Health Department of Western Australia*

The aim of the project is to build on the current graduate Diploma in Health Economics offered at The University of Sydney, by developing web based health economics modules and adapting four modules for Masters of Public Health programs; and to develop four existing introductory health economics modules and two new health economics modules for distance learning. These modules will primarily be suitable for use in postgraduate public health teaching programs within Australia.

## **Health Social Sciences**

### **Comparative and historical study of Health systems \***

**\$40,000**

*La Trobe University; University of Queensland; University of Melbourne; and University of New South Wales*

An on-line study unit will be developed focusing on the comparative and historical study of health systems with associated resources and support arrangements (including a regular module on comparative and historical study of health systems to be included in the La Trobe Public Health Summer School). The resource will be piloted at La Trobe and made available to other public health centres, either through on-line delivery or as a resource package for local delivery.

## **Nutrition**

### **Advanced study and training in Public Health Nutrition**

**\$162,000**

*Menzies School of Health Research; and Flinders University of South Australia*

The project aims to develop a nationally recognised process for ensuring a highly skilled public health nutrition workforce by identifying key knowledge and skills for a national Doctorate in Public Health Nutrition and developing this program within three participating universities.

## **Education Technology**

### **Development of On-line subject on the Australian Health Care System**

**\$33,200**

*La Trobe University; and University of New South Wales*

The aim of the project is to improve practitioners', managers' and policy makers' knowledge of the Australian Health Care System. Its implementation involves: development of an introductory on-line MPH subject; incorporation of links to latest available data through Australian websites; a pilot study involving 20 students; evaluation and revision prior to offering subject to MPH students; and raising the level of understanding of comparative and historical perspectives on health system operations and development among health policy analysts.

\* Agreement is currently being finalised

## **Environmental Health**

### **Advancing the Adoption of the Principles of Sustainable Development into Public Health Teaching and Research Programs**

**\$230,000**

*Griffith University; University of Western Sydney; and University of New South Wales*

The project aims to promote the integration of the Principles of Sustainable Development and Public Health throughout Australian public health teaching and research programs. The project will: explore connections between environmental sustainability and public health research and practice; conduct an innovative, collaborative, exploratory workshop to establish a network of PHERP institutions with an interest in the connections between Australian environmental conditions and public health practice and research; and produce resource materials for Public Health and other relevant courses throughout Australia.

## **Epidemiology**

### **Development of a distance-based delivery for Advanced Epidemiology coursework, allowing students nationally to take such subjects**

**\$96,000**

*University of Melbourne; and Monash University*

The project aims: to coordinate the existing Australian expertise and produce distance modules for the flexible delivery of subjects in advanced epidemiology and applied biostatistics; and to produce suitably qualified personnel in advanced epidemiology as support for Public Health research activities in Australia through offering advanced epidemiology subjects nationally through a distance mode, allowing more students to take advantage of existing academic expertise in epidemiology.

### **Development of two courses in Molecular and Genetic Epidemiology**

**\$26,000**

*University of Newcastle; University of Tasmania; University of Melbourne; Macquarie University; Queensland Institute of Medical Research; and Australian National University*

The aim of the project is to develop the modules for a Genetic Epidemiology course, and to review and further develop the modules for a Molecular Epidemiology course. The two courses are to be offered to students nationally through the Public Health Education & Research Program (PHERP) or through participating institutions.