



GREATER HEALTH GREATER GREEN TRIANGLE

University Department of Rural Health

Strategic Plan 2008-2011

Networking for Greater Health

A Flinders University and Deakin University Partnership



Funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing



Introduction

The Greater Green Triangle University Department of Rural Health (GGT UDRH, *Greater Health*) is a successful partnership between Flinders University and Deakin University that continues to grow in strength with the combined support of the Australian Government's UDRH and Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation and Development (PHCRED) programs, and other funded programs.

The GGT UDRH now has a very strong presence in the Greater Green Triangle region with offices in Hamilton, Mt Gambier and Warrnambool and a dispersed network of innovative multi-disciplinary student support, teaching and research sites embedded throughout the region and in metropolitan Victoria and South Australia.

Our research program continues to be driven by contemporary health issues and has evolved to focus on research on the chronic diseases, diabetes, depression and cardiovascular disease; quality improvement in health service delivery; and, workforce issues related to the recruitment and retention of health professionals.

The GGT UDRH runs a high profile research program having recently been awarded its first category 1 NHMRC grant and the first ever rurally-based Chief Investigator on a NHMRC grant. We continue to influence the national agenda for health. The GGT UDRH led work which, in 2006, saw the Council of Australian Government (COAG) initiative to improve mental health lead to funding of a rural mental health academic program for each UDRH in Australia. In 2007, COAG announced a \$200 million initiative to prevent diabetes. The component aimed at reducing the risk of people progressing to diabetes was based on the Greater Green Triangle Diabetes Prevention Initiative. This national demonstrator has meant that we are now highly competitive and internationally recognised in the areas of diabetes prevention.

Also of national significance is our work on depression in collaboration with *beyondblue*, the National Depression Initiative and other partners. The *True Blue* project is part of this and is the first trial of coordinated care in co-morbid depression to be undertaken in Australia.

We also have an extensive education and training program focussing on continuing professional education for medical, allied and other health professionals, research capacity building for primary health care workers, and academic programs for both pharmacists and mental health professionals.

The GGT UDRH also runs a successful Student Support program that provides support for undergraduate and postgraduate students undertaking clinical or research placements in the Greater Green Triangle region and continues to support a large number of students from a range of disciplines and universities across the country.

All our programs bring together national and international academic institutions, health agencies, professional organisations and community groups to promote "Greater Health" in the region and beyond, and to ensure long-term benefits and practical outcomes for the community at large.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James Dunbar".

Professor James Dunbar
Director
GGT UDRH

The Challenge

'Greater Health' throughout the Greater Green Triangle region and beyond.

Our Vision

To be recognised as a centre for excellence in health service, public health and workforce research and health professional education.

Our Mission

To create a 'network for excellence' in health service, public health and workforce research and health professional education.

Our Core Commitments

- Recruitment and retention of health and other professionals through collaboration with academic institutions, health agencies and private practitioners
 - National and international collaboration with other academic institutions, including other UDRHs, and health agencies to enlarge our research and education foot print
 - Focus on chronic disease prevention to improve understanding and management of diabetes, depression and cardiovascular disease
 - Quality, readily-accessible professional education and support programs for health professionals in the region
 - Support of students from a diversity of health professional disciplines and tertiary institutions
 - Increased student numbers on clinical placement based on workforce and supervisory capacity
 - Quality, well-supported clinical placements for students
 - Promoting understanding of Aboriginal health and culture in collaboration with the Aboriginal communities of the region
 - Developing, supporting and evaluating innovative models of service delivery
 - Excellence in Information Technology
 - Promoting the diversity and extent of UDRH activities
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Our Approach

- Quality driven
 - Collaborative
 - Health-focussed
 - Evidence-based
 - Inter-professional
 - Primary care-based
 - Cross cultural
 - Innovative
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Funding

Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing University Department of Rural Health funding:

Aus\$4.9 Million (GST exclusive), 1 July 2008 - 30 June 2011

Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing Primary Health Care Research Evaluation and Development funding:

Aus\$448,000 (GST exclusive), 1 January 2008 – 31 December 2009

Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing University Department of Rural Health Mental Health funding:

Aus\$274,000 (GST exclusive), 1 July 2008 – 30 June 2010

Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing (via the Pharmacy Guild of Australia) Pharmacy Academics at University Department of Rural Health (PAUDRH) funding:

Aus\$160,000 (GST exclusive), 1 January 2008 – 31 December 2009

The GGT UDRH will continue to identify other sources of funding necessary to meet its objectives and to ensure long-term viability.

Program Overview

The Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing developed the UDRH program to improve recruitment and retention of the rural and remote health workforce and to enhance the community's capacity to deal with the associated health issues.

The GGT UDRH will achieve program objectives through research, evaluation, education and training as outlined on pages 7-13.

Partnership Structure

The GGT UDRH is a partnership between Flinders and Deakin Universities. Flinders University is the signatory to the Australian Government's Department of Health and Ageing Agreement.

Board of Management

Greater Health is overseen by a Board of Management, comprising:

Professor John Catford	Dean, Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences, Deakin University (Chair)
Professor Michael Kidd	Executive Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, Flinders University
MsDiane Petchell	Director, Health Strategies Branch, Victorian State Office, Department of Health and Ageing
Proxy Ms Karen Large	Assistant Director, Health Strategies Branch, Victorian State Office, Department of Health and Ageing
Mr Grant King	Chief Executive Officer, Limestone Coast Regional Development Board & Executive Officer of Regional Development South Australia
Dr Peter Chapman	Chief Medical Advisor, Country Health South Australia
Ms Maree Guyatt	Director, Rural Health, Department of Human Services - Victoria
Ms Sue Cameron	Head Speech Therapy, Western District Health Services, Hamilton, Victoria
<i>TBA</i>	Indigenous Representative
Ms Carolyn Siddel	Second-year medical student, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences, School of Medicine, Deakin University
Ms Anne Hoey	Third-year medical student, Faculty of Health Sciences, School of Medicine, Flinders University

Mr Tony Podpera, from the Regional Training Models Section, Medical Education Branch, Mental Health and Workforce Division, regularly attends Board of Management meetings as a representative of the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

The Board of Management is responsible for compliance with the Australian Government Agreement, and in doing so sets strategic goals, confirms operational goals and financial targets and oversees the Director's performance.



Objective 1: Increase and improve rural experiences including training to encourage cultural awareness and sensitivity to Indigenous health issues, for undergraduate students in the health professions.

- 1.1 Promote the value of rural practice and rural clinical and/or research placements to all undergraduate and postgraduate health professional students placed in the GGT region.
- 1.2 Promote the GGT UDRH as an organisation which supports students, academics, clinical supervisors and health services by provision of high quality rural clinical experience.
- 1.3 Develop partnerships with rural, regional and state-based health services and partner and non-partner university schools to improve the quality of the teaching and learning environment for students undertaking rural clinical experience.
- 1.4 Collaborate with partner and non-partner universities to develop longer and/or flexible length student placements where appropriate.
- 1.5 Ensure that all students undertaking rural clinical and/or research placements are provided with relevant information and/or participate in preparation and orientation programs before placement.
- 1.6 Offer cultural awareness training for all students undertaking placements in the GGT region in collaboration with local Aboriginal communities.
- 1.7 Promote existing scholarships and other incentives to increase equity between rural and urban students.
- 1.8 Maintain a positive teaching environment by enhancing the skills of clinical supervisors; fostering evidence-based clinical settings and providing access to educational and information technology resources.
- 1.9 Undertake evaluative research designed to improve the quality of rural clinical placement for students, university teachers, clinical supervisors and rural health services.

Objective 2: Expand educational opportunities relevant to rural and remote practice, in particular in relation to existing rural and remote health professionals and Indigenous students.

- 2.1 Provide education and training opportunities and workshops for health professionals on a regional and national basis in identified priority areas – these areas will include allied health via the Statewide Allied Health Workforce Education Program (SAHWEP); mental health via the University Department of Rural Mental Health project, and; pharmacy via the Pharmacy Academics at University Department's of Rural Health (PAUDRH) program.
- 2.2 Provide flexible access for rural and remote health professionals to high quality, relevant and responsive continuing education, networking and peer-support opportunities.
- 2.2 Support the clinical practice links of GGT UDRH staff.
- 2.3 Provide support for rural and regional health professionals to enrol in research higher degrees in partner universities and, where relevant, non-partner universities, including promotion of research scholarships and financial support opportunities.
- 2.4 Strengthen and develop links with urban-based academics and research groups to provide a stronger foundation for research-based placements.
- 2.5 Strengthen and develop core infrastructure within the region, in order to provide an environment that urban-based professionals and health professional students will find attractive and will want to work in or undertake clinical placement in.
- 2.6 Offer cultural awareness training in partnership with local Aboriginal communities for all GGT UDRH staff and health service providers working in the GGT region.

Objective 3: Undertake research into rural and remote health issues, including publication of papers and reports and applying for research grants and consultancies.

- 3.1 Recruit senior academics and experienced research staff to coordinate research programs within the GGT UDRH.
- 3.2 Strengthen and develop links with national and international academics and other research groups to provide greater research capacity through a stronger foundation for collaborative research; improved grant competitiveness and greater recognition of the Department's research interests and strengths.
- 3.3 Strengthen and develop infrastructure within the region, in order to provide an environment that urban-based academics will find attractive and will want to work and/or undertake research in.
- 3.4 Participate in the Australian Government's Primary Health Care Research Evaluation and Development (PHCRED), Pharmacy Academic (PAUDRH) and Rural Mental Health programs.
- 3.5 Build research capacity within the GGT UDRH and the Greater Green Triangle region through collaborative research with professional associations and local and regional health service providers.
- 3.6 Build research capacity within the GGT UDRH and the Greater Green Triangle region through mentorship, supervision and provision of training to health professionals interested in research careers and early- to mid-career researchers.
- 3.7 Collect and use health-related data from the region to develop evidence-based plans and create networks for improved outcomes in health.
- 3.8 Secure high-profile externally-funded research grants.
- 3.9 Regularly run staff development and training sessions aimed at improving academic staff publication output.
- 3.10 Publish research in books, book chapters, and refereed articles.
- 3.11 Disseminate research findings widely at national and international conferences and other venues.
- 3.12 Promote research scholarships and financial support opportunities in the Greater Green Triangle region and elsewhere in collaboration with the GGT UDRH.

Objective 4: Provide training and support for rural health professionals (including mentors, supervisors and preceptors), consumers and communities, including Indigenous communities;

- 4.1 Develop and implement professional development models to support educational needs of rural professionals, including clinical supervision, network and peer support needs, via programs including the Statewide Allied Health Workforce Education Program (SAHWEP), University Department of Rural Mental Health project, and Pharmacy Academic at University Department's of Rural Health (PAUDRH) program.
- 4.2 Collaborate with the partner universities, relevant health agencies and professional bodies to ensure rural preceptors have access to adequate training and support to meet requirements.
- 4.3 Provide workshops for all health providers with responsibility for student supervision.
- 4.4 Develop flexible and innovative learning tools and resources for clinical supervisor training.
- 4.5 Increase on-line access to Deakin University and Flinders University library resources at regional campuses.
- 4.6 Increase access to Deakin University and Flinders University staff development and training programs.
- 4.7 Develop a strong infrastructure that can provide support and mentoring for rural health professionals.
- 4.8 Promote GGT UDRH expertise in research and professional development.
- 4.9 Establish partnerships with health service providers to develop strategies for attracting and retaining clinicians in the region.
- 4.10 Recruit new preceptors.

Objective 5: Contribute to innovation in education, research and service development through collaborations with universities, health services and professional and community organisations including Indigenous communities.

- 5.1 Establish an approach to education, research and service activities that extends outside of the Greater Green Triangle region for the benefit of all Australians.
- 5.2 Develop an innovative model of a distributed, embedded network-based management structure that enables staff to be located at the most appropriate sites and still participate fully in all activities of the GGT UDRH.
- 5.3 Promote the GGT UDRH as a highly competitive and internationally recognised organisation with research strengths in diabetes prevention and chronic disease management.
- 5.4 Strengthen the UDRH network.
- 5.5 Strengthen and develop links with national and international academics and other research groups to provide greater research capacity through collaborative research.
- 5.6 Develop strong alliances with the Flinders University, Deakin University and other university faculties of health sciences, through delivery of education, supervision of all higher degree students and health professionals, and other means.
- 5.7 Play an active role in the recruitment of health professionals in association with relevant health agencies, government and non government organisations.

Objective 6: Embrace a strong public or population health focus; and contribute to the development of innovative service delivery models in rural and remote health.

- 6.1 Establish a national and international reputation as a leader in diabetes prevention through partnerships with the National Institute of Health and Welfare Finland, the Victorian and South Australian Governments, Diabetes Australia and other institutions and organisations.
- 6.2 In collaboration with health professionals, academics and communities develop models of operation for identified population health priorities.
- 6.3 Collect and use health-related data from the region to develop evidence-based plans and create networks for improved outcomes in population health.
- 6.4 Develop partnerships with health service providers in order to strengthen their public health activity and hence ensure that service activity includes a public health focus.
- 6.5 Provide public health information in the support programs for all students on clinical placement in the Greater Green Triangle region.
- 6.6 Deliver workshops on relevant health topics for preceptors and health service providers via programs including the Statewide Allied Health Workforce Education Program (SAHWEP), University Department of Rural Mental Health project, and Pharmacy Academics at University Department's of Rural Health (PAUDRH) program.
- 6.7 Develop innovative models of service delivery within allied health and mental health.

Objective 7: Endeavour to progress the rural health agenda within the medical and other health sciences faculties or departments to maximise the efficient use of resources provided for a range of rural health programs. These programs include, but are not limited to, the Rural Undergraduate Support and Coordination program, the Primary Health Care Research Education Development program and the Rural Clinical Schools program.

- 7.1 Collaboration and partnership between the GGT UDRH, the Faculty of Health Sciences at Flinders University and the Faculty of Health, Medicine, Nursing and Behavioural Sciences at Deakin University, the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, Country Health SA, the Victorian Department of Human Services, Divisions of General Practice, other health professional bodies and other UDRHs.
- 7.2 Adopt a leadership role and promote rural health issues within the health faculties at the partner universities.
- 7.3 Develop innovative service delivery models that promote equity between rural and urban academics, whilst simultaneously promoting collaboration, networking and mentorship opportunities.
- 7.4 Strengthen partnership arrangements with the Rural and Remote Health Cluster at Flinders University and Deakin University's School of Medicine and Population Health Research, Evaluation and Policy Cluster, including opportunity for con-joint appointments, research and teaching.
- 7.5 Collaborate with clinicians to support discipline-specific programs, including the Statewide Allied Health Workforce Education Program, the University Department of Rural Mental Health project and Pharmacy Academic program.



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