

RESEARCH CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE – 2009 BUSINESS PLAN



Spencer Gulf Rural Health School (SGRHS)

A joint initiative of the University of South Australia and University of Adelaide

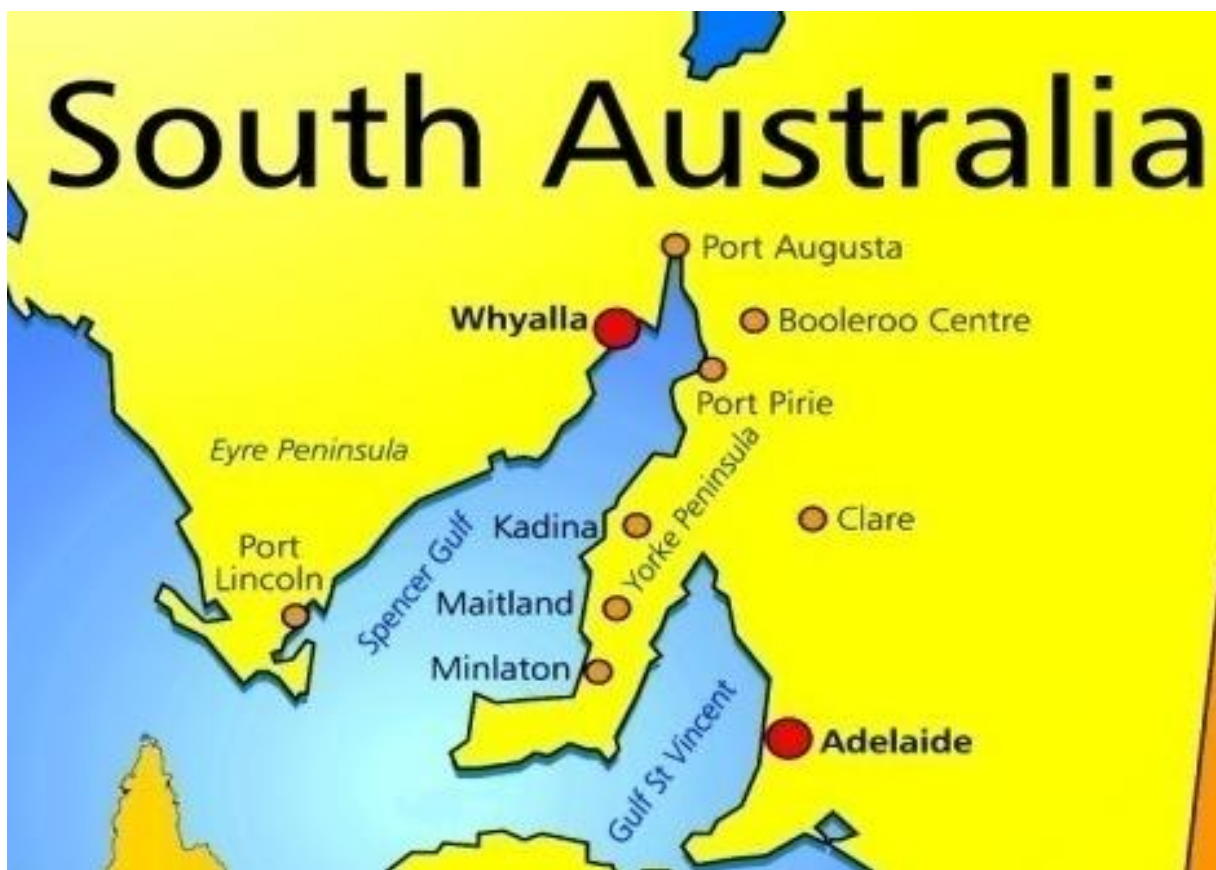
Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation & Development (PHCRED) Strategy

INTRODUCTION

The Spencer Gulf Rural Health School (SGRHS) is a regional school of health science created as a joint initiative of the University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia. The SGRHS comprises a multi-disciplinary team of experienced health professionals and key support staff. Staff have a range of backgrounds including medicine, nursing, pharmacy, physiotherapy, mental health, Aboriginal health, social work, administration, business and finance, public service, education, and information technology.

The purpose of the SGRHS is to “... *conduct education and research to improve the health of rural and remote communities...*” It does this by providing quality placements for undergraduate and post graduate students; by assisting in the planning and establishment of effective models of health service delivery; by conducting research and evaluation to improve the health of rural South Australians, and; by providing education, training and support of existing health professionals in the region.

The SGRHS also provides a wide range of consultancy and support services to the rural and remote health sector and has experience in many health service areas including Aboriginal Health Services. SGRHS activities include research and consultancy, education and training, and facilitation of clinical service delivery. SGRHS' research work has a population health focus with activity in the areas of chronic disease, including self-management and peer support, Aboriginal health, mental health and community participation in health. SGRHS is an affiliate of the Australian Technology Network Centre for Metabolic Fitness (ATN CMF), the Nutritional Physiology Research Centre (NPRC) and is a partner in the Centre for Rural Health and Community Development (CRHaCD). The SGRHS is also affiliated with a national network of rural researchers, clinicians and academics through FRAME and ARHEN which represent the national network of Rural Clinical Schools and University Departments of Rural Health, respectively.



The administrative and research concentrations of the school are located in Whyalla at the Whyalla campus of the University of South Australia. SGRHS has a number of learning centres that have been established in association with a number of primary and secondary health care services of SA's Eyre and Yorke Peninsula's including at Port Lincoln, Pt Augusta, Pt Pirie, Clare, Kadina and Maitland.

The SGRHS in association with the Whyalla campus has established state of the art facilities for assessing body composition (Lunar Prodigy DEXA), physical and cardiovascular fitness (Cardiac profiler) and has a fully equipped gymnasium that provides facilities to enable implementation of guided aerobic and resistance training and exercise. Current SGRHS areas of research interest include:

- Prevalence of chronic disease and chronic disease risk factors including the familial, socio cultural and environmental determinants of chronic disease, chronic disease risk factors and health behaviours;
- Community based studies to counter overweight and obesity and mitigate risk factors of chronic disease (CVD, diabetes, respiratory disease);
- Implementation and impact of community based chronic disease self-management programs, including in mental health, and their integration into mainstream health services;
- Quality use of medicines in rural communities;
- Men's health and endocrinology of male ageing;
- Epidemiology of rural stroke and lung disease;
- Child and maternal health and early detection and management of chronic disease in Aboriginal communities;
- Factors that influence community participation in health and the health of rural communities;
- Rural Health Workforce.

Whyalla is South Australia's second largest regional town with the only University Campus (UniSA) outside Adelaide with a health focus. Whyalla has the largest percentage of people over the age of 65 in SA outside Adelaide, a proportion of Aboriginal people above the State average and a mix of some 60 ethnic groups. The population has higher than State average rates of obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer. Being generally representative of the SA population profile it is expected that successful models, programs and other outputs from research in Whyalla will be applicable to other regions in South Australia and beyond.

Centre for Rural Health and Community Development (CRHaCD)

SGRHS is also a partner in the Centre for Rural Health and Community Development. CRHaCD (CRHaCD), a University of South Australia research centre, that has 9 core researchers, three research fellows, and more than 30 additional members, most of whom are CRE or SGRHS academic or research staff, receives performance-based infrastructure funding from UniSA and project funding from government, industry, non-government organisations, Cooperative Research Centres, the Australian Research Council, and other Australian Competitive Grant programs. The Centre is based at Whyalla Campus and has researchers at other locations in rural South Australia, including Mount Gambier and Port Lincoln.

The CRHaCD has three research themes and 11 research programs. More information about the programs can be found at <http://www.unisa.edu.au/cre/CRHCD/default.asp>.

The PHCRED program at the Spencer Gulf Rural Health School is located within the SGRHS Research Strategy and is central to the Centre for Rural Health and Community Development (CRHaCD). Associate Professor Gary Misan who is Head of Research at SGRHS will be responsible for the SGRHS PHCRED Program in 2009. It is envisaged that Dr Rupesh Goel will continue as SGRHS Co-ordinator into 2009.

In 2009, it is anticipated that the SGRHS PHCRED program will provide support to community based researchers and prospective higher degree research students (HDR) in the SGRHS catchment which includes learning centres located in South Australia's Yorke Peninsula, Mid-North, Spencer Gulf, Barossa Valley and Eyre Peninsula. Target groups for the program include:

- General Practitioners and Divisions of General Practice
- Aboriginal communities, organisations and individuals involved in health development (health development is defined as community-based primary health care, health promotion and primary prevention activities);
- Nurses, allied health practitioners, health managers, health planners, community-based specialists;
- Community residents involved in health development, and;
- Primary health care undergraduate and honours students.

The SGRHS PHCRED program is well placed for continuing success given the existing networks and collaborative relationships with early/mid career researchers and policy makers in our region. We have strong partnerships with the University of Adelaide's Faculty of Health Sciences, University of South Australia's Division of Health Sciences and the UniSA Centre for Rural Health and Community Development. The program will continue to identify and support individuals with potential to become competent and productive primary health care researchers. By aligning the PHCRED program with the SGRHS research strategy, opportunities for collaboration and links between rural health and PHC research practice and policy, will be strengthened.

The SGRHS PHCRED strategies for 2009 are consistent with the national PHCRED objectives and include:

- Up-skilling early or mid career researchers to produce high quality primary health care research;
- Supporting the advancement of sustainable careers in primary health care research;
- Conducting policy and practice relevant research in specific topic areas, and;
- Pursuing the uptake of research into policy by relevant organisations.

The strategy includes the appointment of up to three part time Research Development Placements (RDPs) with at least one expected to be combining primary care practice with the part time research placement. The RDPs will work under the supervision of experienced academic researchers. Structured research education will be offered with topics including: research appreciation, research design, data collection, survey design, ethics, focus groups, grant writing, report writing, quantitative and qualitative analysis, introductory statistics, writing for publication and program evaluation.

SGRHS also plans to offer professional development research bursaries and small research grants that will provide opportunities for primary health practitioners, policy makers and early – mid career researchers to undertake research related training, attend a conference or conduct research.

Indigenous research capacity building will remain a focus of our activities and we will action this in part by the continuing employment of at least one Aboriginal research assistant as part of the SGRHS PHCRED program.

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OBJECTIVE 1: To increase the pool of primary health care researchers by up-skilling early-mid career researchers and supporting the sustainable advancement of research careers in primary health care

STRATEGIES	ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS
<p>Providing learning opportunities to early or mid career researchers to conduct high quality research¹ in Primary Health Care</p>	<p>Disseminate information about the research capacity building program to primary health care practitioners and policy makers throughout the Spencer Gulf Region.</p> <p>Recruit and appoint RDP's</p> <p>Devise an individualised research capacity building plan for each RDP participant, including learning outcomes and resources required</p> <p>RDP's to complete pre and post placement questionnaires</p> <p>Provide information about formal research training opportunities available e.g., JCU, QUT, Menzies etc</p> <p>Encourage RDP's to undertake at least one formal study module offering credit towards a research qualification e.g.,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative methods • Quantitative methods • Research design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compendium of promotional material and activity record • Number of RDP's recruited • Individualised development Plan for each RDP. • Completed pre and post placement questionnaire. • Number enrolled in formal research training

¹ Research refers to research evaluation and research

	<p>Provide financial assistance for primary health care practitioners to attend research related conference or training</p> <p>Provide research education and training including in grant writing and writing for publication, preparation of posters, research methods, statistics</p> <p>Organise CRHaCD Research education activities e.g., Journal Club/Research forum etc promoting research..</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and details of research bursaries and grants provided / awarded. • Number and details of research training conducted, including details of attendees • List of Journal Club Activities in 2009 and attendance. • CRHaCD 2009 research seminar program and attendance.
<p>Support the sustainable advancement of PHC research careers.</p>	<p>Foster collaboration to undertake primary healthcare research with local health services.</p> <p>Support people to present their research at scientific meetings/ seminars/ Forums (local/ state/ national) including CRHaCD</p> <p>Prepare and disseminate information regarding the SGRHS, PHCRED and CRHaCD research opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of collaborative research projects and grant applications.. • Number and details of people supported to present their research. • Number of HDR and PHC practitioners information sessions • Information about details of information sent to Division of General Practice and Country health SA.

<p>Support the sustainable advancement of Indigenous / Aboriginal PHC research careers</p>	<p>Continue to support the employment of at least one Aboriginal research position in 2009 (Full time/ Fractional/ Part Time) as required.</p> <p>Supporting local Aboriginal people in development of Aboriginal health research skills e.g., CCRE Research methods course,</p> <p>Mentoring at least two Aboriginal health workers in the practical application of research methods.</p> <p>Encourage inclusion of Aboriginal health research presentation on CRHaCD research seminar program.</p> <p>Identifying areas with UniSA Indigenous Academic Advisor (Eugene Warrior) to promote research.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of support for Aboriginal research position(s) positions • Details of support for Aboriginal research skill development • Number of Aboriginal health workers mentored in application of research methods. • CRHaCD 2009 research seminar program • Promotional material targeting Aboriginal PHC practitioners • Number of Indigenous research students receiving in-kind or other support from PHCRED.
<p>Support the SA/NT/GGT Collaboration</p>	<p>Attend Collaboration meetings</p> <p>Support State Annual Event</p> <p>Contribute to training workshops in research methodologies with the State Collaboration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of 4 Collaboration meetings noting SGRHS contribution • Number of presentations and SGRHS staff at the Annual Event. • Number of RDPs collaboration training events.

OBJECTIVE 2: To support early-MID career researchers to undertake more high quality primary health care research and ensure its relevance to policy and practice by aligning it with identified needs and priorities.

STRATEGIES	ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS
<p>Increase the amount of industry and policy driven research undertaken by RCBI by early-mid career researchers</p>	<p>Collaborate with one or more of the following to undertake policy relevant primary health care research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country Health South Australia (CHSA) • Division of General Practice (DGP) • Home and Community Care (HACC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records of meetings held with Country Health SA, HACC, DGP and their funded agencies that include discussions about research related strategies and collaborative projects.
<p>Conduct high quality and policy relevant collaborative research in line with National, State and Local Government health priorities</p>	<p>Undertake at least one project in collaboration with other university departments/health services or other industry partners in at least one of the following priority areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cardiovascular health including stroke • Cancer • Asthma • Diabetes • Chronic health conditions • Arthritis • Mental Health • Injury prevention and Control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of grant applications submitted • Number of successful applications • Number of collaborative research projects • Details of priority health area project(s) undertaken.

OBJECTIVE 3: To disseminate and facilitate the uptake of evidence in policy and practice.

STRATEGIES	ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS
<p>Promote research that contributes to policy at a regional, State and National level</p>	<p>Promote at least one community partnership for health development in regional Australia to inform policy.</p> <p>Provide support for dissemination of PHCRED (including RDP) related research findings in relevant forums.</p> <p>Promote local researchers areas of expertise to policy makers to encourage their inclusion on working parties and as consultants for evidence based practice and policy</p> <p>Distribute information about local, state and national PHC research activity and forward this to local, State and Federal PHC policy makers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and details of partnerships promoted. • PHCRED (including RDP) publications, conference abstracts, papers publications, seminar presentations and information sheets with explicit implications for health policy. • Participation in working parties to implement changed practices/policies • Number of collaborations with regional health service personnel with a focus on uptake of evidence • Record of contact with SA Population Health Unit regarding dissemination of population health data to country SA practitioners