

PUBLIC HEALTH INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION (PHILE) NETWORK

BIANNUAL BULLETIN

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PHILE NETWORK WELCOME

Welcome to the fourth edition of the Public Health Indigenous Leadership in Education (PHILE) Network Biannual Bulletin. In this edition we are pleased to provide information on current PHILE Network activities, which aim to *'build capacity in Indigenous public health teaching and learning programs nationally,'* and to launch a new series that profiles PHILE Network leadership members. Our member profile this month features Vanessa Lee, Senior Lecturer at the University of Sydney and Vice President of Public Health Association of Australia Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES AND MEMBERSHIP

Our current work in conducting the National Curricula Reviews of Core Indigenous Health Competencies Integration in Masters in Public Health programs has reached a new stage with three of the reviews now in the final publication phase. These reviews include those conducted at the University of Adelaide, La Trobe University and the University of Melbourne. Over the last six months, the PHILE Network has conducted two more reviews at the University of Western Australia and Deakin University. In addition, the PHILE Network is committed to knowledge transfer activities and has agreed to share findings from these reviews by co-hosting its third Teaching and Learning Workshop at the Council of Academic Public Health Institutions Australia (CAPHIA) Teaching and Learning Forum in September 2013.

PHILE Network Leadership Members are dedicated to meeting monthly via teleconference to share information about innovations in Indigenous public health education. Nearly all of the members met in Melbourne for the annual strategic planning meeting on 27 February 2013. There are several recent membership changes, including a farewell to Paul Stewart. Paul has been a strong supporter of the PHILE Network and we wish him the very best in his new role at Cricket Australia. Also, Tara Sklar has changed positions at the University of Melbourne and is no longer the Secretariat. The PHILE Network is currently comprised of 17 academics, 9 of whom are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders representing 12 universities across Australia.

The Biannual Bulletin is a collaborative publication that encourages information sharing between PHILE Network members. If you have a story, idea or an event that you would like to highlight, we would love to hear from you. We hope you enjoy this edition of the Bulletin and encourage your contributions for future publications.

PHILE Network Secretariat

ARTWORK by Shawana Andrews
Sharing knowledge – a community learning circle around the campfire



NATIONAL REVIEW OF CORE INDIGENOUS PUBLIC HEALTH COMPETENCIES INTEGRATION INTO MPH CURRICULA

The key activity of the PHILE Network is to build capacity of Master of Public Health (MPH) programs nationally in regards to integration of Indigenous health content. To date, the PHILE Network has reviewed eight MPH programs, including a pilot at the University of New South Wales, along with the University of Adelaide, Flinders University, Menzies School of Health Research at Charles Darwin University, the University of Melbourne, La Trobe University, the University of Western Australia and Deakin University.

Three of these reviews are now formal reports, which are in the final phases of publication. These reports are from the reviews conducted at the University of Adelaide, the University of Melbourne and La Trobe University. Each of these institutions has thanked the PHILE Network for providing practical suggestions to improve Indigenous public health teaching.

Professor Sandra Leggat, Head of the School of Population Health and Human Biosciences for La Trobe University stated in the foreword for the La Trobe report, *“We were pleased to see recognition of our commitment to using positive, rather than negative, examples of Indigenous health programmes – that is, what works rather than what is wrong.”*

The University of Western Australia and Deakin University recently had their reviews conducted on 30-31 January and the 12 April, respectively. At least one Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander public health academic from the PHILE Network is involved in every MPH curriculum review, in the writing of the final report or provides a mentoring role in the form of local support from each university.

PHILE Network Leadership member, Ray Mahoney, a Research Fellow at Queensland University of Technology, served as part of the review team for Deakin University and said, *“I was looking forward to conducting a review and found the experience very positive. I learned a great deal and am glad I had the opportunity.”*

COUNCIL OF ACADEMIC PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTIONS AUSTRALIA (CAPHIA) INDIGENOUS HEALTH TEACHING & LEARNING FORUM

The PHILE Network will be co-hosting their third Indigenous Health Teaching and Learning Workshop on 20 September 2013 at the annual CAPHIA Teaching and Learning Forum.

This forum provides an opportunity for PHILE Network members to share the preliminary findings from the national reviews of core Indigenous public health competencies integration into MPH curricula and discuss the potential impact with CAPHIA conference participants. PHILE Network members plan to build on the knowledge gained from the previous workshops to continue to connect subject matter content in Indigenous public health with future workforce needs.

PROFILE: VANESSA LEE
SENIOR LECTURER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY
VICE PRESIDENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH



Vanessa Lee is a descendant of the Meriam people.

Her qualifications include an undergraduate in education and a Masters of Public Health in the field of Indigenous Health and she is currently a PhD candidate in Public Health.

Vanessa has local, national and international research experience within the area of public health and Indigenous health. She networks between the Faculty of Health Sciences and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Organizations to build bridges with Indigenous communities. All of the research Vanessa is involved in is directed toward the overarching goal of improving the efficacy and linkage of health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

As the Vice President of the Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander section, where she has co-authored a number of public submissions including Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Bill 2011, Social Security Legislation Amendment Act 2011 and the related bill to the Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs. This submission led to a presentation and parliamentary address to the Senate Committee and two recommendations from this submission were incorporated into the Senate Report.

The second major submission that Vanessa has been involved in was to the Independent Hospital Pricing Authority (IHPA) Activity Based Funding (ABF) and Aboriginal Health to encourage the IHPA to adopt an Indigenous weighting under ABF. Recently tenders were called for the development of tools to measure weighting. In her Public Health VP capacity, and as an invited expert, Vanessa has participated in discussions on the National Aboriginal Health Plan with the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Equality Council (NATSIHEC) and the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples through the National Health Leadership Forum. Vanessa has also submitted a position statement, for endorsement by the board of the PHAA, to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the constitution and to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages as the country's first tongue, while confirming that English is Australia's national language.

Vanessa is both the Deputy Chair for the PHILE Network and was unanimously elected to be the PHILE Network representative on the CAPHIA Executive Committee. She is extremely active in updating PHILE Network members with opportunities around the country that help improve health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Vanessa is also dedicated to conducting national reviews of core Indigenous public health competencies integration into MPH curricula. She has served on four of the review teams, including the University of New South Wales, La Trobe University, Flinders University and Menzies School of Health Research at Charles Darwin University. Vanessa, along with PHILE Network Leadership member Leanne Coombe, are actively involved in translating the experience of the review process into a step-by-step capacity development process to share with other leaders in Indigenous public health.

STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING

A full day strategic planning meeting for the PHILE Network was held on the 27 February 2013 in Melbourne. The PHILE Network Leadership group discussed the process and impact of the national curricula reviews both in terms of what went well and opportunities for improvement. The public health academics from the MPH programs that were reviewed all resoundingly felt the process went well and that the reviews have made an impact, with some MPH programs feeling the immediate effects, particularly at the University of Melbourne and Flinders University.

This discussion also included plans to develop future strategies for knowledge dissemination of the review process, including publications of reports, articles and conference presentations.

PHILE NETWORK MEMBERS

Heather D'Antoine (Menzies School of Health Research at Charles Darwin University)
[PHILE Network Chair]
Vanessa Lee (University of Sydney)
[PHILE Network Deputy Chair & CAPHIA Representative]
Leanne Coombe (University of Melbourne)
[PHILE Network Secretariat]
Professor Dennis McDermott (Flinders University)
Associate Professor Geoffrey Marks (University of Queensland)
Associate Professor Jenny Baker (University of Adelaide)
Assistant Professor Craig Allen (University of Western Australia)
Dr David Paul (University of Western Australia)
Dr Hassan Vally (La Trobe University)
Dr Priscilla Robinson (La Trobe University)
David Sjoberg (Flinders University)
Janice Jessen (Deakin University)
Melody Muscat (James Cook University)
Ray Mahoney (Queensland University of Technology)
Tara Sklar (University of Melbourne)
Wendy Anders (Deakin University)

For more information on the PHILE Network, to become a member or contribute to the Bulletin, please visit the website: www.phile.net.au

