

Public Health Nutrition Program

Health Development Section

Public Health Division

PROJECT BRIEF

Expression of Interest for Public Health Nutrition Workforce Development Initiative

1. Introduction

One definition of public health nutrition is the *science and art of promoting the health of the population via sustainable and equitable improvements in the food and nutrition system. Based upon public health principles, it is a set of collaborative activities that are ecological in perspective and multisectoral in scope. These include environmental, educational, economic, technical, organisational and legislative activities*¹.

Public Health Nutrition is increasingly recognised for its potential to contribute to health gains for the population. The Victorian Government Department of Human Services, Public Health Division, has recently established a new Public Health Nutrition Program. A key priority area of this Program is the development and strengthening of the public health nutrition workforce in Victoria. This is seen as essential in increasing the capacity to deliver and strengthen public health nutrition programs at the regional and local level.

At a National level, SIGNAL (the Strategic Inter-Governmental Nutrition Alliance) under *Eat Well Australia* has recently produced An Agenda for Action for Public Health Nutrition 2000 – 2010. Within this strategy, workforce development has been identified as one of the priority areas for action. For a copy go to the SIGNAL website: www.dhs.vic.gov.au/nphp/signal

Some other recent papers written recently about the public health nutrition include:

- *Developing a Public health nutrition Workforce in Australia: Workforce Issues – A Discussion Paper* written by K Campbell, J Steele, J Woods and R Hughes – October 1997.
- A Survey of the Community and Public Health Nutrition Activity occurring in Victoria prepared in 1998 by the Dietitians Association of Australia – Victorian Branch.

¹ Campbell, Steele, Woods and Hughes, Developing a Public Health Nutrition Workforce in Australia: Workforce Issues. October 1997.

- *Public Health Nutrition Workforce Development* written by Margaret Way in April 2000 for the Department of Human Services Nutrition forum.
- Victorian Paediatric Nutrition Workforce Survey – conducted by the Royal Children’s Hospital in Melbourne in February – March 2001.

2. Project Aim

To develop a strategic plan for Victoria to strengthen and further develop Victoria's public health nutrition workforce.

3. Project Objectives

1. Within the selected two Primary Care Partnerships (one rural and one metro), identify the public health nutrition workforce training needs four groups within the workforce:

- managers/funders/decision makers
- nutrition experts (dietitians/nutritionists)
- non nutrition health workers
- non-health workers with a potential role in the delivery of public health activity.

2. To map out a way forward for Victoria to strengthen and further develop the Public health nutrition workforce.

- To identify groups within the sector who have a potential role in increasing the capacity to deliver public health nutrition workforce programmes.
- To identify gaps in education and training within the potential public health nutrition workforce.
- To explore opportunities and barriers for public health nutrition activity to occur.

4. Rationale

- There is increased Government recognition of public health nutrition as a way of improving the nutritional health of the population.
- There is also increased recognition of good nutrition being an important factor in improving the general health of the population from birth to senior age status.
- There is increasing evidence of poor nutrition and inappropriate eating patterns as contributing to the development of nutrition related illness such as obesity, cardio-vascular disease, diabetes and cancers.

- The recent burden of disease study that the leading causes of overall disease was cardiovascular disease (20%) followed by Type 2 diabetes (3%) and colorectal cancer (3%). These are all diet related.
- Major risk factors contributing to the overall burden of diseases include physical activity (6.7%), obesity (4.3%), inadequate consumption of vegetables and fruit (2.7%) and high blood cholesterol (2.6%).
- In addition it is acknowledged that poor nutrition in utero and in early childhood contributes to diseases developed later in life such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer.
- There is a need to inform and skill people in organisations with a potential role in the development and delivery of public health nutrition programs. This will include not only dietitians/nutritionists but also other workers with a potential capacity to contribute to improving nutrition.
- Parallel to this process, is a need to inform key stakeholders involved in funding/policy development, about the role of public health nutrition.
- In order to effectively develop a state-wide public health nutrition plan, it is necessary and timely to conduct training needs analysis.

5. Intended Audience for Reviews

1. The organisations and individuals who participated in this public health nutrition workforce training needs analysis.
2. The Health Development Section within the Public Health Division including the Health Promotion and Capacity Building team and from the Public Health Nutrition Program.
3. Non-government organisations with an interest in development of the Public Health Nutrition workforce eg Dietitians Association of Australia.
4. The Policy and Program advisers for the Primary Care Partnerships within Aged and Community Care in the Department of Human Services.

6. Guidelines for Methodology

There is strong evidence in the general field of health promotion that programs which use a combination of multifaceted interventions are the most effective and powerful in terms of long-term outcomes for the community. Health promotion settings refer to the places or social contexts in which people engage in daily activities and where environmental, organisational and personal factors interact to affect health and wellbeing (World Health Organisation, 1998).² Public health nutrition is one aspect of health promotion.

² World Health Organisation. (1998). Health Promotion Glossary. World Health Organisation, Geneva.

The consultant is required to be rigorous in the following:

- Provision of a solid methodology framework to undertake this public health nutrition workforce training needs analysis. The essential feature is to ensure all four levels of the desired workforce are included.
- Approaches that incorporate some level of feedback to the people/organisations that have participated in the public health nutrition workforce training needs analysis will be favoured.
- A literature review of articles and other unpublished works needs to be included as a summary of the current status of public health workforce development in Victoria.
- A structured program of consultation with people/organisations with a current or potential role in the development and delivery of public health nutrition. The consultation process will also need to include key Government stakeholders in both regional and central locations.
- Preparation of the product related to the public health nutrition workforce training needs analysis for immediate dissemination to the target audience. This will need to include a summary of the findings of the public health nutrition training needs for all four levels of the workforce and recommendations for future action.

7. Intended Products

Product 1:

Description – A written summary (plus a copy on disc – microsoft word) including:

- A summary of the learnings from each of the 2 Primary Care Partnerships.
- Summary of the relevant literature as it applies to Victoria.
- Barriers and opportunities for effective public health nutrition activity to occur for each of the four target groups as identified in project objectives section.
- Gaps in information available.
- Recommendations for future action.

Product 2:

Description - training needs analysis of the public health nutrition workforce for the four different groups identified. This would include specific detail about public health nutrition, health promotion and program management competencies. The exact competencies to be used for this project will be decided by the Project Advisory Group (refer to section 9).

Product 3:

Description - the development of a written strategic plan for Victoria to strengthen and further develop Victoria's public health nutrition workforce incorporating the needs of the four different groups within the workforce, including:

- managers/funders/decision makers
- nutrition experts (dietitians/nutritionists)

- non nutrition health workers
- non-health workers with a potential role in the delivery of public health activity.

8. Selection Criteria for the Consultant

- Knowledge and understanding of public health nutrition workforce issues within the Victorian service system.
- Demonstrated ability to establish a sound methodology for conducting a multi-faceted training needs analysis.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Demonstrated capacity to complete the project within the agreed timeframe.
- Demonstrated understanding of the brief and required outcomes.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Management

The Department of Human Services will be the contract manager of the project. A Department of Human Services project manager will be identified for the day-to-day management issues.

Project Advisory Group

A Project Advisory Group will be formed by the Health Development Section, Department of Human Services, and will provide the consultant with advice on various project issues, including communication with regional staff and other key partners, budget issues and project accountability. This group will provide guidance about the specific public health nutrition and health promotion competencies to be used in the training needs analysis. The Group will also read and provide comments on early and final drafts of the products.

The Project Advisory Group will include representatives from the Department of Human Services Health Promotion and Capacity Building team, Food Safety, Primary Care Partnerships and the Public Health Nutrition Program. The Group will decide how frequently to meet.

Consultant

Following feedback from the Project Advisory Group, the consultant will be required to complete all tasks necessary to achieve the desired products and outcomes (as articulated in Section 7). The consultant will be required to sign a Standard Department of Human Services contract.

The consultant will identify two - three experts in the field of Public Health Nutrition from around Australia who are prepared to review the direction and content of the project at critical times. It may not be necessary for these people to meet.

The consultant will be required to liaise with Corporate Communications of the Department of Human Services with regard to preparation of products for

dissemination. This will ensure that it adheres to corporate Department of Human Services' style guidelines.

The consultant will attend Project Advisory Group meetings providing project status reports, an early draft version of the final product (product numbers 1, 2 and 3) to be submitted prior to the end of the contract period.

10. Budget

Funding of up to \$32,500 is available for the project. This funding is to cover all work, products and other costs required for the successful completion of the project, exclusive of GST.

A detailed budget is to be included as a part of the submission.

11. Timeline

The project will need to be completed in a within in six month period from commencement.

12. Submissions

- Written submissions are required to include the following sections: *Project Title, Background, Methodology, Project Timetable, Budget Justification, References, Expertise of the Review Team (Curriculum vitae of person/persons to be directly involved in the project are required (including three relevant referees).*
- Potential consultants that are short listed within this process may be required to give an oral presentation of their proposal to a panel selected from the Project Advisory Group.
- Supply three copies of written submissions.
- Closing date for submission is 2:00pm Friday 6th April 2001.
- Submission to be forwarded to:
Veronica Graham
State Public Health nutritionist
Health Development Section
Public Health Division
Department of Human Services
Level 16, 120 Spencer Street
Melbourne. 3000

Phone: 03 9637 4047

Email: veronica.graham@dhs.vic.gov.au

