

VICTORIAN PUBLIC HEALTH AWARDS FOR

Excellence and Innovation 2004

And the winners are:

Research

Excellence Winner

Epidemiological Studies of Intracerebral Haemorrhage

National Stroke Research Institute and The Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, Monash University

Innovation Winner

Project i

Key Centre for Women's Health in Society, University of Melbourne

Highly Commended

Pathways: A Review of the Victorian Drug Treatment Service System

Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre

Capacity Building

Excellence Winner

The Australian Unity Wellbeing Index

School of Psychology, Deakin University; Australian Unity; Australian National University; University of Sydney

Innovation Winner

'WayOut' Central Victorian Youth and Sexual Diversity Project

Cobaw Community Health Service

Highly Commended

Doctoral Training Program

Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, Monash University

Programs

Excellence Winner

Vision Initiative

Vision 2020 Australia

Innovation Winners

The Braystone Fruit and Vegetable Shop and Delivery Service

Maribyrnong City Council, WestNet, Western Region Health Centre

Café Meals Program

North Yarra Community Health and City of Yarra

Highly Commended

Young People's Health Service

Centre for Adolescent Health

From the Director

The 2004 Public Health Awards for Excellence and Innovation celebrate the significant contributions made by Victoria's public health community.

The awards acknowledge a commitment to protecting and promoting the health and wellbeing of all Victorians. This commitment is shared by individuals, organisations and partnerships that provide leadership, support and services and work with stakeholders and communities to improve public health.

I thank my colleagues on the selection panel for their insight and support in determining the award winners. Panel members this year were:

- Ms Margaret Stebbing, President, Public Health Association (Victorian Branch)
- Professor Terry Nolan, Head, School of Population Health, University of Melbourne
- Assoc. Professor Helen Keleher, School of Health and Social Development, Deakin University
- Dr Rosemary Lester, Manager, Communicable Diseases, Department of Human Services

I congratulate the winners and all those nominated for their outstanding work in 2004 and I look forward to a very productive and exciting 2005.



Dr Robert Hall
Director Public Health
Chief Health Officer

About the Awards

Now in their eighth year, the Victorian Public Health Awards reflect achievements in practice and research and promote ongoing work to achieve innovation and excellence in approaches to public health issues.

The Awards are given in three categories, reflecting integral components of public health—research, capacity building and programs. They recognise originality and innovation, use of evidence-based approaches, capacity to enhance public health, strategic partnerships and

alliances, quality processes for implementation and analysis, achievement of objectives, communication of findings and impact on public health.

For more information about the Public Health Awards, or to enquire about the 2005 Awards, contact:

Spiro Iliopoulos
Partnership Development Section
Public Health Group
Department of Human Services
Phone: (03) 9637 4753
Email: spiro.iliopoulos@dhs.vic.gov.au

PUBLIC HEALTH RESEARCH AWARDS

For an original piece of research that has made a substantial contribution to public health. The research, which could be basic or applied, must have been published in a peer review journal or be of a demonstrated equivalent.

WINNER FOR EXCELLENCE Epidemiological Studies of Intracerebral Haemorrhage

National Stroke Research Institute and The Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine, Monash University



The epidemiological studies of intracerebral haemorrhage (ICH) provide important evidence that will help prevent and reduce the impact of this serious condition.

ICH is a type of stroke that has particularly poor outcomes. It accounts for 10–15 per cent of all strokes experienced in Victoria. Up to one half of people who experience ICH die within the first month and many survivors are left severely disabled. With no effective treatment methods, prevention is the best way to reduce the impact of ICH.

This project is the first comprehensive investigation of the risk factors for ICH and focuses on the impacts of smoking, hypertension and the use of aspirin-like drugs in a case series of first episodes of primary ICH.

A total of 331 cases of ICH were studied, using computerised tomography (CT) scans from patients of Victorian public hospitals. The widespread use of CT in Victoria enabled this information to be gathered in a way that is not possible in most other parts of the world. These 331 cases were then age and gender matched to 331 controls living in the same neighbourhoods.

The study findings have important implications for public health, for example:

- Younger people with hypertension are at much greater risk of ICH—this provides evidence that these people need to be carefully monitored.

- People who have stopped antihypertensive therapy are at much greater risk of ICH—this is the first time a strong link has been made between stopping antihypertensive medication use and stroke risk.
- Low to moderate dose aspirin therapy does not substantially increase the risk of ICH—provides comprehensive evidence that low dose levels are safe, which is vital information for general practitioners.
- ICH occurred less often among people who were physically active—provides more evidence for general practitioners to promote physical activity.

The research conducted by the National Stroke Research Institute (Melbourne University) and the Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine (Monash University) has led to further work, including investigations of how people with stroke and their carers manage in the community.

For more information

Contact: Amanda Thrift
Tel: (03) 9496 2862
Email: thrift@unimelb.edu.au
Website: www.strokeresearch.com.au

WINNER FOR INNOVATION Project i

Key Centre for Women's Health in Society, University of Melbourne



Project i, the first comprehensive and longitudinal study of homeless young people in Australia, has gathered valuable knowledge to improve public health policy and practice in response to the often hidden but real public health issue of youth homelessness.

Through contact over two years with homeless young people and the service providers who work with them, Project i has collected information on the factors that lead young

people into and out of homelessness, their experiences of homelessness and their use of, and satisfaction with, services.

In Melbourne, 700 young people aged from 12 to 20, from 95 services, completed a survey covering issues such as accommodation, social connectedness, family and peer environments and relationships, physical and mental health, suicide, drug use, sexual health, daily routines, education and employment, resilience, street survival skills and daily hassles. About one third of these young people completed follow up surveys at three, six, 12, 18 and 24 months, and 40 young people were interviewed in depth at 18 months after the initial survey.

Service providers from 107 services also completed a survey covering service philosophy, governance, funding, practice, training and knowledge. A sub-sample of 50 was interviewed in depth about these issues.

Project i is unique and innovative in many ways. As a collaboration between the Key Centre for Women's Health in Society at the University of Melbourne and the Centre for Community Health at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), the project allows cross-national comparison of policy and services. Project i also worked across sectors, recruiting participants from a range of youth services. By taking a 'whole person' approach, Project i examined the health, social and economic contexts in which young people experience homelessness.

There have already been many positive outcomes from this project. There is now greater knowledge about service need and use and the gap between service providers' and young people's perceptions and attitudes. Partnerships have been established, further research initiated and contributions made to State policy and practice. In addition, several pilot projects are being undertaken to develop and implement targeted, high quality and cost effective prevention and intervention service responses to youth homelessness.

For more information

Contact: Dr Shelley Mallett
Tel: (03) 8344 0245
Email: s.mallett@unimelb.edu.au
Website: www.kwch.unimelb.edu.au/projecti/

PUBLIC HEALTH CAPACITY BUILDING

This category is open to teams, organisations and partnerships that have identified public health needs and responded by building capacity to meet those needs.

WINNER FOR EXCELLENCE

The Australian Unity Wellbeing Index

*School of Psychology, Deakin University;
Australian Unity; Australian National University;
University of Sydney*



Since April 2001, the Australian Unity Index has monitored how Australians feel about their lives. To date, 11 surveys have been conducted, each involving a telephone interview with 2000 randomly selected people.

Unlike most official indicators of quality of life and wellbeing, the Australian Unity Wellbeing Index is subjective—it measures how people feel about life.

The Index comprises two numbers:

- The Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI) is the average level of satisfaction across seven aspects of personal life—health, personal relationships, safety, standard of living, achievements, community connectedness, and future security.
- The National Wellbeing Index (NWI) is the average satisfaction score across six aspects of national life—the economy, the environment, social conditions, governance, business, and national security.

The PWI for Australia reflects findings from other Western countries, that is, that most people are satisfied with their lives. The index normally falls within the range of 70–80 points, where one represents complete dissatisfaction and 100 represents complete satisfaction. The NWI normally falls between 55 to 65 points, reflecting lower levels of satisfaction.

The Australian Unity Index provides data for public health knowledge and practice in Australia. Studies using the PWI, for example, show a strong relationship between subjective wellbeing and depression and further research is being undertaken to investigate this link.

At a population level, the PWI can be used to enquire about the wellbeing of different demographic groups and identify groups at high risk of depression. Such information is crucial for policy makers and service providers. At the individual level, the PWI is simple and quick to complete and could be used by health professionals as a screening device for depression risk.

The PWI is available on the Deakin University website at www.aqol.deakin.edu.au

Several public health organisations in Victoria have expressed interest in collaborative activities to use the technology and the data created through the Australian Unity Wellbeing Project.

For more information

Contact: Professor Robert A. Cummins
Tel: (03) 9244 6845
Email: robert.cummins@deakin.edu.au
Website: www.aqol.deakin.edu.au

WINNER FOR INNOVATION 'WayOut' Central Victorian Youth and Sexual Diversity Project

Cobaw Community Health Service



The 'WayOut', Central Victorian Youth and Sexual Diversity Project is changing the way many people think about sexual diversity, which is critical if we are to rid our communities of homophobia and create a safe and affirming place for all young people.

Approximately 8–11% of young people experience sexual attractions towards members of the same sex. For these young people, life can be difficult—they are more likely to experience family conflict, difficulties at school, verbal and physical abuse, become homeless, abuse alcohol and drugs and

attempt suicide. There is also evidence that these young people living in rural areas fare worse than their urban peers.

WayOut is addressing the isolation, stigma and discrimination that same sex attracted young people (SSAYP) can experience through initiatives targeted at young people as well as organisations and the general public in their communities.

The project, established by the Cobaw Community Health Service in 2002, has helped strengthen the capacity of communities in the local government areas of Macedon Ranges, Mt. Alexander, Central Goldfields and Bendigo to respond to the needs of SSAYP.

WayOut emphasises young people's input to the design and delivery of the service and they have developed a unique model that includes:

The 'gay-straight' alliance—this recognises that not all young people disclose their sexuality and so aims to reach a 'hidden' group. It reflects the desire for services that include everyone, not just SSAYP, and promotes community connectedness by enabling young people to gather and share their views.

Promoting public activism—the young people involved wanted to 'do something public' to raise awareness and challenge homophobia. The group has given talks to 250 secondary schools, featured in local media, written, performed, recorded and distributed a play, and attended community events to promote the project.

Raising awareness and promoting understanding—an original range of social marketing, information and training resources have been developed for young people, schools, professionals, agencies and the community, including stickers, t-shirts, badges, a poster, information card and a video, and training resources. These products have proved to be a successful way of promoting positive messages about sexuality.

For more information

Contact: Sue Hackney
Tel: (03) 5421 1619
Email: shackney@cobaw.vic.gov.au

PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMS

This category is open to teams, organisations and partnerships that have designed and delivered a public health program to meet a significant unmet public health need or have improved the effectiveness of an existing public health program.

WINNER FOR EXCELLENCE

The Vision Initiative

Vision 2020 Australia



The Vision Initiative is committed to raising the awareness of eye health amongst Victorians, especially those aged 50 plus.

More than 100,000 Victorians have a significant degree of vision loss or impairment, at least half of which is correctable and one quarter is preventable.

With the support of the Department of Human Services and partners in the eye health, research, clinical, community and broader health fields, The Vision Initiative is targeting a cross-section of the community including people over 50 years of age and those at high risk of vision impairment, as well as government, health professionals, media, community organisations and other key professionals. Its primary consumer message is: 'If you experience any changes to your vision, have a family history of eye disease, are over 50, or diabetic, have your eyes tested regularly'.

The Vision Initiative is encouraging individual, structural and social change in relation to eye health, and focussed on:

- public information and awareness
- professional development and training
- research, monitoring and evaluation
- clinical and support services and
- policy, legislation and advocacy.

The Vision Initiative is mid-way through an initial three-year program. The Victorian experience is being monitored and evaluated with a view to rolling out the program on a national basis.

For more information

Contact: Jennifer Gersbeck, CEO

Tel: (03) 9656 2020

Email: jgersbeck@vision2020australia.org.au

Website: www.saveyoursight.org.au

WINNERS FOR INNOVATION

This was awarded to two programs established as Food Insecurity Demonstration Projects with pilot funding from VicHealth and the Department of Human Services.

The Braystone Fruit and Vegetable Shop and Delivery Service

Maribyrnong City Council; WestNet; Western Region Health Centre



The Braystone Fruit and Vegetable Shop and Delivery Service is bringing affordable, healthy food to people in one of Melbourne's most disadvantaged communities, while providing valuable learning and social opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities.

An excellent example of collaboration, this program is delivered by WestNet, an adult day facility for people with disabilities, with support from Maribyrnong City Council, the Western Region Health Centre, the Department of Human Services, a consultant from the fruit industry, VicHealth, and local individuals and organisations.

Since February 2002, Braystone has operated a shop at WestNet in Braybrook and a mobile market stall each week at a local school and public housing estates. Deliveries are made to local individuals and businesses and for health promotion events.

For WestNet clients, the program involves them in the community as a service provider, rather than a receiver of services. Barbara Gillies, Program Coordinator, says 'it provides much needed community services and a way of involving people with a disability in a worthwhile, meaningful community project.' The program helps clients develop social and employment skills, increases their confidence and promotes community acceptance of people with an intellectual disability.

The program assists in improving the health of customers and clients by raising their awareness of healthy eating and improving access to nutritious food. In the words of a high-rise resident: '...I've increased my fruit

and vegetable intake since Braystone started coming here; they have inspired me to go on a health kick and lose my beer gut'.

For more information

Contact: Lynley Dumble,

Maribyrnong City Council

Tel: (03) 9688 0237

Email: lynley.dumble@maribyrnong.vic.gov.au

Website: www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au

Café Meals Program

North Yarra Community Health; City of Yarra



Since 2002, the Café Meals Program, a collaborative program of North Yarra Community Health (NYCH) and the City of Yarra, has been providing nutritious, affordable and socially acceptable meals for around 120 homeless people in the City of Yarra.

NYCH Project Coordinator and dietitian Katrina Doljanin describes the program's approach as original and creative. 'It challenges the "middle class" constructs that underlie more traditional delivered meals options. It doesn't, for example, assume that the person's life is stable enough to be at home at a particular time each day to receive the meal, or that they will have the facilities to heat or refrigerate the meal, or even that they have a fixed address to which the meal can be delivered,' she said.

Individuals are referred by community support workers and are given a membership card that entitles them to one subsidised meal per day from any of the four participating cafes. The clients pay \$2 towards a meal valued up to \$8.80. The café is subsidised through HACC funding.

Benefits for clients include improved nutrition and wellbeing, more frequent meals, a greater focus on eating and improved self-esteem. As one client said in the evaluation: 'I used to feel like I was on the outside of life, looking in, and now I can sit in a café looking out and feel like I am part of the community.'

For more information

Contact: Katrina Doljanin

Tel: (03) 9411 3526

Email: katrina.doljanin@nych.org.au

Website: nych.org.au