

University and Health Department Partnerships in Health  
Workforce Development:  
Perspectives on a Work-Integrated Aboriginal Population  
Health Scholarship

Shane Venables, Deanne Condon-Paoloni, Erica Gray, Tara Lawson, Sally

Stevenson, Kaylee Anderson, Gail Daylight, Jo Mitchell, Sarah Thackway

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# Overview

- ◆ Overall program aim & objectives
- ◆ Description of Scholarship
- ◆ Support in Workplace and University
- ◆ Placements in SESIAHS
- ◆ Evaluation of program
- ◆ Future directions



# The UOW SESIAHS Work-Integrated Aboriginal Population Health Scholarship

## Overall Program Aim:

- ◆ To increase Aboriginal representation in mainstream health services, in order to increase cultural awareness and accessibility of health services to Aboriginal communities.

## Objectives:

- ◆ To encourage Aboriginal students to undertake study in Population Health
- ◆ To enable Aboriginal students
  - to consolidate skills and knowledge acquired in their degree
  - with work placements in the Population Health unit of the area health service
- ◆ To enhance the public health career path of the scholarship holder



# Unique features of the Scholarship

Unique:

- ◆ Work placements provided through a single Area Health Service
- ◆ Linked to an undergraduate degree
  - Enhances opportunities for participation
  - Multiple pathways into University
  - Potential links to other relevant majors that expand the health portfolio:
    - Nutrition
    - Exercise Science
    - Indigenous Health
    - Marketing (for health communication)
    - Human Geography (urban planning and demography)
    - Psychology
    - Biostatistics

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# Support in the workplace

- ◆ Resources
  - computing, printing, etc
  - Population Health library for study resources
- ◆ Identified mentoring and support people
- ◆ Informal professional support
- ◆ Movement around diverse locations in health
- ◆ Different supervisors & management styles
  - Develop flexibility and adaptability
  - Range of mentoring



# Support in the University

- ◆ Woolyungah: UOW centre dedicated to supporting Aboriginal students in their studies
  - Recruitment of students through Access Program
  - Social support: email networks provide information about events and opportunities
  - Funding for tutoring in specific subjects
  - Resources: computers, printing, library
- ◆ Academic program support: course coordinator involved in the scholarship program



# Placements in SESIAHS

- ◆ First year work placements are fixed
- ◆ In later years, links between the academic program and the work placement are made possible by some flexibility in placement choices,
- ◆ Links between subjects & placements worked in both directions
  - the policy and epidemiology subjects assisted in the later planning placement
  - the health promotion placement assisted in the later health promotion subject



# Evaluation of the program

- ◆ Externally reviewed 2006 by Sally Stevenson
- ◆ 56 Recommendations
- ◆ General Findings
- ◆ Specific Findings
- ◆ Information on Evaluation Report
  - Jo Mitchell, A/Director Population Health, SESIAHS ph:4221 6700  
email: [jo.mitchell@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:jo.mitchell@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au)



# Where to from here?

- ◆ Consolidation
  - Aim to continue program for the longer term
  - Ideally having one student enter each year
    - Always a senior student to support a younger student
- ◆ PG one year internship
  - Continuity
  - Career development for the graduate
  - Consolidate skills development for the graduate
  - Potential for involvement in supporting students as well
  - Possibility of a further year at NSW Health



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