

### **3 Progress on decisions of the 2003 meeting**

Ms Susan Elliott presented an overview of the PHC RED Strategy and described progress on a number of important initiatives arising from the 2003 national meeting, including:

- clinical priorities had been established by a working group resulting from the last meeting and chaired by Professor Justin Beilby. Priorities identified as a result of the groups work had been used as the foundation for the NHMRC clinical research program;
- two working groups on how RCBI University Departments report activities and sharing resources and information in RCBI had been formed and were operating (see below);
- some work had progressed on national marketing of the PHC RED Strategy (see below);
- DoHA had made some significant improvements in the way that it reviewed annual reports and business plans from RCBI University Departments, advising reporting requirements prior to Christmas 2003 and then improving the timeliness of its review of, and feedback on, the reports;
- consumers had been involved in the PHC RED Strategy at a national, state and local level although significant progress in training and developing consumer representatives had not been made;
- links with Divisions of General Practice were improving; and
- the evaluation of the PHC RED Strategy has commenced, and RCBI University Departments had been offered an extra year of funding to allow them to continue operations during the period of the evaluation.

Finally, Ms Elliott challenged meeting participants to think about the role of future national meetings. With the significant increase in the number of participants each year and the alignment of the components of the PHC RED Strategy, participants needed to question whether the current structure and format of these meetings is still suitable?

#### ***Measuring and reporting activities in RCBI***

Dr Nigel Stocks reported on the activities of a working group he had chaired which was formed after the 2003 national meeting to discuss how RCBI University Departments could better report activities to capture the essence of what was being done and the outcomes that were being achieved. Discussion following Dr Stock's presentation and a workshop held on Day Two of the meeting considered how reports could be streamlined and more consistently completed across RCBI.

Participants felt that some important aspects of RCBI work were not currently being adequately captured (eg levels of Indigenous involvement, changes in attitudes to research activity), whilst other things were being measured which were easy to count but were not really telling anything about the quality of activities and the outcomes being achieved (eg number of people attending courses). There was also some double counting

and some variances in how different University Departments defined what was counted as PHC RED activities that needed to be improved.

This is exacerbated by the fact that the objectives of RCBI are not as clear as they could be and the overarching goals of the whole PHC RED Strategy have not been clearly articulated. The evaluation of PHC RED Strategy may go some way towards determining clear objectives for PHC RED in the next cycle which will in turn make it easier to identify the key variables that should be measured over time to determine the progress being made in the Strategy and the RCBI.

Meeting participants generally felt that there should be some movement towards streamlining the number of reports that University Departments are required to produce. Currently they must develop yearly business plans and report on progress towards achievement of the plans in their annual reports. Some meeting participants advocated a move away from business planning towards other models such as balanced scorecard reporting, narrative reporting and Bennetts Hierarchy.

It was agreed by the meeting that the working group on measuring and reporting activities in RCBI should continue its work but expand its role, going back to a basic understanding of objectives of RCBI and uses of reports. The working group could then review the entire reporting cycle, the number and types of reports required and recommend processes for improvement. The group was also asked to further progress the initial work undertaken on an electronic template for reporting.

### ***Sharing information and resources across RCBIs***

At the 2003 National Meeting it was agreed that consideration should be given to structures and processes that will result in greater sharing of resources and information amongst University Departments. A working group was formed in 2004 to progress this issue and the group met several times during the year. Deb Askew from the University of Queensland reported on the working group's activities on the first day of the meeting and presented two options to the meeting for how there can be a greater sharing of information and resources across RCBI, providing a brief rationale for the options.

There was agreement across the meeting to trialling a PHC RED visiting fellowship or secondment as part of RCBI activities.

There was also agreement to RCBI University Departments and statewide coordinators working with PHC RIS in a more strategic manner to enhance the sharing of information and resources amongst University Departments.

In addition, participants agreed to send PHC RIS a one paragraph description of any research networks that were part of RCBI for posting on the web page including who is involved, what the network is doing, how it operates and who to contact for more information.

## ***National marketing of PHC RED***

Dr Nigel Stocks reported to the meeting that the working group on marketing the PHC RED Strategy agreed to at the 2003 national meeting had never really gotten off the ground, but that there was still an obvious need to actively market the Strategy and highlight what was being achieved. A workshop was held on Day Two of this meeting to determine what the purpose of marketing the Strategy would be, who we would want to market it to, and what might be a practical, achievable marketing plan.

The workshop determined that marketing should be done for the purpose of raising the profile of the PHC RED Strategy and associated activities. There was a view that marketing activities might involve specialised media, special interest groups, community radio and the metropolitan press.

It was agreed by the meeting that a national marketing plan for the PHC RED Strategy should be developed by a working group to be formed for this purpose. States and individual University Departments should also develop their own strategies for marketing the activities they are undertaking.