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Network committed to healthy unis

REPRESENTATIVES from 25 Australian universities have joined to form the Australian Health Promoting Universities Network (AHPUN), working collaboratively to create healthier university campuses and communities.

The AHPUN is one of the outcomes from the inaugural Australian Health Promoting Universities meeting held recently, a joint initiative of Western Sydney University (WSU) and the University of Sydney (UoS).

Following the success of similar networks in the UK, US and Canada, the AHPUN will help universities share best practice across the sector, and work to improve the health and wellbeing of more than one million students and over 100 000 university staff members.

Initiatives championed by the AHPUN include increasing the availability of healthy food options in campus outlets, creating sustainable, student-led initiatives that encourage better mental health, and promoting safe and respectful relationships.

Vice-Chancellor of WSU and chair of Universities Australia, Professor Barney Glover, welcomed the formation of the AHPUN.

"Universities must be at the forefront of addressing major health challenges, such as improving mental health and preventing chronic disease. As

the national peak body representing the Australian university sector, Universities Australia also supports this important initiative," Professor Glover said.

"Health-promoting universities are those that embed health in our teaching, learning and research, and create supportive environments in which our students and staff can flourish and succeed. University graduates who are resilient, and value their health and the health of others, contribute significantly to our society and are role models for their communities."

Dr Michael Spence, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of UoS said: "The AHPUN is an important step towards achieving a nationally adopted 'whole-of-campus' approach to health promotion.

"Current efforts to enhance student and staff health on Australian campuses are well intentioned yet sporadic. This network is about moving beyond service provision and risk reduction and creating a higher education system that prioritises the health and wellbeing of its community as part of core business.

"Public health research has consistently shown that targeting individuals to lead healthier lifestyles is not as effective as when a whole environment or setting is there to support them."



Further meetings are planned for the year, with the AHPUN keen to secure support from other Australian universities.

The AHPUN and its universities will also seek to sign the Okanagan Charter. Launched in October 2015 by the University of British Columbia in Canada, the charter calls for universities to embed health into all aspects of campus culture and operations, and to encourage health promotion activities in the wider community.

The following universities are committed to AHPUN: Australian Catholic University; Australian National University; Curtin University; Deakin University; Federation University Australia; La Trobe University; Macquarie University; Queensland University of Technology; RMIT University; Southern Cross University; Swinburne University of Technology; University of Adelaide; University of Melbourne; University of New England; University of New South Wales; University of Newcastle; University of Notre Dame; University of Queensland; University of South Australia; University of Sydney; University of Tasmania; University of Technology Sydney; University of the Sunshine Coast; University of Wollongong; Western Sydney University.

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Around the universities and research institutes

The **University of Notre Dame**'s Broome campus-based **Nulungu Research Institute** has appointed Professor Jeanette Ward as Adjunct Professor to its teaching and research team. Nulungu is one of three research institutes of the UND. Professor Ward holds the position of Consultant, Public Health Medicine with WA Country Health Services and this adjunct appointment aims to further strengthen the connection between Nulungu and health service providers in the Kimberley region. Her role with WA Country Health Services focuses on strategic development of public health, primary health care and stakeholder partnerships to improve population outcomes. Professor Ward will work with Nulungu and the Notre Dame Fremantle campus-based **Institute for Health Research** (IHR) to undertake "collaborative research, implementation projects and higher-degree student supervision in ways that promote academic support for Aboriginal community re-empowerment and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies to shift control from distant institutions to local governance structures and partnership", said Nulungu's director, Associate Professor Sandra Wooltorton. "Subsidiarity as an organisational principle will be explored in this work. As an academic institution, Nulungu fosters Aboriginal intellectual traditions, according respect and recognition of ownership of Country, Aboriginal Knowledges, continuing cultural practice and cultural governance. This further acknowledges the cultural heritage that underpins contemporary community actions to create a better future for the people of the Kimberley and beyond. Nulungu's guiding principle is to work with 'Right People, Right Country, Right Way', she said.

Researchers at **Monash University** and the **Hudson Institute of Medical Research** have received a highly competitive Victoria Cancer Agency (VCA) grant worth \$2 million to determine whether particular prostate and colorectal cancer patients will respond to a new class of cancer drug known as BET inhibitors. Unlike chemotherapy which indiscriminately attacks 'good' and 'bad' cells, BET

inhibitors — a type of epigenetic therapy — work on a genetic level to turn off the growth of cancer cells. Lead researcher is Dr Arun Azad, Senior Research Fellow at Monash University and Consultant Medical Oncologist at Monash Health. The collaborative research project builds on the previous work of Hudson Institute's Associate Professor Ron Firestein, who identified the RNA biomarker and potential benefit of BET inhibitors in pre-clinical models in his previous laboratory at Genentech Inc. Undertaken at Monash Health, the trial will recruit 25 patients with advanced prostate or colorectal cancer and for whom other treatments options have failed. Co-collaborators on this study include Monash University's Professor Gail Risbridger, Associate Professor Helen Abud, colorectal surgeon Associate Professor Paul McMurrick and Cabrini's Dr Simon Wilkins.

Four members of **Flinders University**'s School of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences have received 2016 Vice-Chancellor Awards for Early Career Researchers. Dr Kate Laver, from the School of Health Sciences, aims to take evidence-based interventions for people with dementia into their homes using telehealth technologies. Dr Amanda Muller (School of Nursing and Midwifery), supports the language needs of over 500 international nursing students at Flinders, delivering face-to-face classes and providing online support. She also researches English for Specific Purposes (Nursing English and Academic English) and the use of computer games to teach language. Dr Andrew Vakulin's (Medicine) current research focus is the exploration of novel neurophysiological, neurobehavioural and biological measures or "biomarkers" that may be useful in clinically identifying individual patients who may be more vulnerable to sleepiness-related impairments and accident risk, as well as the efficacy of sleep apnoea treatments. Dr Annabelle Wilson (Health Sciences) has worked with Aboriginal people both as a dietitian and a researcher in urban, rural and remote communities across Australia.

New South Wales' first full undergraduate

medical degree in a regional centre will be offered in Port Macquarie next year, the President and Vice-Chancellor of **University of NSW** Ian Jacobs has announced. Developing a full undergraduate medical degree was a key component of a collaborative project announced in 2011 between UNSW, the **University of Newcastle** and **North Coast Institute of TAFE**. The project secured \$20 million in federal funding for a purpose-built facility, the Port Macquarie Shared Health Research and Education Campus (SHREC). UNSW currently provides medical education for 4 years of a medical degree — Years 3 to 6 — through its Rural Clinical School campuses in Port Macquarie, Coffs Harbour, Albury, Griffith and Wagga Wagga. Dean of UNSW Medicine Professor Rodney Phillips said the Faculty had undertaken an assessment of the new facility and what needed to be in place to offer the full 6-year program.

Clinical training for **University of Queensland** medical and allied health students will be boosted with the opening of student training centres at the Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee and Redland hospitals. UQ Vice-Chancellor Professor Peter Høj said the new facilities would "revolutionise" training practices at the hospitals and offer more clinical placement opportunities for students. The training centres have been built with \$2.2 million from the Federal Government Health Workforce Australia Fund and \$1.15 million from UQ, on hospital campus sites provided by the State Government's Metro South Hospital and Health Service. About 300 UQ medical students rotate through the Redland and QEII Jubilee hospitals each year for specialist training in medicine, surgery, gynaecology and critical care disciplines. A further 100 students from other UQ schools rotate through the sites for clinical training in areas such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy and pharmacy.

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