

NSW HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROJECT

E-News

The 2005 Developmental Sites Learning HIA by Doing in New South Wales

This issue profiles the six sites from across New South Wales who are currently undertaking HIAs on a diverse range of proposals. They are being supported by the Centre for Health Equity Training, Research and Evaluation (CHETRE) through:

- Five days of HIA training;
- Being linked in with a network of

participant observers who have also completed the training;

- A helpdesk to respond to phone and email queries, and
- Electronic resources such as the E-News, the HIA Connect website and a weblog on HIA.

More information is available at chetre.med.unsw.edu.au/hia



The 2005 Developmental HIA Sites and Participant Observers

Indigenous Environmental Health Workers Proposal North Coast Area Health Service

The Proposal

The health status of Aboriginal people on the North Coast of New South Wales is documented as being poorer than that of the rest of the population. Over recent years the Area Health Service has recognised that a significant factor contributing to the poor health experienced by Aboriginal people is directly linked to inadequate environmental health conditions. The Indigenous Environmental Health Workers proposal is intended to improve environmental health conditions within rural indigenous communities through the training and employment of indigenous community members.

A range of government and non-government organisations play a key role in improving environmental health conditions in indigenous community settings. Training and employment of Indigenous Environmental Health Workers (IEHW) is identified by these organisations as a priority for indigenous communities.

The aims of the proposal include:

- establishing a training program for IEHWs that links with the population health training package (Nationally accredited course);
- empowering indigenous communities to better manage environmental health issues; and
- identifying/developing

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**Prepared by
Greg McAvoy &
Paul Corben**

*North Coast Area
Health Service*

At a Glance

Proposal Assessed
Indigenous
Environmental health
Workers Proposal

Developmental Site
North Coast Area
Health Service

Stakeholders Involved

- NSW Premier's Department
- NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs
- NSW Aboriginal Land Council
- Aboriginal Housing Office
- Kempsey Shire Council
- North Coast Institute of TAFE
- Durri Aboriginal Medical Service
- NSW Department of Health

employment opportunities in the environmental health field for indigenous people.

The HIA

North Coast AHS intends to undertake a rapid-level HIA of the IEHW proposal. The HIA has provided the IEHW project team with an essential tool for identifying the health impacts of the proposal. This process ensures that all potentially positive, negative and unintended health impacts are identified and addressed.

The HIA process has also provided a structured format for consulting and negotiating with decision makers. A steering committee consisting of decision makers and key stakeholders was established for the purpose of discussing the issues that arise during the HIA process and refining the proposal.



Map of North Coast Area Health Service
(dots represent population centres)

Insights So Far

Conducting regular steering committee meetings has been useful for the screening and scoping stages of the HIA. The steering committee representatives come from a diverse

range of organisations with differing levels of understanding of relevant issues. A concise description of environmental health conditions in local Aboriginal communities and how these conditions impact on the health of these communities was needed to enable the committee to gain a shared understanding and progress through the different stages of HIA.

Next Steps

The IEHW HIA project team will develop several case studies for the steering committee showcasing the environmental health issues that local Aboriginal communities experience.

The project team has identified the search terms to be used whilst undertaking a literature review. Several key informants have been identified and an interviewing process is now due to commence.

Learning by Doing

The learning by doing approach has allowed the project team to connect the learning activities more closely with the real world situation. It shifts the focus from the lecturer-teaching activities to learner-focused learning activities. The HIA approach to learning by doing explicitly forced the project team to adopt a problem-solving orientation when learning new information or when agreement on some issues could not be achieved.

NSW HIA E-News

Disclaimer

This project is funded by NSW Health. Views expressed here are not necessarily the views of NSW Health.

This newsletter is brought to you by the HIA Project Team at the Centre for Health Equity Training, Research and Evaluation (CHETRE).

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Funded by

NSW HEALTH

Lower Hunter Regional Strategy

Hunter New England Area Health Service

The Proposal

The Lower Hunter Regional Strategy (LHRS) is a major policy that will guide and strategically direct how development in the region will be managed sustainably, based on a potential population increase of up to 125,000 people over the next 25 years. One of the aims of the LHRS is to provide a regional overarching framework for local governments to develop local strategic plans and local environmental plans. It will also guide priorities for investment by the State Government in transport infrastructure, capital works and service delivery.



Photo: MUV/RU

The Hunter Valley

The SIA

Hunter New England Area Health Service, a HIA developmental site, and the Hunter Premier's Department are the lead agencies on the project working closely with officers from the Hunter Department of Planning and the other RCMG members. Given the range of potential impacts arising from the proposal, it was decided to undertake a rapid-level social impact assessment. This will incorporate the social determinants of health to

develop recommendations for the Department of Planning.



Photo: Klarerati

Sunset over Newcastle Harbour

Tip 1: Never underestimate the capacity of a Working Party

Although several departments working together makes this an ambitious project, the SIA process to date indicates that all departments are working cohesively and respectfully. They have also embraced the challenge of contributing to the SIA process, including an agreement to share information.

Tip 2: Dealing with shifting goal posts

Given the political influences inherent in the development of strategies it is no wonder that throughout the process, the LHRS proposal has been modified and changed. Each change has required flexible thinking and adaptable approaches, without reverting back to the beginning of the process each time.

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Venessa Wells

Hunter New England
Area Health Service

At a Glance

Proposal Assessed
Lower Hunter
Regional Strategy

Developmental Site
Hunter New England
Area Health Service

Stakeholders Involved

- NSW Premier's Department
- NSW Department of Planning
- Members of the Hunter Regional Coordination Management Group

The Draft Lower Hunter Regional Strategy

The draft strategy has been released for public comment and can be accessed at on the NSW Department of Planning's website:

www.planning.nsw.gov.au/regional/hunter.asp



Prepared by
Matthew Lynch
Palerang Council

At a Glance

Proposal Assessed
Population Growth
Plan for Bungendore

Developmental Site
Greater Southern
Area Health Service

Stakeholders Involved

- Palerang Council
- Community
Representatives

Population Plan for Bungendore

Palerang Council and Greater Southern Area Health Service

The Proposal

Future development options are being considered for the town of Bungendore, located 26km east of Queanbeyan on the Kings Highway that links the Australian Capital Territory with the south coast of New South Wales. In recent times

Bungendore's population has been growing at an annual growth rate of about 3.9% resulting in an estimated population of 2000 people in 2005. In addition, Palerang Council, the council responsible for Bungendore, has also been approached by several land owners requesting to rezone significant areas of land adjoining the existing village boundary to allow for future urban expansion.

The HIA

Hypothetical Infill and Greenfield development scenarios have been developed, extrapolated from proposals already put before Palerang Council for the future development of Bungendore. These scenarios will be assessed for potential health impacts.

Insights So Far

The breadth of possible impacts, even in such a small community, is far reaching. Screening and scoping have revealed the need to be very clear on what is to be assessed in the HIA. There are broader contextual influences such as petrol prices, climate change, and a property boom. The HIA team must be comfortable in identifying these issues while acknowledging minimal influence on

these. In addition there are specific things more amenable to influence such as density, street design, walkability and the support of "healthy programs". These have formed the basis for the impacts being assessed.

The Next Steps

The next step is to finalise key stake-

holder interviews as part of the identification step.

On Learning by Doing

At the outset, none of the team members had direct prior experience in HIA. Learning by doing has broadened our experience base, while providing participants with an opportunity to learn from others in the team.

Learning to be flexible has been vital. Participants have had to be honest and comfortable admitting that processes and timeframes have been under-estimated and that these elements have had to be revisited.

This experience and real life 'learning by doing' example can not be reproduced by text book learning.

"The breadth of possible impacts, even in such a small community, is far reaching. Screening and scoping have revealed the need to be very clear on what is to be assessed in the HIA."



Photo: Matthew Lynch

...there are specific things more amenable to influence such as density, street design, walkability and "healthy programs".

Health and Wellbeing in Greater Western Sydney

Greater Western Sydney Health and Urban Development Group

The Proposal

The HIA is a strategy within the Group's overarching aim of improving understanding of health and wellbeing impacts of urban development in Greater Western Sydney, and accordingly, influencing policies that guide urban planning and development in the region.

Two documents are of primary interest - *The Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney* and *The Growth Centre Planning of the New Residential Release Areas in the South and North of the Western Sydney Region*. The focus of both documents is on managing population growth in Greater Western Sydney, including maintaining economic growth and employment opportunities, investing in infrastructure, developing "liveable" communities, and protecting the environment.

The HIA seeks to assess the potential health and wellbeing impacts of these plans and policies and make recommendations for the benefit of both new residents of growth areas and the wider population of metropolitan Sydney. To achieve these goals, the HIA will seek the support and participation not only of local governments and the health services, but also of development interests, academic institutions and state agencies involved in urban development decisions.

The HIA

In assessing the impact of anticipated urban and population growth in Western Sydney, the HIA will examine a number of potential development scenarios, comparing the predicted health and wellbeing impacts anticipated as a result of variations in such factors as the scale of development, infrastructure, and urban design. Given this approach the HIA will make specific recommendations for current urban

development plans for the region and, perhaps more importantly, will provide a strong basis for including health and wellbeing considerations in ongoing development planning and implementation.

Useful offshoots may be the identification of appropriate health and wellbeing indicators for urban growth in Sydney and by extension, other urban areas in Australia, and an assessment of capacity constraints within the agencies involved in urban planning in Sydney.

Challenges & Ways Forward

Maintaining a focus for the HIA when the proposal is being subjected to major revisions has been a challenge. The scenario-based approach to assessment we are using has enabled the HIA to retain its relevancy in a changing planning environment.

What is the Metropolitan Strategy?

The Sydney Metropolitan Strategy is made up of a number of planning documents developed by the NSW Department of Planning. It seeks to manage population growth in Greater Western Sydney for the next twenty-five years, while maintaining economic growth, investing in infrastructure, developing "liveable" communities, and protecting the environment.



Sydney Metropolitan Strategy documents are available from

www.metrostrategy.nsw.gov.au

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Berryman

*Western Sydney
Regional Organisation
of Councils Ltd*

At a Glance

Proposal Assessed

- The Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney
- The Growth Centre Planning of the New Residential Release Areas in the South and North of the Western Sydney Region

Developmental Site

Western Sydney
Regional
Organisation of
Councils Ltd

Stakeholders Involved

- Sydney South West Area Health Service
- Sydney West Area Health Service
- Centre for Health Equity Training, Research and Evaluation (CHETRE), University of New South Wales
- NSW Department of Health

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Central Coast Area
Health Service*

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Health*

At a Glance

Proposal Assessed
Integrated Perinatal
and Infant Care
Program for Northern
Sydney

Developmental Site
Northern Sydney
Central Coast Area
Health Service

**Stakeholders
Involved**
NSW Department of
Health

Health Home Visiting Program in Northern Sydney

Northern Sydney Central Coast Area Health Service

The Proposal

The program we are assessing is a model of Integrated Perinatal and Infant Care, as part of the Families First strategy, to be implemented in Northern Sydney. Proposed components include Universal Home Visits with a primary care assessment (psychosocial assessment of new mothers in the first two weeks postpartum), team care planning and management, and sustained home visiting (SHV). The model proposes specific strategies to support families identified as vulnerable to adverse physical, social and mental health outcomes, by targeting all women in Northern Sydney who have recently delivered.

2. Health services do not always think in terms of health impacts. Despite being a health service proposal, the desired health outcomes are not clearly specified. So our task will be to identify both positive and negative intended impacts and unintended impacts that may arise through local implementation.
3. Make the HIA your own. While a framework is useful (we are using the Equity focused HIA framework), be prepared to introduce other elements that match your HIA.

Next Steps

At this stage we are reviewing the literature and doing consultations as part of the identification stage. This will be followed by assessment of identified health impacts.

On Learning by Doing

As first-timers it may be tempting to cut corners. However, the learning by doing approach encourages all steps to be taken, and learning from each step. In particular the scoping step was frustratingly time-consuming, intense

and detailed, but we learned that to get the most out of the HIA, this stage must be done properly. Learning by doing this time around means doing future HIAs may be easier.



Photo: Pixelo Ltd

The HIA

A rapid-level equity-focused HIA aims to strengthen the proposed program by identifying both expected and unexpected benefits and unintended negative impacts that may arise in local implementation. As a commitment to reducing health inequities underpins Families First strategies, the HIA will also seek to identify relevant equity issues.

Insights So Far

1. Be clear about the scope of the project. We have confined our HIA to the components of the service model for which we can make recommendations for change. This took some time.

More information on
Families First is available at



[parenting.nsw.gov.au/public/
s26_homepage](http://parenting.nsw.gov.au/public/s26_homepage)

Greater Granville Regeneration Strategy

Sydney West Area Health Service

The Proposal

The Greater Granville Regeneration Strategy Stage 1 is an initiative of the strategic Partnership established in 2004 between Parramatta City Council and the Department of Housing. Granville has been chosen as a joint project due to the high proportion of Department of Housing owned stock and the significant long-term impacts and opportunities associated with regeneration. The Greater Granville Regeneration Strategy has taken a holistic approach to increasing the social, economic and environmental well-being of residents living in the area. The Stage 1 strategy includes guidance for the redevelopment of Department of Housing owned stock, as well as the provision of community facilities and services by a range of service providers.

The HIA

Extensive community consultation and engagement has already occurred as part of regeneration planning. The draft Regeneration Plan will be the focus of this HIA - which may be rapid or in-depth level depending on scoping. With the preparation of the Residential Development Strategy (RDS) by Parramatta Council coinciding with the project time frames, the Greater Granville stage 1 report will act as a key input into the development of the RDS.

The two guiding documents for Regeneration in Granville are the RDS being prepared by Council and the Regeneration Methodology Report developed jointly by Parramatta Council and DOH. The HIA recommendations are expected to contribute to both these by highlighting health outcomes of planning decisions in the local area.

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*Sydney West Area
Health Service*

At a Glance

Proposal Assessed
Greater Granville
Regeneration
Strategy

Developmental Site
Sydney West Area
Health Service

Stakeholders Involved

- Parramatta City Council
- NSW Department of Housing
- Community Representatives

International Society for Equity in Health 4th International Conference Adelaide, 11-13 September 2006

The theme for the 4th International Conference being held in Adelaide in 2006 is "creating healthy societies through inclusion and equity", and this reflects the central role of social, political, and economic determinants in creating health.

The organisers are now calling for abstracts, which are due by 1 March 2006. Early registration is available until July 11 2006. Further information, including forms, is available from the conference website at <http://www.iseqh.org>

The South Australian Government is funding a capacity building scholarship program for local

delegates who have little experience in documenting or presenting their work. The scholarship includes mentoring through the South Australian Community Health Research Unit. Conference registration and some other costs are also covered. For further information, contact Angela Lawless on 08 8204 5979 or email her at angela.lawless@flinders.edu.au



The 4th International
ISEQH Conference is
being held in
Adelaide from the
11th-13th September
2006

HIA Connect Resources and Information Online

HIA Connect brings together information and resources on health impact assessment from around the world.



chetre.med.unsw.edu.au/hia

It includes:

- Detailed information on the steps involved in HIA;
- Past editions of the HIA E-News
- Reviews and links to over 20 HIA guidelines and manuals
- Completed HIAs, including case studies on the 2004 Developmental HIA Sites.
- Reports on the application of HIA
- An extensive list of answers to frequently asked questions on HIA;
- A glossary of HIA terms;
- Information on the NSW HIA Project
- Details of other Australian HIA-related initiatives



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New Resources

HIA Special Issues

NSW Public Health Bulletin
Volume 16, Issues 7-8
www.health.nsw.gov.au/public-health/phb/phb.html

Environmental Impact Assessment Review
Volume 25, Issues 7-8

Websites

HIA Connect
<http://chetre.med.unsw.edu.au/hia>

RIVM HIA Database
webcollect.rivm.nl/hiadatabase

IMPACT: International HIA Consortium
www.ihia.org.uk

The HIA Gateway
www.publichealth.nice.org.uk/hiagateway

Journal Articles

Parry J, Kemm J. *Criteria for Use in the Evaluation of Health Impact Assessment*, *Public Health* 119(12): 1122-1129.

Simpson S, Mahoney M, Harris E et al. *Equity Focused Health Impact Assessment: A tool to assist policy makers in addressing health inequalities*, *Environmental Impact Assessment Review* 25(7-8): 772-782.

Atkinson P, Cooke A. *Developing a Framework to Assess Costs and Benefits of Health Impact Assessment*, *Environmental Impact Assessment Review* 25(7-8): 791-798.

Besser L, Danenberg A. *Walking to Public Transport: Steps to help meet physical activity recommendations*, *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 29(4): 273-280.