

University of Canberra

Healthpact Research Centre for Health Promotion and Wellbeing (HRCHPW)

Name of Storyteller(s): Professor Paul Morrison and Ms Kylie Pryde

What is this story about?

The HRCHPW is a multidisciplinary research centre, working to conduct health promotion and wellbeing research and evaluation in partnership with other organisations and communities in the Australian Capital Territory. The research undertaken by the Centre will be linked to the key issues which impact on the health and wellbeing of the ACT community as outlined in the Canberra Plan and the ACT Health Promotion Board's Strategic Plan.

Why were you doing it?

In 2004 the ACT Health Promotion Board (**Healthpact**) commissioned a scoping study to explore the possibility of establishing a Health Promotion Research and Evaluation Centre (Verrinder & Patten, 2004). In May 2005 it was announced that the University of Canberra would establish the **Healthpact** Research Centre for Health Promotion and Wellbeing (HRCHPW) as a joint initiative between the ACT Health Promotion Board (**Healthpact**) and the University of Canberra.

What year did this project begin and how long did it take?

The Centre was established in 2005 at the University of Canberra and is funded by the ACT Health Promotion Board and the University of Canberra for a period of three years

Where did the project take place?

ACT-wide

What were you trying to do?

The primary goal of the Centre is to conduct high quality research that contributes to the knowledge base for health promotion and wellbeing policy, research, evaluation and practice in the Australian Capital Territory.

The Centre's research and evaluation are prioritised in the following three areas:

- Efficacy and evaluation of health promotion interventions
- Health inequalities
- Social determinants of health

Who were you wanting to reach and how did you go about it?

The Centre hopes to reach individuals, researchers, community based organisations and policy makers who have an interest in promoting health and wellbeing that is underpinned by research and evaluation studies.

The Centre is one provider of health promotion evidence in the ACT and seeks to work as a collaborator with other organisations, people and communities.

Who was involved?

ACT Health Promotion Board (Health**pact**), University of Canberra

Our vision has been bold and daring; there has been a need to be creative in our thinking and, above all, not to be afraid to try new things and take risks.

Health**pact** Research Centre for Health Promotion and Wellbeing

What did you do?

A Joint Strategic Planning Committee was established to draw up a Strategic Plan and act as a resource and consultative group to the Centre. The Committee comprises representation from Health**pact** and the University of Canberra. The Strategic Plan charts the Centre's course over the next three years and serves three critical functions by:

- Helping the Centre to clarify, focus, and plan its development;
- Providing a considered and logical framework within which the Centre can develop and pursue its goals; and
- Serving as a basis for discussion with potential partners such as Universities, funding agencies and community organisations.

The Centre was officially launched on Monday 29 August 2005 by the Chief Minister, Mr Jon Stanhope. MLA

Since the official launch, the Centre has:

- Provided seed funding to support the establishment of research partnerships between university researchers and community or industry partners, practitioners and organisations
- Offered mentoring and support to researchers who apply for funds
- Helped build capacity through liaising with community organisations advising on evaluation methodology and seeking evaluation consultancy services outside the University
- Applied for a range of small and large grants ranging from \$5,000-\$200,000 from UC and community organisations.
- Grant allocation: \$30,000 funds available in 2005 and \$60,000 for 2006
- Scholarship allocation for a PhD to commence in 2006



- Applied for funds to support the establishment of an Indigenous research fellowship currently pursuing a research fellow in Indigenous health promotion negotiations with a number of philanthropic organisations
- Commenced evaluation studies with the Cancer Council ACT

What is working well?

The widespread support we received from across the University and the community has been tremendous. Psychologists, educators, health scientists, graphic designers, nursing, physiotherapy, law, business, and sociology staff have expressed a positive desire to be involved in the Centre's work.

We have set up a grants scheme that provides funds for collaborative research between University researchers and community partners working in the area of health promotion and wellbeing. In 2005, we allocated \$30,000 funds for two grant applications. In 2006, we have a total of \$60,000 available for collaborative research grants. We are continuing to raise our profile through our website, e-mails and newsletters.

What can others learn from your work?

The Centre is quite different to others in that it is a University-wide Centre and draws on expertise within the University of Canberra and agencies and practitioners in the region.

Our vision has been bold and daring; there has been a need to be creative in our thinking and above all not to be afraid to try new things and take risks to tackle the complex health and wellbeing problems in our community.

Where to from here?

Develop the profile through publications, conferences and extensive funding while working with key partners in the community.

Conclusion:

We hope that this expanding vision of research will help us to explore important social issues and problems. These approaches to research will generate more solutions, strategies and innovations and will help us to 'give research away' to people and institutions and enable them to become more active participants in society setting their own agendas for health promotion and wellbeing.

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Who would you like to thank?

Health**pact**; the University of Canberra, especially the Vice Chancellor (Professor Roger Dean) and the Pro Vice-Chancellors for their support.

