

WA Health Translation Network

Executive Board Minutes

Meeting No. 1/2019

Tuesday 29 January 2019, 7:30-9:30am

Members Meeting Room, UniClub, UWA

Attendees:

Mr Malcolm McCusker AC CVO QC, Chair

Ms Pip Brennan, Consumer Advocate

Dr James Williamson, representing the WA Department of Health

Professor Shirley Bowen, representing the Private Health Sector members

Professor Peter Leedman, representing the Medical Research Institute members

Professor Eeva Leinonen, representing the member universities

Professor Neale Fong, representing the WA Health Service Area Boards

To be appointed, Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia

Professor Gary Geelhoed, Executive Director WAHTN, ex officio

Executive Officer: Dr Tanya Tuffrey, WAHTN

By Invitation:

Dr Debbie Turner, Chief Operating Officer WAHTN

Professor Peter Thompson AM, Deputy Director WAHTN

Apologies

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed members to the first meeting of 2019.

2. Declarations of potential or perceived conflicts of interest

None

3. Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Board 6 November 2018

3.1 It was resolved that the Minutes of the Executive Board Meeting of 6 November 2019 were Approved.

3.2 The Executive Director provided an update on the Action Items from 6 November 2018.

4. Management Committee

The Minutes of the Management Committee meeting held on 4 December 2018 were noted.

The next Management Committee meeting will be held on 19 February 2019.

5. Australian Health Research Alliance (AHRA)

- There were 4 key AHRA Initiatives undertaken in 2018 that will continue in 2019:
 - Indigenous Research Capacity Building Network undertook a nationwide survey. The response from WA was very small, but overall the response rate across Australia was good. A workshop will be held to discuss the findings on 14 February 2019 which will be attended by Glenn Pearson and Debbie Turner (who will also attend an AHRA Chief Operating Officers meeting while there).
 - Health Systems Improvement & Sustainability Initiative – WAHTN have two representatives on this working group. This group have been very active and have produced some significant reviews and recommendations in 2018. In a recent AHRA meeting, it was agreed that these reports (and others produced by AHRA working groups which are ready to be shared publically) will be made available for AHRA Centres to share with their members. WAHTN will make these documents available on the WAHTN website when available.
 - Data Driven Health Improvement. Workshop outcomes will be posted on the WAHTN website when available.
 - Consumer and Community Initiative Project – WAHTN is heading this initiative with Sydney Health Partners – a survey, literature review and comparative study were done in 2018, culminating in a workshop on 12 November. This is a growing important area of research and is now being mandated by NHMRC for inclusion in grant applications. AHRA will continue work in this area in 2019 to assist with standardising tools across the country.
- Other AHRA Networks and Initiatives
 - Wound Care Initiative- Federal Health Minister asked AHRA to study Wound Care. This is being headed by WAHTN and The Brisbane Diamantina Group. WA is well placed to lead this initiative, with previous work by WoundsWest and work by SilverChain looking at wound dressings providing an ideal opportunity for translation of research. A Steering Committee is being formed and a project outline will be drafted for discussion by the AHRA Executive Council.

6. Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF)

- A new position has been created to manage the WA based MRFF funded projects.
- MRFF Round 2 submission for \$2 M has been approved for the calendar year 2019, with \$1M allocated to the Early Career Fellowships in Translational Health Research Program. 11 Fellowships were awarded across a number of WAHTN partner organisation research sites.
- MRFF Round 3 applications for \$4.138M are due in April 2019. The funding will be over two years. The projects to be funded are yet to be determined, however \$3M has been set aside to fund Hospital based translational research.

- The Executive Director met with Hospital Service Provider Chief Executives to flag that \$3M will be available for funding translational research projects (proposal previously circulated to the Board). These projects must include: collaboration with 3 WAHTN partners; community involvement; measurement of impact; and alignment with MRFF research priorities.

Discussion was held around the need to position WA researchers to be ready for large funding calls such as MRFF, Frontier and Partnership grants in such a way as to maximise success.

7. Governance and Operations

7.1 Joint Venture Agreement, Centre Agent Services Agreement, WAHTN Executive Board Terms of Reference and WAHTN Management Committee Terms of Reference have been updated and were sent to UWA Legal Services for review. Feedback has been received and minor adjustments recommended. ACTION ITEM - Updated documents will be circulated to the Board OOS for approval.

7.2 Partners and Associate Membership update:

- WAHTN is still awaiting word from SilverChain as to whether or not they agree to becoming a WAHTN Partner.
- The Executive Director has met with staff from one of the private radiology groups, to discuss possible funding and/or in-kind support for research imaging. They queried membership benefits and are considering becoming a member.

7.3 Strategic plan

Executive Director to undertake review of WAHTN structure, including role and structure of the Board and Management Committee and a review of the other AHRA Centres.

ACTION ITEM – Executive Director to set up a Strategic Planning discussion session for the Board, possibly in April. Possible dates and a draft framework to facilitate discussion will be circulated OOS. Executive Director to circulate draft document to the Board

The draft document should be a strawman and incorporate feedback from the WAHTN survey (noting its limited circulation and audience).

ACTION ITEM Executive Director is to explore whether other AHRA centres would be willing to share their strategic plans.

It was noted that there are several WA based strategic plans are underway at the moment and concern was expressed about overlap and that consultations involving the same stakeholders could be confusing and burdensome.

8. Initiatives and Activities

8.1 Activities

- 3–5 November - Meetings with Dame Sally Davies CMO England. The Executive Director had a one on one meeting with Dame Sally, prior to co-chairing a workshop with Jonathan Carapetis of Chief Executives, Board Chairs and Health Officials. Dame Davies has re-energised research in England, and shown that to provide good service research and academia must be emphasised.

8.2 WAHTN Retreat / Strategic Planning Workshop

See Item 7.3

8.3 Proposed Neuroscience Research Plan for Western Australia – Jo Wilkie is working with WAHTN and the Perron Institute to develop the Neuroscience Research Plan. The strategic plan will include all stakeholders, including funders, to ensure an implementable plan is developed with funding mapped for the next 10 years. It was noted it would need to be compatible with the broader strategic plans and could provide valuable lessons in its development.

8.4 Survey of WAHTN researchers

The results of this survey were positive. Results indicated that there was a good culture, respondents were positive about resources, however most claimed that they were time-poor. Comments about WAHTN platforms such as Research Education and Training Platform (RETP), Consumer and Community Health research Network (CHHRN) and the Clinical Trials and Data Centre (CTDC) were positive.

8.5 Biostatistics Consulting Service

Clinical Trials and Data Centre (CTDC) is one of WAHTN's original platforms and is based at Curtin University with Prof Chris Reid. Biostatisticians are in short supply in WA, which has implications for incorporating good statistical advice into research projects from start to finish. Such services are often expensive and therefore not accessible to younger researchers. Prof Peter Thompson in conjunction with CTDC is exploring the development of a service to provide biostatistician help to WA researchers. This service will utilise young biostatisticians, who will do most of the coalface work, with oversight by a senior biostatistician. This will assist researchers and will provide a workforce development approach to young biostatisticians in WA. The cost for the service will need to cover the costs of both the junior and senior biostatisticians and is estimated to be \$120,000 pa for 3 years. WAHTN is exploring ways to fund the program, MRFF funding may be a possible mechanism. In order to capture research in a good database, the internationally accepted REDCap software will be used. It is hoped REDCap will become the standard being used in WA. This program will be administered through CTDC, and Helen Atkinson will provide REDCap support. This service will be promoted actively online and through WAHTN networks. The funding model still needs developing and guidelines around authorship will need to be drawn up. The WAHTN Board agreed to support this initiative.

Note – the Forrest Foundation also supports Biostatisticians through a Forrest Fellowship and the Australian National Phenome Centre is about to employ 2 Biostatisticians. It would be advantageous if these individuals could join the 'network' of biostatisticians coalescing around the Biostatistician Consulting Services project. ACTION ITEM Executive Director to meet with Paul Johnson to explore further.

9. Financial Reports

9.1 The WAHTN Financial Report was discussed.

It was noted Consumer and Community Health Research Network (CCHRN) funding ends in June 2019. Interim funds are needed to continue this work while there is a transition to a more sustainable form of funding. This may be through the WA Research and Innovation

Fund in the long term. At a meeting with Lotterywest it was suggested that a combined CCHRN/WAHTN application would be preferable.

The Board requested a budget format which separated research project costs from operational costs and could be more clearly read and understood. At Peter Leedman's suggestion it was agreed the WAHTN Manager would meet with the CFO from Harry Perkins to draw up more suitable budget format. An updated set of financial papers will be circulated out of session with end of 2018 calendar year figures included.

The issue of auditing of finances was discussed. The Board voted to ask UWA to audit and report on the WAHTN Business Unit annually, and to seek an external person (if required) to do the audit of Commonwealth MRFF program grants (ACTION ITEM).

10. Platforms

- 10.1 CCHRN – Anne McKenzie has resigned her position as Head of CCHRN, effective from 15 Feb 2019. Ms Debra Langridge has been appointed as the new head. ACTION ITEM – a letter to be sent from the Executive Board to Anne McKenzie to formally thank her for her contributions to WAHTN and the Consumer and Community sector.
- 10.2 Biobanking –WAHTN provided some matched funding to Telethon Kids Institute and the Origins project to pilot biobanking software. The software will be made available to a larger number of WAHTN partners if successful. Discussion ensued about the expense of successful biobanking facilities, standardising processes across Australia, and sustaining these activities long term. ACTION ITEM Executive Director to send Aron Chakera's biobanking review paper to James Williamson.
- 10.6 Executive Director has met with key stakeholders and more recently Lotterywest about contributing to a joint funding bid to the Commonwealth under the National Imaging Facility (NIF) program. In addition to the stakeholders funding, a commitment from the state government of approximately \$5M over 3 years is required in order to secure \$10M of Commonwealth funding. James Williamson agreed to meet with Peter Leedman and Gary Geelhoed to discuss Government contribution OOS (ACTION ITEM).

11. Any other Business

- 11.1 Time and venue for future meetings confirmed for every two months, at the UWA UniClub from 7:30 am to 9:30 am.
- 11.2 AICC visit to Israel – Executive Director had raised this issue out of session. The visit is scheduled for May 2019 and the Director General of DOH, as well as the Minister for Health and the WA Chief Scientist are anticipated to also be taking this trip, which has a Health and Innovation focus this year. The Board supports this trip if the program and meetings are structured carefully, and the budgetary cost are clear.
- 11.3 A Communications Officer has been appointed for 6 months, with the costs shared between CCHRN and WAHTN. It is hoped that this person can continue to be employed after the first 6 months are over, depending on the budget. Prof Leinonen suggested exploring the use of University students in internship placements for projects on communication, based on successful experience at Murdoch.

12. Next meeting of the WAHTN Executive Board

Tuesday 12 March 2019, 7:30 am – 9:30 am

13. In camera