

## **Reinventing health – policy, practice and systems**

Health care and health systems are changing dramatically in Australia and globally leading to increased pressure to accelerate the transfer of new knowledge from research to policy and practice. Government, research funding bodies and the research community are investing in finding more effective ways of ensuring that this occurs in a timely, systematic and effective manner.

The partners involved have contributed to the development of significant government initiatives such as the Guidelines for best clinical practice in smoking cessation in general practice, guidelines for treatment of alcohol problems, General Practice Reform, better prescribing of pharmaceuticals, Medically Supervised Injecting Centre, Families First, health professions education, improving health services for diverse communities, the NSW Health Equity Initiative, HIV prevention and sexual health promotion, traffic safety and many more. Research at UNSW has contributed to implementing behavioural risk factor identification and management in primary care, enhancing the organisational underpinning for effective chronic disease care, developing national guidelines for managing Type 2 diabetes, developing the national 'best practice' framework for information and education for people with diabetes, developing the Australian National Diabetes Strategy and Implementation Plan, influencing policy in reconfiguration of emergency departments, developing interventions in response to concerns around patient safety and developing and evaluation of discharge processes. Ongoing surveillance activities have informed practice in relation to surveillance for HIV, viral hepatitis and STIs, as well as through the Illicit Drugs Reporting System (IDRS).

In setting research directions for the next decade the UNSW should actively build on this expertise and develop national leadership in the research to policy, practice and systems interface. A strong commitment to social justice characterizes much of the activity which has local, national and international dimensions. Our teaching and relationships with key organizations are central to playing this role which needs to be challenging, iterative, and interactive with relevant stakeholders.

The School of Public Health and Community Medicine, its associated research Centres, together with a number of other research centres at UNSW have identified “**Reinventing health – policy, practice and systems**” as a key priority area of research focus. Collectively this group has a substantial reputation in policy and practice as reflected in publications, research funding and national leadership roles. In 2002, there were over 250 research publications from this group of research teams. Research funding rose dramatically from under \$10 million in 1998 to well over \$20 million in 2003. Research activity continues to grow with competitive research grants awarded through the NHMRC, the ARC, the NIH, and non-governmental bodies including the National Heart Foundation and Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation. The UNSW is working actively with the Institute of Health Research to advance a number of related research areas.

A focused investment by the UNSW would be in keeping with increased commitment by the NHMRC to strategic and priority driven research as well as with key proposals regarding health research funding in NSW and nationally. Investing in “**Reinventing health – policy, practice and systems**” will ensure that UNSW is well placed to work with all the key NSW players, as well as those working nationally and internationally at this important interface.

<b>Participating UNSW groups:</b>	
School of Public Health and Community Medicine	National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre
Indigenous Health Unit, SPHCM	National Centre for HIV Epidemiology and Clinical Research
Centre for Culture and Health	Australian Centre for Diabetes Strategies
Centre for Health Informatics	Injury Risk Management Research Centre
Centres for Primary Care and Equity Research	Centre for Population Mental Health
Centre for Clinical Governance Research in Health	Simpson Centre for Health Services Research
National Centre for HIV Social Research	Social Policy Research Centre