

**WA Health Translation Network
Management Committee Subgroup Meeting 03/2021
Minutes**

Wednesday 15 September 2021, 10 am – 11 am

Location: Harry Perkins Institute, Room 538, 6 Verdun Street Nedlands Via Zoom

Present

Chair: Professor Gary Geelhoed, Executive Director WAHTN
Edith Cowan University: Professor John Olynyk
North Metropolitan Health Service: Dr Aron Chakera
St John of God Hospital: Professor Steve Webb
The University of Notre Dame Australia: Professor Jim Codde
The University of Western Australia: Professor Anna Nowak
Clinical Trials and Data Management Centre: Professor Chris Reid
WAHTN Chief Operating Officer: Dr Debbie Turner
WAHTN Manager National Projects: Ms Jo Wilkie
WAHTN Manager: Ms Lauren White
WAHTN Administrative Officer: Koshala Shanmugakumar

Apologies

Harry Perkins Institute and the University of Western Australia: Professor Kevin Pflieger
Murdoch University: Professor David Morrison
Perron Institute for Neurological and Translational Science: Professor Steve Wilton AO
Telethon Kids Institute: Professor Catherine Elliott
Busselton Population Medical Research Institute: Ms Jennie Hui
Consumer and Community Involvement Program: Ms Debra Langridge

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomes members to this meeting.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 August 2021

The Minutes of the Meeting of the WAHTN Subgroup held on 11 August 2021 were noted.

3. Governance

Executive Board Meeting update

The Executive Board of the WAHTN met earlier in the day (15 September 2021), Professor Gary Geelhoed updated members on the outcomes from this meeting. Summarised as follows:

- Silver Chain Group and Perth Radiological Clinic have been endorsed as new Partner Members. The NHMRC will be notified of the new additions to the WAHTN Membership.
- There is still no decision on the appointment of the new Board Chair. Recruitment for the Executive Director position will be advertised soon as Gary Geelhoed's current contract concludes in April 2022.

- Discussion on the latest round of NHMRC Investigator Grants:
 - The group congratulated Professor Anna Nowak on her recently awarded NHMRC Investigator Grant relating to her work in mesothelioma.
 - The NHMRC's Investigator Grant outcome was discussed at length, particularly how to improve the success rate of WA applications, which was a record low with only 2% of the funding awarded to WA. The group discussed ways to improve the success rate for future applications.
 - The members agreed that it might be useful to obtain statistics and feedback from NHMRC about the applications submitted by WA researchers as it might provide some insights.
 - Professor Nowak, who was successful in this year's grant round, said the process was very competitive and fractions of a score were the difference between funded and non-funded applications.

Professor Jim Codde suggested getting information on whether applicants were full time researchers or whether time committed to teaching and/or clinical loads potentially impacted their likelihood of success.

Professor John Olynyk noted that it was important to ensure we keep a minimum quantum of research capacity in the State if we were to compete against the East Coast researchers.

The group discussed representation and lobbying in Canberra to improve success in NHMRC/MRFF funding.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Professor Geelhoed will write to the appropriate organisations, asking if they can share broad anonymous information on scores and success rates from the recent outcomes of NHMRC grants, in particular, the Investigator Grants.
- Explore possibilities to hold an online or face-to-face seminar which includes a successful organisation or alternatively from funding bodies, such as NHMRC or MRFF to give an insight to WA researcher on how our rate of success could be improved.

4. Funding Opportunities

WA Future Health Research and Innovation Fund

Professor Gary Geelhoed informed members that he has been unable to obtain a subsequent meeting with Mr John Van Der Wielen, in his capacity as Chair of the Advisory Council for the Future Health Research and Innovation Fund. The WA Department of Health is working out a process for key stakeholders to connect with the Advisory Committees, particularly to put forward ideas on funding opportunities.

5. Activities

Area Health Services Workshop

The WA Health Minister, Roger Cook, has agreed to open the workshop. The scheduling of this meeting is still in progress.

Clinical Trials Forum (held 9 September 2021)

The Clinical Trials Stakeholder Forum was held on 9 September 2021. The Future Health Research and Innovation Fund event was organised in collaboration with the WAHTN, and MTPConnect and WA Life Science Innovation Hub. Members provided updates and noted that the event was well attended and productive.

Professor Chris Reid commented that the consultation process had sought to narrow some of the funding initiatives prior to the commencement of the Forum, which may have led to some of the best options related to integrated methods of promoting clinical trial activity not having an opportunity to emerge, perhaps to the extent that it could have.

Professor Steve Webb said that some of the options that were presented as alternatives were really best packaged within the WAHTN Clinical Trials and Data Management Centre (CTDMC) but incorporating some sort of model in which there are multiple nodes spread across our key institutions.

The WA Department of Health will summarise outcomes from the Forum, which will be circulated to this group in due course.

Science on the Swan 2022 topic focussing on Innovation and Commercialisation

The theme for the Science on the Swan 2022 will focus on WA Innovation and Commercialisation in Health Research and will be held in May 2022. Preliminary meetings have been held with key stakeholders and a call for nominations for the SOTS Organising Committee will be called for shortly.

Phase 2b Study of oral Insulin update

Glen Travers and Professor Gary Geelhoed met recently with the WA Minister for Health, Roger Cook to discuss the possibilities of producing oral insulin in WA. This meeting could create opportunities, which could be beneficial to the State. Discussions are ongoing.

Clinician Researchers

Professor Gary Geelhoed is in the process of arranging a meeting with key stakeholders to progress this initiative.

Primary Care Research

Professor Gary Geelhoed discussed the work of the Australasian Association of Academic Primary and noted there is no Primary Care Research Network in WA. He is planning to have discussions with WAPHA to promote this idea, as primary care is an important part of the health care system in terms of research and reducing the pressure in the hospital system.

Professor Steve Webb suggested linking with the local primary care sector to promote cohesion at a national level amongst primary care.

Prof Nowak suggested if it was helpful to bring together representation from WAHTN partner organisations that already have some primary care research who will benefit from connecting.

6. Australian Health Research Alliance (AHRA) and Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF)

CCI Handbook

Ms Jo Wilkie briefed the members on the CCI Handbook, which is still under embargo, members were asked not to distribute further at this stage.

The CCI Handbook is designed for researchers, consumers, organisations, and funders, and incorporate templates and useful resources.

WAHTN is currently awaiting advice from the Commonwealth and State Health Ministers with regards to launching the CCI Handbook.

Final Activity Report for the MRFF Rapid Applied Research Translation Grant

The report was attached to the Agenda for members information and was noted.

7. Other Business

N/A

8. Next Meeting

Wednesday 13 October 10 am – 11 am