

ARC/NHMRC Research Network in Ageing Well



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Convened by: The University of Sydney

Major partners:

Australian National University La Trobe University
University of Queensland Curtin University of Technology
Flinders University University of New South Wales

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Newsletter 2 – November 2005

Dear Colleagues

We are pleased to send you this second newsletter on our developments and plans as we near the end of our first year. We very much appreciate the efforts and goodwill of many individuals and organisations who share our commitment to the collaborative development of Australian research on ageing.

Network Participants are encouraged to contact our Convenors – Theme, State, and National – to become more involved in our activities and to suggest new initiatives. The Network's programs will be evolving progressively over our five year program, and they are open to new directions within our core mission.

If you are new to the Network and would like to know more about us, we suggest that you go to our website (see below) for information on our objectives and programs, 9 Management Committee members and 41 other Participants. You also will find our June newsletter, related resources on ageing research, and information on how you can become an Associate of the Network.

Senior Program Manager for the Network Hub

We are pleased to announce that Mr Bruce Shaw has commenced as Acting Program Manager, phone 02 9767 6282 (Sydney) or 02 6125 6042 (ANU), emails bshaw@fhs.usyd.edu.au and bruce.shaw@anu.edu.au. Bruce recently served as a Senior Advisor on ageing and aged care for the Australian Medical Association (AMA) and he has widespread experience in government and with voluntary organisations. Bruce is working from our University of Sydney hub for program management, and he has a base at our ANU hub for national liaison in Canberra.

The Ageing Well Website (www.ageingwell.edu.au)

Our website provides Network Participants and Associates with information on Network programs, and it serves as a portal to Australian Research On-Line (see below) and other national and international resources on ageing. Please check ARO and our website frequently for news.

The Network Advisory Group

The Network Advisory Group brings the views of consumer, government, and industry constituencies to establish Network directions; build collaborative research; and disseminate and translate research into practice, policy, and public awareness.

At its first meeting in August, the Advisory Group emphasised the value of research which brings the viewpoint of older people into policymaking and service development. This perspective will be important in identifying research initiatives to be supported by the Network.

We are especially grateful to Barbara Squires of The Benevolent Society (and immediate past president of the Australian Association of Gerontology) for her leadership of the Advisory Group.

NHMRC/ARC Ageing Well, Ageing Productively (AWAP) Funding Program

The Network supports our Participants in preparing high quality research proposals that can contribute significantly to the national development of multi-disciplinary research on ageing in Australia.

After seeking input from our Participants, the Network supported the submission in September of three Expression of Interest (EoIs) directed to the ‘themes’ of the five-year AWAP program.

The Management Committee aims to support Network Participants in developing proposals for AWAP (if short-listed) and other ARC and NHMRC funding. Priority will be given to strong teams of Participants whose proposals fit our core objectives:

- Multi-disciplinary, large-scale, national, and high quality proposals involving several or more Universities across the States.
- An emphasis on Network theme areas with strong involvement of constituency groups including representatives of older people (particularly for ARC Linkages grants).

Participants who have research plans that fit these criteria are encouraged to explore them with other Network Participants and the relevant theme or working group Convenors.

Theme Areas led by Core Collaborators in the Network

The Network’s four themes centre on focal points for the wellbeing of an ageing Australia, and they relate closely to the Australian Ageing Research Agenda and the ‘Ageing Well, Ageing Productively’ National Research Goal (see ARO below). The themes are led by Convenors and Co-Convenor who set priorities and plan research efforts.

Productivity and Economic Security Theme:

Professor Sue Richardson of Flinders University (Convenor) and Professor Peter Saunders of the University of NSW (Co-Convenor).

A planning workshop with key researchers and policymakers has identified priority research topics for collaborative proposals and seeking financial and other support from Government departments.

Professor Richardson and the Productivity Theme supported an AWAP EoI Productive Retiring led by Professor Graeme Hugo involving seven Chief Investigators who are Network Participants.

Independent Living and Social Participation Theme:

Professor Helen Bartlett of the University of Queensland (Convenor) and Professor Duncan Boldy of Curtin University of Technology (Co-Convenor).

A preliminary scoping workshop was held, a scoping paper is nearing completion, and a working paper on data linkages was prepared on services research.

Professors Bartlett, Boldy, and other participants in this theme area are Chief Investigators in AWAP EoIs on Productive Retiring (above) and Approaches to Care (below).

Healthy Ageing Theme:

Professor Colette Browning of La Trobe University (Convenor) and Professor Mary Luszcz, Flinders University, and Professor Gary Andrews of the Centre for Ageing Studies (Co-Convenor).

A workshop on ‘Interventions for Older People’ brought together more than 30 leading researchers and health promotion experts to identify current knowledge and gaps, outline research directions,

explore collaborative activities, and involve post-graduate students and emerging researchers. The opening address was given by Professor Marcia Ory who is an international expert in physical activity interventions for older people. Collaborative grant proposals will be developed on Adapting to Driving Transitions and Physical Activity Promotion in General Practice Settings. A workshop report will be available on the website.

Five students were assisted to attend the *First Biannual APS Psychology & Ageing Interest Group Conference: 'Informing Psychological Interventions'*, 4-5 November 2005 at Deakin University.

Professors Browning, Luszcz, Andrews and other collaborators in the Healthy Ageing theme are Chief Investigators in the AWAP EoI Learning How to Age Well (below).

Population Research Strategies Theme:

Dr Judith Healy of the Australian National University (Convenor) and Associate Professor Kaarin Anstey of the Australian National University (Co-Convenor).

The ANU hub leads the Network's longitudinal research strategy including efforts to increase use of existing longitudinal studies, enhance analysis skills (see below), and explore new directions in Australian longitudinal research on ageing.

Associate Professor Anstey is leading 10 Network Participants in an AWAP Expression of Interest Learning How to Age Well from Australian Longitudinal Studies of Ageing.

Research on Aboriginal Ageing Working Group:

Professor Tony Broe with Dr Lisa Jackson Pulver, at the University of New South Wales, are leading the development of a Network-supported, collaborative research program on Aboriginal ageing, working closely with the AAG and indigenous researchers. They are developing a research agenda and proposals including a component of the Approaches to Care AWAP proposal (see below).

Research on Aged Care Services Working Group:

Professor Hal Kendig, in his capacity as a Research Professor at the University of Sydney, has coordinated an AWAP EoI by 7 Network Participants on Approaches to Care Supporting Independence and Well-being.

State Hubs of the Network

State-based activities of the Network are facilitating information exchange, collaborative proposal development, and joint seminars linking researchers from different disciplines and universities to government departments, service providers, and organisations for older people.

The **WA State Hub** (Professor Duncan Boldy Convenor), in collaboration with the WA Division of the AAG, held a 'Symposium on Ageing Research' for 60 people in Perth in September. The symposium aimed to identify opportunities for new and imaginative research connections. 36 short presentations were given and presentations were made on the Emerging Researchers on Ageing and other national programs of the Network (see below). A report will be available soon on the Website.

The **Victorian Hub** (Associate Professor Colette Browning Convenor) has co-sponsored a seminar and a meeting is planned for late November 2005 with researchers to discuss networking in Victoria and collaborative grant activities. A Forum on translating research to practice is planned for March 2006 in collaboration with government departments, AAG Victoria and COTA.

The South Australian Hub (Professor Mary Luszcz Convenor) is working with the multi-

University Healthy Ageing Research Cluster, the APS Psychology and Ageing Interest Group, and the SA/NT branch of the AAG. A core group from the three Universities, the Office of the Ageing and other key stakeholders is being formed to achieve synergies among groups having common aims and activities are identified.

The **NSW Hub** (Professor Kendig) and **Queensland Hub** (Professor Bartlett) are establishing their core groups and planning activities. In NSW a seminar will be presented on Successful Ageing by Professor Jacqui Smith of the Max Planck Institute on 19 December 2005.

Network Programs

The Emerging Researchers in Ageing (ERA) Strategies

The University of Queensland hub (Professor Bartlett) has organised an ERA conference of post-graduate students in ageing on 8 November 2005, just prior to the Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG) national conference.

A national survey of emerging researchers in ageing is nearing completion with more than 150 responses so far. This will increase our understanding of emerging researchers' needs and expectations, and help inform strategies for capacity building.

ERA aims to enhance research capacities for research students and recent graduates by providing quality mentoring from and collaboration with established experts, in order to help build the next generation of leaders in ageing research.

Students with an interest in ageing are encouraged to join the Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG) as a member of the Student Section. The AAG is a particularly valuable forum for multidisciplinary research, which makes strong connections between research and practice.

Data Archive on Older People

The ANU hub has set up a Data Archive on Older Australians at the Australian Social Science Data Archive (ASSDA) led by Dr Deborah Mitchell. The Archive makes quality data available for wider use by researchers and makes better use of our investment in existing studies.

The Archive, available at <http://ageing-well.anu.edu.au/webview/index.jsp> (or through the Network's web page) includes cross-sectional studies as well as important longitudinal surveys. New users need to register before using the system. Registration is free. Stephen Gray was appointed as a half-time archivist. People wishing to discuss depositing or accessing data can contact Sophie Holloway at ASSDA on 02 6125 3809.

The Network and ASSDA (and possibly ERA) are considering a plan to run an introductory workshop on accessing and using the Archive on Ageing.

Inventory of Australian Grants and Publications in Ageing

The Network has supported the Centre for Research & Education in Ageing (CREA) at the University of Newcastle, led by Professor Julie Byles, in compiling a database on Australian literature and grants relating to ageing research over the last five years. This will serve as an invaluable source for the Network, and for future ageing research in Australia. This database should be available through the Australian Research Online (ARO) website (<http://www.aro.gov.au>) in late 2005.

Thanks to the many Network Participants who contributed to this effort.

Methodological Skills Development

The ANU Hub of the Network will sponsor workshops on longitudinal data analysis, commencing in 2006.

International Visitors

The Network is finalising plans to support several distinguished international visitors to Australia during 2006, in association with other organisations related to ageing.

Network Participants who wish to propose international visitors are encouraged to send a brief e-mail to Bruce Shaw bshaw@fhs.usyd.edu.au outlining the proposed visitor and how they could contribute to Network theme areas and programs.

Developments in Collaboration

The Network aims to build its programs in collaboration with other organisations contributing to research on ageing. We work particularly closely with the Australian Association of Gerontology and the Office for an Ageing Australia. The Australian Government's Building Ageing Research Capacity (BARC) project is important in facilitating national developments by researchers and policymakers.

The Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG)

The AAG provides leadership in developing and linking multi-disciplinary research on ageing to policy, practice, and service developments. Network Participants and Associates are encouraged to join and contribute to the AAG. For more information go to www.aag.asn.au.

The 2005 National Conference on the Gold Coast on 9-11 November includes a symposium on Network activities, and an open forum to provide information and seek input on the Network directions. Presentations will be made on the Data Archive on Ageing (Steve Gray) and results from pooled longitudinal data from the Archive (Kaarin Anstey).

Ageing Research Online (ARO)

The ARO is the central repository of information on Australian research on ageing. It is managed by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (www.aro.gov.au).

Australian researchers on ageing are encouraged to enter their research on the ARO data base and to check it frequently for news. The ARO continues to expand the numbers of entries and its search capacity has recently been upgraded.

International Research Centre for Healthy Ageing & Longevity (IRCHAL)

IRCHAL is an associate organisation member of the Network, and we are exploring collaborative possibilities involving international experts, primarily in bio-medical aspects of healthy ageing.

IRCHAL's mission is to promote healthy ageing & longevity through interdisciplinary collaboration among the world's leading experts on the science of health, ageing and longevity, and to disseminate evidence-based knowledge throughout the nations of the developed and developing world for the betterment of humankind.

IRCHAL's third international conference will be co-sponsored by the World Health Organisation in Melbourne 13-15 October 2006. www.longevity-international.com

National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre (NSPAC)

The Network is exploring collaborative arrangements with NSPAC and its newly appointed director Dr Susan Dann. NSPAC recently released its research framework in the document *Dimensions*. The framework acknowledges that productive ageing encompasses more than just a traditional economic interpretation of productivity and is inclusive of social and other non-financial contributions that seniors make to society.

Organised around five core elements, research within NSPAC will cluster around the following streams:

- Working people – worklife choices for everyone
- Enterprising people – strengthening our communities
- Resourceful people – designing the new environment
- Learning people – fostering knowledge exchanges between generations
- Responsible people – leaving a healthy legacy of urban quality, community well being and environmental sustainability.

NSPAC conducts research internally with its own researchers but is also heavily involved in collaborative partnerships with external researchers and the Universities. Recent collaborative research projects conducted by NSPAC include *The process of participation and phased retirement: Evidence from mature aged workers in Australia* conducted in conjunction with QUT and *Volunteering* with UQ. Details of the Centre, its research and activities are available from the website www.productiveageing.com.au.

Finally, thanks again to all who have contributed to our Network's development so far, and we especially encourage Network Participants to get in touch with us about possible future developments.

With best wishes

Hal Kendig
National Convenor

Bruce Shaw
A/g National Program Manager

7 November 2005