

Strategic Plan: 2016-2020

A well-educated public health workforce whose practices are informed by cutting-edge research is more important to Australia's future than at any point in history. Funding for public health research and teaching is incommensurate with their impact on Australian health. Rapid technological and social change is ushering in a new and better world, but posing health risks which require evaluation and remediation. Traditional public health issues persist, such as the health gap between Indigenous and other Australians and the need to protect the population from emerging diseases. Implementing effective solutions requires coordination between more organisations than ever before, yet keeping health costs down requires keeping people healthy. The Australian tertiary public health sector is educating an increasing number of international students from across the globe, which brings rewards to the sector, but strengthening the Australian public health sector is also imperative. Imparting public health expertise to the next generation has never been so demanding, while demand for this expertise has never been so great, domestically and internationally.

Public health research and education is highly reliant on what happens within and beyond universities' campus borders. Influencing factors include currency flows and economic activity within and across countries. Relatively small changes to national research and education policy and funding levers can have dramatic benefits or disadvantages for tertiary public health programs. Such changes have been ongoing over the last decade, and will continue. If informed by the collective wisdom of the tertiary public health sector, they could substantially benefit the health of all Australians.

CAPHIA's mission is to improve the public's health by advancing public health education, research and service. It will further this aim as the lead advocacy organisation for tertiary public health education, promoting public health research and workforce training and development. Over the next four years, CAPHIA's success in progressing this mission will rest on five pillars:

- Enhancing public health teaching and learning
- Facilitating public health research at member organisations
- Engaging with strategically relevant organisations
- Advocating for public health teaching and research
- Building our evidence base

For each pillar, this Strategic Plan describes an ideal state for CAPHIA in 2020. To ensure measured progress over the four year period, this is accompanied by a set of easily measured goals. This document also sets out a series of ambitious 12 month goals in Appendix 1. Achievement against these objectives will be reviewed annually, when new 12 month goals will be established.

Enhancing public health teaching and learning

The complexity of many public health challenges demands a highly skilled workforce, in which individuals and teams are able to independently implement novel solutions for a range of challenges. Teaching public health is a crucial step between public health research and on-the-ground improvements to health. Public health education is rightly regarded as an essential form of research implementation. Teaching public health is also part of the core business of CAPHIA's member organisations, which are collectively responsible for virtually all tertiary public health education in Australia.

Desired state in 2020

CAPHIA is a highly regarded partner of its member institutions and these partnerships enhance public health pedagogy in Australia. CAPHIA capitalises on the latest technology to facilitate communication between staff at member institutions through a variety of media.

Four year goals

1. Commence review of the *Foundation Competencies for Public Health Graduates in Australia, 2nd Edition* in preparation for a third edition.
2. Hold Teaching and Learning For a annually between 2016 and 2020.

Supporting member organisations in research and translation

CAPHIA's member organisations undertake the substantial majority of public health research in Australia, and research is central to their work. Catalysing or enhancing opportunities for research funding, collaboration and capacity building at CAPHIA's member organisations would measurably benefit Australia's public health-related intellectual output, and could improve the nation's health if appropriately translated.

Desired state in 2020

CAPHIA works with and for member organisations to advocate to government and other funding bodies for appropriate support for public health research and research training. CAPHIA provides forums (real and virtual) for public health research leaders to communicate trends and challenges in Public health research. CAPHIA actively seeks opportunities to identify new public health research directions beyond the current scope of individual member institutions, and supports collaborations that bring together the relevant public health research expertise nationally. CAPHIA promotes building evidence-based health policy with policy makers, and communicates research opportunities to member institutions. Where possible, CAPHIA assists member organisations to translate their research, including into government policy.

Four year goal

1. Facilitate a webinar or other forum about establishing and strengthening relationships between academic departments of public health and state, territory and local governments.

Engaging with strategically relevant organisations

CAPHIA operates in a dynamic external environment characterised by opportunities and risks. Engaging with other organisations is critical to maximising CAPHIA's influence.

Desired state in 2020

CAPHIA has strong formal and informal ties with other educational, public health and related organisations nationally. These links enable coordinated approaches to advocacy and inform teaching and research at member organisations. These links enhance CAPHIA's influence to

expand the application of public health principles and practices in health-related service delivery, including research translation, through evidence-based service planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Internationally, CAPHIA is connected with and learns from similar public health educational peak-body organisations and is seen as a leader in tertiary public health education in the South Pacific region. Already strong links with the Public Health Association of Australia and the Public Health Indigenous Leadership in Education network are maintained and expanded.

Four year goals

1. Maintain ongoing links with similar organisations, such as Associations of Deans of related disciplines.
2. Regularly cooperate with PHAA and PHILE, with several joint or coordinated projects and/or submissions completed annually between 2016 and 2020.
3. Develop links with key health-related service organizations, including advocating for placements and more employment of public health experts.
4. Regularly communicate with at least one international peak body for teaching and learning public health, or with several schools of public health in New Zealand.

Advocating for public health teaching and research

Broader utilisation of public health expertise would improve the health of Australians and Australia's health system yet investment in public health research lags behind its effects. Improving the government's and public's understanding of the benefits of public health and the extent of its unrealised potential for the Australian community and the Australian health system would advance the common agenda of CAPHIA's member organisations.

Desired state in 2020

CAPHIA is recognised as a substantial advocate for public health research and teaching by major funding bodies, including the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF). CAPHIA is known to, and considered a respected voice by, elected representatives of the Australian Government, Opposition, the Greens, and other appropriate cross-bench parties, as well as members of the Department of Health.

Four year goal

1. Meet with MPs, high level representatives of the Australian Department of Health, the NHMRC and/or the MRFF at least once annually between 2016 and 2020.

Building our evidence base

As a peak body for research organisations, CAPHIA should make evidence-based decisions. There are currently substantial gaps in the research base on questions of vital interest to CAPHIA and its member organisations. Topics include:

- What is the relationship between the demand and supply of tertiary qualified public health professionals?
- Do employers of public health graduates feel that they have the skills necessary for their positions and the wider health system?
- What is the optimal level of public health expertise in the Australian health system?

No single organisation could comprehensively answer all of these questions. However, given the dearth of available information, even modest research efforts will meaningfully enhance the evidence base.

Desired state in 2020

CAPHIA's member organisation use research conducted or commissioned by CAPHIA to inform their planning and decision-making. CAPHIA's research, while modest in scope, is an important tool for CAPHIA's advocacy and is recognised by other public health advocates. Where appropriate and ethical, CAPHIA uses research involving government officials and other employers of public health graduates as an opportunity to educate them about the benefits of public health expertise.

Four year goal

1. Complete or commission three research projects or journal manuscripts of interest to member institutions (e.g. on a topic similar to those listed above) between 2016 and 2020.
2. As a peak body for research organisations, CAPHIA should make evidence-based decisions. There are currently substantial gaps in the research base on questions of vital interest to CAPHIA and its member organisations

Appendix 1. Twelve month goals – workplan

Enhancing public health teaching and learning

1. Publish the *Foundation Competencies for Public Health Graduates in Australia, 2nd Edition*
2. Hold a Teaching and Learning Forum in 2017
3. Explore partnering with a journal to publish articles based on a subset of presentations from the Teaching and Learning Forum
4. Hold a sideline meeting at the World Congress of Public Health Associations in April 2017, for peak-body organisations like CAPHIA and representatives of universities in countries without similar peak-body organisations
5. Investigate a web-based forum to enhance communication about public health teaching between staff at different universities
6. Review the pilot of the CAPHIA mentoring program and extend the program if warranted

Supporting member organisations in research and translation

1. Explore facilitating a webinar or other forum about establishing and strengthening relationships between academic departments of public health and state, territory and local governments

Engaging with strategically relevant organisations

1. Develop links with Associations of Deans of related disciplines to determine areas of common interest and opportunity for future co-operation
2. Reach out to New Zealand tertiary public health institutions to determine if there would be mutual benefit from a more formal relationship with CAPHIA
3. Hold a sideline meeting at the World Congress of Public Health Associations in April 2017, for peak-body organisations like CAPHIA and representatives of universities in countries without similar peak-body organisations
4. Discuss with the Australasian Epidemiological Society the possibility of holding the Teaching and Learning Forum in conjunction with their conference in 2017
5. Develop an engagement plan

Advocating for public health teaching and research

1. Continue to engage with the NHMRC and MRFF in future consultations regarding health research funding
2. Obtain a parliamentary pass for the CAPHIA Executive Director
3. Meet with MPs from the Coalition, Labor and the Greens
4. Meet with at least one representative from the Australian Department of Health
5. Respond in a timely manner to submissions related to the mission of CAPHIA

Building our evidence base

1. Complete one research project or journal manuscript of interest to member institutions (e.g. the relationship between supply and demand of tertiary qualified public health professionals or another topic similar to those listed on page 3).