

**Report of 16th Session of the enHealth Council
18 February 2005, Adelaide**

The sixteenth Session of enHealth Council was held in Adelaide on 18 February 2005. The following members were in attendance:

Mr Michael P Jackson	Chair
Ms Jan Bowman	Deputy Chair, Department of Human Services Victoria
Dr Kevin Buckett	Department of Health South Australia
Dr Helen Cameron	Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing
Dr Anne Cawsey	(for Peter Burnett) Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage
Mr Brian Dixon	Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health
Mr Jim Dodds	Department of Health Western Australia
Ms Sophie Dwyer	Queensland Health
Ms Melissa Langhorne	ACT Department of Health
Dr Andrew Langley	National Health and Medical Research Council
Mr Michael Livori	(for Chris Russell) Australian Local Government Association
Professor Ian Lowe	Australian Consumers' Association
Mr Bruce Morton	Australian Institute of Environmental Health
Dr Anne Neller	Public Health Association of Australia
Mr Paul Prendergast	Ministry of Health New Zealand
Ms Karen Roger	National Public Health Partnership
Mr Xavier Schobben	Northern Territory Department of Health and Community Services/NIEHF Chair
Dr Roscoe Taylor	Department of Health and Human Services Tasmania

New Members:

Ms Julie Driver	National Indigenous Environmental Health Forum
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Secretariat:

Mr Roger Longhurst	A/Policy Officer
Ms Nicole Parkes	A/Executive Officer

Observers:

Ms Cheryl Woolard	Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing
Mr Len Turczynowicz	Department of Health South Australia

Apologies:

Mr Peter Burnett	Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage
Mr Chris Russell	Australian Local Government Association

Administration Matters

The Chair welcomed members to enHealth Council's 16th Session, including new members Ms Julie Driver from the National Indigenous Environmental Health Forum (NIEHF) and Mr Brian Dixon representing the Standing Committee for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (SCATSIH). Welcome also to Roger Longhurst, A/Policy Officer, enHealth Secretariat, Mr Michael Livori, attending on behalf of Mr Chris Russell, representing the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) and Dr Anne Cawsey attending on behalf of Mr Peter Burnett representing the Australian Government Department of Environment and Heritage.

Members noted the minutes and status of actions from the 15th session of Council.

enHealth Council Publications Policy

Members agreed to endorse the Publications Policy and for the responsibility of producing enHealth Council publications to remain with the Australian Government.

Indigenous Issues

National Indigenous Environmental Health Forum (NIEHF) Report

Members noted the 8th Session of the National Indigenous Environmental Health Forum (NIEHF) was convened on Wednesday 16 February 2005.

Members acknowledged Mr Shane Nichols from Victoria as the new Deputy Chair for the NIEHF commencing April 2005.

Members noted that Ms Julie Driver will represent the NIEHF on the Evaluation of Fixing Houses for Better Health program.

Members discussed a proposal to engage a dedicated project/policy officer.

Recommendations from the 5th NIEH Conference

Members noted the recommendations from the 5th NIEH Conference and agreed to consider and/or endorse them out of session.

Indigenous Environmental Health Worker Review

Members noted the significant financial and in-kind contribution of the Australian Government to the Indigenous Environmental Health Worker Review.

Members noted that the National Public Health Partnership (NPHP) is proposing to undertake an audit of training resources relevant to Indigenous Environmental Health with a view to comment on the scope and gaps and the

extent to which implementation of the Public Health Qualification Framework is supported.

Air Issues

Air Working Group (AWG) Report

Members noted the contribution of the AWG in the development and review of National Environment Protection Measures.

Members acknowledged that Dr Roscoe Taylor now co-chairs the Standard Setting Sub-group of the Air Quality Working Group.

Members discussed and endorsed the terms of reference for the AWG.

Unflued Gas Heaters

Members noted the proposal for a joint health/industry designed study into the health effects and emissions from 'low Nox' unflued gas heaters and discussed the need for the study to assess these heaters in homes as well as in schools.

Members noted NSW Health's willingness to conduct the study in schools.

Members noted and discussed the progress of enHealth Council's unflued gas heater brochure and agreed to a number of minor amendments to the brochure prior to printing.

Members also acknowledged the efforts of the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing in developing the brochure.

Members discussed the draft point of sale brochure on unflued gas heaters developed by the Gas Appliance Health and Safety Council of Australia (GAHSCA).

Members discussed enHealth Council's position statement on unflued gas heaters and agreed to a number of amendments prior to final endorsement and public release.

Members also discussed the progress of the unflued gas heater monograph and agreed that comments from targeted consultation be considered and incorporated into the document prior to its release for public consultation.

Water Issues

Water Working Group Report

Members noted and agreed to co-badge the occasional paper 'Understanding the Impact of Recreational Access in Drinking Water Catchments and Storages'.

Members noted that water fluoridation is a current priority in Australia and agreed to establish a national working group under the Water Working Group.

Members noted that the Water Working Group has commenced a review of the Legionella monograph and the possible role of the Communicable Disease Network of Australia (CDNA) in reviewing the monograph.

Toxicology and Contaminated Sites

Toxicology and Contaminated Sites Working Group Report

Members noted a report from the Executive Officer for the Toxicology Reference Network (TRN).

Members also noted that a representative of New Zealand has been nominated to join the TRN.

Members discussed and agreed to write to the NHMRC requesting the development of factsheets on the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.

Legionella and Potting Mix

Members noted a report on legionellosis from *Legionella longbeachae*.

Members noted that information on *L. longbeachae* was limited and saw the need to encourage further research including environmental sampling and epidemiological studies.

Members also noted that a Masters of Applied Epidemiology student is conducting a multi-variate analysis, the outcomes of which will inform future recommendations on public health and safety when handling potting mixes.

Publications Update

Members noted progress on the following documents for publication:

- Management of Asbestos in the Non-Occupational Environment
- Australian Exposure Assessment Handbook
- Community Involvement in Responding to Environmental Health Incidents

Intersectoral Links

MoU with EPHSC and NHMRC

Members noted a proposal by the NHMRC for representatives of enHealth Council to meet with the Environment Protection Heritage Council and NHMRC from time to time to share information and to identify strategic issues where a coordinated integrated approach could optimise outcomes.

EPHC Air Quality Working Group

Members noted the Air Quality Working Group report and the Environment Protection Heritage Council's commitment to work with the health sector on air quality.

National Arbovirus and Malaria Advisory Committee

Members noted progress on the MoU for vector control between the Australian Government and jurisdictions.

National Water Recycling Guidelines Joint Steering Committee

Members noted that the draft Guidelines have undergone consultation and will be endorsed at Ministerial Council level.

Rural and Remote Water Quality Steering Group

Members noted a presentation of the Rural and Remote Potable Water Project CD tool. The CD tool has been developed to facilitate the application of the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines and is considered particularly useful for use in Indigenous communities.

Health Impact Assessment

Health Impact Assessment Workshop Report

Members noted progress on the workshop report and agreed to inform the National Public Health Partnership of the workshop outcomes given their current HIA work program.

Health Impact Assessment of the Intensive Livestock Industry Publication

Members noted that the draft 'Health Impact Assessment of the Intensive Livestock Industry' document was currently undergoing public consultation until the end of February 2005.

Members also noted preliminary comments from industry groups and recognised the need to work with industry in identifying and addressing issues where possible.

Urban Planning and Health Research Project

Members noted the establishment of an urban planning and health research program at Griffith University.

Special Interest

Asian Tsunami

Members noted and discussed the potential role of enHealth Council in providing environmental health expertise and trained professionals to assist in emergency response.

Members also discussed the need to raise awareness within Australia of the importance of environmental health in emergency response situations.

enHealth Council Project Updates

Environmental Health Indicator Project

Members noted the progress of the environmental health indicator project and Professor Ian Lowe's invitation to join the technical advisory group.

Economic Assessment of Ross River Virus

Members noted the progress report on this project and the expected completion of the project in the near future.

Next Meeting

Members agreed that the next meeting of enHealth Council would be held in August 2005.