

Thinking beyond the project.... 1

Promoting the Use of Research

In 2000, founding Board member for the Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal and Tropical Health, Prof. Ian Anderson said:

*"...Most of our thinking around better ways to do Aboriginal health research has focused on the project. It has tended to focus on participatory action research and models for working effectively with Indigenous communities. I argue that we need to think about the broader environment in which we do the research. It is the **policy process** and issues around **uptake** of the research that are important. We need to move beyond good ways of doing projects, to thinking about **research within broader systems**..."*

The Cooperative Research Centre is committed to doing research that is used, so that it will contribute to improved Aboriginal health. This requires CRCATH researchers "thinking beyond the project" in order to promote the use of their research. Researchers need to think about how to promote the use of their research **before, during** and **after** the research project.

Research User Groups

The potential 'users' of research vary according to the research question and the type of research. There are several key research user groups in the Aboriginal health arena. These are:

- Aboriginal communities and organizations
- Politicians
- Health policy makers, planners and managers
- Health care providers and practitioners
- General public (including opinion leaders)
- Other researchers/academics

Differing Information Formats

Most researchers work hard at publishing their work in academic journals. Journals are an excellent way of reaching other researchers and academics. However, research has shown that other major audiences often prefer to receive their information about research in different formats.

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Research User Group	Preferred Formats for Research Information
Aboriginal communities and organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> € Workshops € Plain English reports and summaries € Local Language reports € Videos € Flip charts € Community meetings
Politicians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> € Personal briefings € Media € Overview in brief memo
Health policy makers, planners and managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> € Short Plain English report with policy implications highlighted € Briefings € Seminars € Personal contact
Health care providers and practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> € Standard Treatment manuals € Professional education € Colleagues € Professional journals € Specialist e-lists € Systematic reviews
General public (including opinion leaders)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> € Media (radio, television, newspapers and magazines) € Internet (including clearing houses)
Other researchers/academics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> € academic journals € conferences € seminars

Tips for thinking beyond the project.....to promote the use of research

Before the research begins:

- work in partnership with potential users of the research to clarify and design the research question and methodology
- encourage potential research users to be involved in the research
- clarify preferred formats for delivering research findings
- be realistic about the costs and time involved in effective transfer and dissemination

During and after the research:

- challenge yourself to think about the policy and practice implications of your research for each potential user group
- as the findings emerge, challenge yourself to refine your thinking on groups which may use the research

- take every opportunity to speak about the research with potential research users and public opinion leaders
- view transfer and dissemination activities as integral parts of your research - not optional extras - and give them time and effort
- meet with CRCATH transfer staff PRIOR to commencing writing about your research
- work with CRCATH transfer staff to:
 - develop a full transfer and dissemination plan for your project
 - capitalize on relevant media or political interest
 - develop Plain English writing skills
- give potential users drafts of your research writing and ask for comments
- let CRCATH transfer staff know when you know people are using your research (eg in policy development)
- provide CRCATH transfer staff with copies of all transfer and dissemination materials