

Presentation Abstracts

Theme 2: Collaboration in training and development

Ms Angela Paton, Barwon Health *apaton@barwonhealth.org.au*
Ms Kathryn Vick, Barwon Health
Ms Leo Coolhaas, Barwon Health

Abstract title: *Lessons learned from implementing an inter-professional graduate program*

Introduction: It is well-recognised that new graduates have unique and specific learning needs, many of which are common across disciplines and locations (Smith and Pilling, 2007). In 2014 Barwon Health established a formal allied health interprofessional graduate program and invited participation of graduates within the Barwon South West Region via a cluster agreement.

Objectives:

- To evaluate data from the first two years of Barwon Health's Allied Health Graduate Program (AHGP)
- To reflect on the strengths, challenges and opportunities for enhancement of the program.

Methods: Program evaluation included analysis of survey data and feedback from 2014-2015 AHGP participants, supervisors and managers, and comparison with other health services offering an AHGP.

Results: The strengths of Barwon Health's AHGP included discipline representation (therapies & sciences), high rates of participant satisfaction and an impact on staff recruitment. Identified challenges included scheduling logistics; changes in the group dynamic with variable attendance and tailoring the program to the wide variety of participants. Identified opportunities for development include improving the engagement of allied health supervisors and managers and implementing a step-down support structure for graduates after the AHGP.

Conclusion: Despite the complexity and challenges of bringing graduates together from a broad range of professions and locations, the participants created dynamic interprofessional relationships. Bringing this group together in a structured program provides more than an opportunity to deliver content; it assists graduates to normalise their transition experiences and gain valuable peer support. Greater articulation is needed of these less tangible benefits to supervisors and managers to maximise support for, and sustainability of, a program that is highly valued by participants.

References:

Smith RA, Pilling S 2007, 'Allied health graduate program – supporting the transition from student to professional in an interdisciplinary program', *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, vol. 21, pp. 265–276.

Biography

Angela graduated with a Bachelor of Physiotherapy (Honours) in 2007 and worked as a physiotherapist in Public Health in Melbourne and London prior to commencing at Barwon Health in 2015. Her clinical expertise in the area of neurology and rehabilitation has inspired her interest in understanding how strong interprofessional relationships may lead to enhanced patient outcomes. Angela is passionate about empowering allied health clinicians to fulfil their potential as allied health professionals and uses education as a tool to foster their development.