

Edition 1: SIF Project newsletter.

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SECURING AN INTERPROFESSIONAL FUTURE

FOR AUSTRALIAN HEALTH PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AND PRACTICE

Introducing the SIF Project

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This is our first project update and our first attempt to communicate something about the experience of the project – its direction, progress and complexity. Much is happening, many people and organisations are already involved. Support and enthusiasm for interprofessional education (IPE) and interprofessional and collaborative practice (IPCP) and the aims of the project are strong. The challenges are also considerable, for instance, in principle support for IPE/IPCP is matched by uncertainty about how to embed IPE/IPCP across areas of practice, curriculum and accreditation - all key areas of project focus. We hope this first update conveys not only what is happening but something of the energy, dynamics, opportunities and challenges of working to promote and embed IPE/IPCP within the Australian context. We look forward to talking more and to building strong and creative partnerships with many individuals and bodies across the life of the SIF Project. Whilst the SIF Project has been funded with an Australian focus, we aim to work closely with and learn from our colleagues in New Zealand.

In this newsletter:

- [SIF Project website is now live!](#)
- [Some background to the SIF Project](#)
- [Project Focus](#)
- [What's different about the SIF Project?](#)
- [The Project Management Team](#)
- [The Project Reference Group](#)
- [Making SIF a Success](#)
- [Initial Engagement and Outreach Activity](#)
- [Relevant activities and reports](#)
- [Looking forward](#)
- [Assisting the Project](#)
- [Get involved](#)

SIF Project website is now live!

We have just launched our official [SIF Project website](#). Along with further information about the SIF project, you can

access previous project reports and relevant publications, keep up to date with project activities as they occur via our blog, and find out more about our project team. You can also see requests for assistance and calls for participation.

The web address is sifproject.com

[Back to top](#)

Some background to the SIF Project

In 2007, Professors Jill Thistlethwaite, Alison Lee (dec) and I were discussing whether we would develop a funding proposal to undertake a national scoping study of Australian interprofessional education (IPE). We were unsure – this would not be standard research and IPE is a complex phenomenon. We decide to go ahead. Almost ten years later, we have just commenced our sixth and largest project, Securing an Interprofessional Future for Australian Health Education and Practice, funded by what was until recently the Office for Learning and Teaching – an Australian peak body funding innovation, development and research in Australian higher education. The new project builds on previous Australian R&D and brings together an interprofessional team drawn from eight universities, seven in Australia and one in the UK; and from two regional NGO bodies, the [Australia and New Zealand Association for Health Professional Educators \(ANZAHPE\)](#), and the Australasian Interprofessional Practice and Education Network (AIPPEN). The project will also draw on the experience and insights of many eminent educators, researchers, health professionals etc., from Australia, New Zealand and, more broadly, globally – as part of the Project Reference Group.

[Back to top](#)

Project Focus

In responding to increasing calls from health professionals, health service providers, health educators, government bodies and health consumers, and in close partnership with all relevant stakeholders, the project will support the development of a whole of system approach to Australian IPE. Whilst an ambitious aim, the SIF Project will work toward ensuring that every student who graduates from an Australian university with an entry level health professional qualification has achieved the core capabilities required for successful interprofessional and collaborative practice and continuing interprofessional learning across their professional lives. Guided by the input from many national and local consultations conducted over the past decade the project will focus on:

1. National IPE leadership – bringing all professions and all sectors together, to establish an enduring interprofessional national body. What we are referring to as an IPE ‘national council’. Such a mechanism will be a point of inclusive coordination and will give direction and support to the further development of Australian IPE
2. Embedding and supporting an IPE/IPCP focus as part of the Australian health accreditation scheme. A partnership with bodies in the existing accreditation system
3. The further development of IPE capacity and capability across all relevant universities, faculties and other related bodies. A partnership with the higher education and health sectors
4. Establishing an Australasian IPE/IPCP knowledge and information hub. This work will also include the development of Australian IPE focused research and knowledge development agenda This aim builds on the important work of AIPPEN

The project will work from and evolve an ‘Australian IPE work plan. In addition to the outreach work the project will undertake, we have already been contacted by individuals and organisations expressing their interest to be part of and/or connected to the project.

[Back to top](#)

What’s different about the SIF Project?

Within the Australian context our response is, ‘lots’.

- SIF builds on existing Australian and global IPE development and research
- From a decade of national consultations and working with all relevant stakeholders, the SIF Project has identified and verified national IPE development directions
- The SIF Project focuses on the development of a national and cross sector approach to Australian IPE/IPCP development
- The SIF Project focuses on the development of a national IPE structure and arrangements to support an enduring IPE/IPCP voice as part of Australian accreditation, health policy, educational capability building, health service and health workforce development and, critically, increased levels of IPCP capability across all sectors of the Australian health workforce
- The SIF Project will work from a national consensus based document, an 'IPE national work plan'
- The SIF Project has received significant funding to make a difference to how IPE operates and evolves in Australia.

[Back to top](#)

The Project Management Team

The Project Management Team is an interprofessional grouping with broad experience in health professional education, curriculum design, health practice, health policy and professional learning and change management. Members of the Project Management Team are drawn from seven Australian universities, one UK university and two NGO partner organisations. Find out more about the team and our partners on [our People page](#).

[Back to top](#)

The Project Reference Group

We are honoured to have such an eminent and diverse Project Reference Group (PRG). Many members of the PRG have worked with us on other projects. Whilst always an immense support and source of guidance and positive critique, the current project's focus on governance, accreditation, organizational cultures, national mobilisation etc., make the role of the PRG in this project particularly important. The PRG will meet at regular intervals to offer insights, advice, commentary etc. We have also asked PRG members to advise on and contribute to the dissemination of project materials and reports. Find out more about the PRG members on our [project website](#). The first proposed meeting of the PRG is scheduled for mid-February 2017.

[Back to top](#)

Making SIF a Success

The factor that will shape what the SIF Project is able to achieve will be the degree of participation the project is able to engender. The SIF Project will provide many opportunities for individuals and organisations to shape and contribute to the future of Australian IPE/IPCP. Over the coming months there will be more information about how people can participate in this project. In the interim, please visit our [project blog](#) for regular updates.

[Back to top](#)

Initial Engagement and Outreach Activity

The SIF Project will be built around partnerships with a wide range of bodies across higher education, health, the professions, the accreditation system, government, students and health consumers. Given the urgency of the review of the Australian Health Accreditation System (ASR) process (more on this below), we decided to commence our engagement and outreach activity by prioritising meetings with key bodies in the Australian accreditation system. To date we have met with the ASR body; the Australian Health Professions Regulatory Agency, and the Accrediting

Councils' Forum. Each of these meetings has been substantial, wide ranging in its discussions and positive. We will release an engagement and outreach strategy document shortly.

[Back to top](#)

Relevant activities and reports

AUSTRALIA

Review of the Australian Health Accreditation System (ASR) - a unique historical opportunity

Many health professionals and health educators will know of the of the Australian accreditation system review that occurred in 2014. More recently, [a review of the review](#) was announced by COAG. Professor Mike Woods heads up the review team. Such reviews occur infrequently. The current review provides a unique opportunity for the SIF Project and many others to argue the case for Australian IPE/IPCP. The ASR will report to COAG in September/October 2017. We have already indicated our intent to provide an IPE/IPCP focused submission. We have also had the opportunity to talk with the review team. It was a very positive and productive meeting. Whilst IPE/IPCP and accreditation is only one focus of the SIP Project, it is such a critical issue that we will do whatever we can to coordinate and author a strong submission. We would like to invite help in this area. Please see 'Assisting the SIF Project' – the final section of this update.

The Accrediting Councils' Forum

As a way of illustrating the widespread support for IPE/IPCP across Australian bodies, we refer to what we think is a ground breaking position statement from a body that represents all the health professions registered in Australia. The Position Statement referred to was agreed following a national interprofessional workshop held in 2015. [Click here to see the statement.](#)

ANZAHPE 2017 Conference

The SIF Project Management Team will be at the 2017 Australian and New Zealand Association for Health Professional Educators (ANZAHPE) Conference in Adelaide from the 11 – 14 July 2017. We have submitted presentation abstracts for consideration by the conference organisers, and will have a SIF Project stall where you can meet members of our team and discuss the project. We are also hopeful that we will be able to provide a status report of the SIF Project, look back on 2017 and a look forward into 2018. More information about the conference can be accessed on the official conference website: <http://www.anzahpeconference.com.au/>

INTERNATIONAL

CAIPE

A publication out of [CAIPE](#) about a recent global review of IPE: [Barr, H. \(2015\) Interprofessional Education-The Genesis of Global Movement](#)

WHO

Two reports recently released by the [WHO](#). Use the search bar in your PDF viewer and search for the term 'interprofessional'.

- [Health employment and economic growth: A five year plan](#)
- [National health workforce accounts](#)

[Back to top](#)

Looking forward

Next Steps – engaging with the Australian IPE/IPCP community

Whilst we have not yet finalised dates, our intention during the first half of 2017 is as follows:

- To seek the participation and support of key bodies/groupings from health, higher education, the professions,

regulators, consumers and students and government for the aims and work of the SIF Project. We hope many of these meetings will be face to face.

- To distribute 'expressions of interest' for individuals and organisations who may wish to be more directly involved in key elements of the SIF Project; for example, being part of a leadership process, building IPE capability, developing an IPE/IPCP relevant research agenda, resource sharing, writing together, identifying local work, and researching practice and innovation.
- As well as engaging with colleagues involved in the practical side of education, curriculum and resource development, we are also keen to identify individuals and groups who have an interest in conceptual, theoretical and methodological issues and developments as these relate to IPE/IPCP.
- We plan to run a number of face to face and webinar events to enrich and strengthen the development of the SIF Project. We wish to hear from and incorporate your views in how we develop the project.

Project Funding to Support Development and Innovation The project has been granted a small amount of funding to support IPE/IPCP innovation and development over the next eighteen months. We will shortly be circulating criteria on how you can bid for some of this funding.

[Back to top](#)

Assisting the Project

We hope to create many ways in which Australasian individuals and groups can contribute to the project.

Experience with IPE/IPCP standards development and accreditation

One immediate need is to identify individuals and/or bodies who have currently, or who have had in the past, a particular interest or engagement with the issue of IPE accreditation in Australia or internationally. More particularly, approaches to establishing IPCP/IPE standards, and the process of programme monitoring and accreditation. Please [contact us](#) with the following information:

- Your name/position
- Best phone contact
- Is your experience with IPE/IPCP standards development/accreditation in Australia?
- If not Australian, could you specify the jurisdiction?

[Back to top](#)

Get involved

The active involvement of all stakeholders will be critical to the success of the project. You can [sign up to our project newsletter](#) for regular updates. You can also [register an expression of interest](#) to participate in the project.

Get in touch

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[Back to top](#)

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