

# Network Strategy Plan

## Australian divisions of general practice network 2007-2011

### *Delivering local health solutions through general practice*

The divisions of general practice network is a unique and vital part of the Australian health system. The network is comprised of AGPN, the national peak body, state based organisations (SBOs) and local divisions of general practice.

The AGPN *Primary Health Care Position Statement* sets out the network's vision for a wellness oriented, patient centred primary health care oriented Australian health system. General practice working with multidisciplinary teams is fundamental to the system. Our vision also features a cohesive national network of accredited and high performing organisations leading and driving health system change and contributing to primary health care capacity. Our vision is for a network that delivers primary health care solutions, improved integration between general practice and the rest of the health system and reduced pressure on the hospital system.

The network implements national, state and local level programs and initiatives, supports general practice with access to services and allied health support, and works to improve the quality, accessibility and responsiveness of health services. Crucial to the success of divisions is a local focus and the capacity to deliver local health solutions in response to community need. Equally important is their capacity to evolve to embrace emerging health priorities.

### *The Current Environment*

The network's future is secure with continued funding to 2011. The network continues to have high levels of confidence by government and health sector stakeholders, but this is not without a growing emphasis on continuous quality improvement through requirements such as organisational accreditation and expectations that the network will fully embrace programs such as the Australian Primary Care Collaboratives.

The landscape for the network continues to be dynamic and ever-changing. The Council of Australian Governments has taken an unprecedented interest in health with its National Reform Agenda focusing on key areas of primary health care delivery – diabetes, prevention and chronic disease self-management and mental health. These are all areas where the network is well placed to support implementation. Equally, our environment is contestable - one where it is imperative that as a network we demonstrate capacity, coverage, consistency of delivery and results. In this context, it is important that the network continues to evolve and consolidate itself as a service deliverer and

primary care solutions broker in the health landscape. It is also important that we look to our future with a shared sense of our strategic direction.

### ***This Plan***

The development of a Network Strategy Plan has been identified as an important means of providing a common framework that promotes cohesion and a shared vision for the future for the diverse and independent organisations that comprise the network. The development of such a Plan was supported by the network membership at the 2006 AGPN Annual General Meeting. The Plan has been informed by state and territory level consultations, an advisory group of interested divisional and SBO representatives and a national meeting of CEOs and Chairs. The Plan also recognises that governments are significant funders of the network and that, as a result, there are mutual primary care and population health goals.

The Plan provides a framework that moves the network forward in a common direction without losing local diversity and recognising that our membership is essential to achieving our objectives through general practice.

#### The Plan:

- sets out clear priorities and focus for the network as a whole particularly for the 2008-2011 funding triennium
- guides the strategic, business and operational plans of AGPN, SBOs and divisions by encouraging a common framework
- serves as a marketing tool to convey what we stand for, our priorities and future direction
- serves as a platform to continue to build network profile and capacity
- serves as a basis on which the network will frame discussions and negotiations with government.

The Plan has the following underpinning vision, mission and principles:

Vision: Accessible and equitable quality health care for all Australians

Mission: To ensure the divisions of general practice network contributes to measurable health improvements through accessible, equitable, quality primary health care - delivery of local health solutions through general practice

Values: *Leadership* - setting, influencing and delivering on an agenda

*Facilitation* – brokering solutions, forging partnerships and delivering programs

*Advocacy* – providing a voice and profile for general practice, primary health care and the network

*Communication* – engaging with members and communicating our successes.

# Preamble statements

## **Enhanced capacity of general practice to deliver improved health outcomes**

An effective primary health care sector is critical to the future of Australia's health system. Viable, sustainable and well supported general practice and a high performing network are vital to the effective delivery of primary health care services and programs as well enhancing the capacity of the primary health care system overall. It is important that the network remains independent, yet responsive, to government and that it acts as drivers of change rather than passive recipients of change.

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## **Health policy at all levels of government informed by a strong general practice voice**

Numerous professional and other non-government organisations seek to influence government policy. The contemporary general practice setting reflects a diverse workforce that operates in a number of practice configurations and in a variety of community settings. Through their day to day contact with practices and community connections, divisions are well placed to know the pressing health issues in communities. The network is well placed to provide practical policy solutions to today's health challenges. In order to optimise our impact, it is essential that we raise our profile, demonstrate the network's relevance and convey consistent messages.

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## **A quality improvement culture and framework throughout the network**

Members have reaffirmed that they wish the network to be regarded as provider of choice – the first call for both general practices as well as governments and other stakeholders. There has been a shift towards strengthened performance and accountability arrangements for the network setting out performance indicators and planning and reporting processes. Accreditation is increasingly becoming a tangible indicator of the network's ability to meet agreed levels of quality in service delivery and management. Earning the role of 'provider of choice' and demonstrating capacity to deliver involves an ongoing commitment to managing change, continuous quality improvement (CQI) and accountability. We need to invest seriously in better measuring, evaluating and disseminating network activities and outcomes, operate in a performance based framework and be accountable for our delivery.

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### **IM systems that meet the clinical, business and population health planning and delivery needs of general practices and the network**

The Australian health system is complex. It is characterised by a mix of private and public providers and three tiers of government with responsibility for various aspects. If the system is to support continuity of patient care and team-based approaches between health care providers, there must be functional and effective integration and coordination between components of the system through improved information management capability. The focus on improved management of information in general practice can also enhance the doctor-patient relationship and support the efficiency of practices.

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### **Accessible and equitable primary health care services to disadvantaged populations**

Access to high quality, affordable health care based on need is a fundamental right of all Australians. The greatest challenge we face over the next 20 years is managing chronic disease in an ageing population. At present about 80% of ill-health, disability and premature death in Australia is due to chronic diseases. Chronic disease affects nearly one in seven and already cost about 70% of current allocated health expenditure. In addition we continue to see inequities in the health status of indigenous Australians and many in lower socio-economic brackets. The complex care required to manage chronic disease will need to be undertaken increasingly in the primary health care setting.

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# Goals and strategies

Key result area	Enhanced capacity of general practice to deliver improved health outcomes	Health policy at all levels of government informed by a strong general practice voice	A quality improvement culture and framework throughout the network	IM systems that meet the clinical, business and population health planning and delivery needs of general practices and the network	Accessible and equitable primary health care services to disadvantaged populations
<i>Goal/s</i>	To deliver customer focussed services to general practices and deliver primary health care programs to support both viability in general practice as well as health outcomes in the community consistent with the relevant roles and responsibilities of AGPN, SBOs and divisions.	To be a leading participant in shaping health policy through the provision of practical primary health policy solutions.	To promote and support an active commitment to continuous quality improvement at the practice level and all levels of the divisions network.	To lead IM reform in the general practice sector by effectively promoting the management of knowledge, skills and tools in divisions and general practice that enable data to be collected, managed, used and shared to support the delivery of quality health care and improve the health and wellbeing of the Australian community.	To promote access to primary health care services and deliver well evaluated local primary health care programs with a focus on measurable health improvements particularly with regard to the national health priority areas and high need populations.

Key result area	<b>Enhanced capacity of general practice to deliver improved health outcomes</b>	<b>Health policy at all levels of government informed by a strong general practice voice</b>	<b>A quality improvement culture and framework throughout the network</b>	<b>IM systems that meet the clinical, business and population health planning and delivery needs of general practices and the network</b>	<b>Accessible and equitable primary health care services to disadvantaged populations</b>
<b>Strategies</b>	Establish and deliver communication and marketing programs to increase advocacy for general practice capacity.	Ensure appropriate mechanisms for communication and consultation with members and other relevant stakeholders at all levels – AGPN, SBOs, divisions.	Embrace the implementation of the extended Australian Primary Care Collaboratives Program in conjunction with other organisational leadership and strategies as the network’s primary change management and CQI tool and embed the methodology in key divisional programs.	Build information management capacity internally and in general practice.	Identify opportunities and undertake significant national, state and local initiatives to improve community access to primary health care – both government and non government funded.
	Develop, deliver and/or advocate for workforce initiatives, infrastructure and services to increase the capacity and viability of general practice as well as nurture and support the emerging workforce.	Establish effective linkages to federal, state and territory governments and oppositions as well as local government agencies and other stakeholders.	Comply with the reporting and other requirements of the NQPS, particularly to ensure all network members are accredited organisations by June 2008.	Improve communication within the Divisions Network and between Divisions, general practice and the wider health sector.	Increase levels of community and health stakeholder engagement in division business by establishing partnerships with key organisations.

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	<p>Advocate for appropriate and more effective models of financing general practice as well as appropriate and effective models of funding for divisions.</p>	<p>Speak with one voice: - ensure consistent messages and policies are conveyed in a well timed fashion particularly taking into account political and government budgetary cycles at national and state levels.</p>	<p>Provide active support to processes that ensure the network has greater capacity to deliver outcomes such as promotion of decision making based on use of quality data and evidence, structural efficiency (amalgamation) and models of cross-divisional collaboration.</p>	<p>Facilitate and encourage secure and robust connectivity.</p>	<p>Promote innovation and service excellence and delivery of evidence-based primary health care programs.</p>
	<p>Provide integrated workforce support through provision of continuing education and training for both established and emerging primary health care professionals, support for workforce recruitment and retention and practical practice level support.</p>	<p>Implement and build on the network communications and advocacy strategy.</p>	<p>Support general practice compliance with quality and standards agendas, including practice accreditation, participation in continuing professional development opportunities and participation in key quality improvement programs.</p>	<p>Drive change management in general practice's approach to embed best practice information management.</p>	<p>Promote a particular focus on Aboriginal health through local, state and national partnerships with the Aboriginal community controlled health sector as well as other locally determined disadvantaged populations such as refugees and people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.</p>