

## Establishing a network of community-based obesity prevention interventions in Australia



Melanie Nichols, Steven Allender,  
Emma Smitten, Boyd Swinburn

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## Overview

- Rationale for a national collaboration
- Introducing CO-OPS
- Establishing the network
- Achievements to date
- Future directions



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## The CO-OPS Collaboration

- > 30 major community obesity prevention initiatives around Australia
  - mainly in children and adolescents
- Differing interventions, evaluations, tools
- Many lessons are being learned in isolation
- Need systematic approach to collaborative efforts
  - Identifying and supporting best practice
  - Sharing tools and resources
- Collaborative approach to create the future for community-based obesity prevention

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## The CO-OPS Collaboration

- **C**ommunity-based **O**besity **P**revention **S**ites
- DoHA funded 2008 – 2011
- Deakin, Melbourne and Sydney Universities
- National collaborative network for practitioners, researchers and funders:
  - 'Best practice principles'
    - An operational framework for effective action
  - A collaboration network
    - Systems for learning from each other
  - Evidence quality & analysis systems
    - Knowing what works, for whom and why
  - Knowledge translation & exchange
    - Knowledge exchange and training

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## Definitions

- 'Community based'
  - Organisations engaging settings at a local level
  - NOT higher level policies, social marketing at state/national level
  - Could be centrally organised, locally delivered
- 'Obesity prevention'
  - Promotion of healthy eating and PA which could be expected to influence energy balance
  - Reducing the risk of unhealthy weight gain
  - NOT clinical or weight loss programs
- 'Initiatives'
  - Programs/activities – loosely defined

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## CO-OPS Structure

- Secretariat (Deakin)
  - Director, Knowledge Broker, Program Evaluator, Administrator/web manager
- Steering Committee
  - Dept of Health and Ageing: Debbie Hurlbut, Sandra Alexander
  - University of Sydney: Tim Gill and Lesley King
  - University of Melbourne: Liz Waters and Rachel Clarke
  - Deakin University: Boyd Swinburn and Steven Allender
- Advisory committee
  - Steering Committee plus national representatives from community-based obesity prevention initiatives

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## Establishing the Network

- Finding the network – identifying initiatives
  - Known initiatives
  - Federal, state and territory health departments
- Building and expanding the network
  - National workshop
  - Website and member newsletter
  - National consultations, site visits and conference presence
- Future
  - National 'audit'
  - Rural and remote focus
  - Continue and expand existing activities

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## Key Achievements

- Network: >500 members
- Website
  - Increasing use and registration
  - Resource library
  - Discussion forums
- Best Practice Principles for Community-based Obesity Prevention
- Practitioner-led Evidence Summaries
- Professional development and networking
  - State-based seminars
  - National Workshop
- Advice and support

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The screenshot shows the homepage of the CO-OPS collaboration website. It features a navigation menu with links for 'home', 'about us', 'news', 'links', and 'contact'. There is a login section with fields for 'Email Address' and 'Password', and a 'Remember me' checkbox. A 'welcome' message is displayed, along with a 'register with CO-OPS' button. The page also includes sections for 'Our goals', 'Are you looking for project advice and support?', and 'New Staff at CO-OPS'.

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## Website

**Visits - 2009**

- >75% of visitors 'add to favourites'
- Most access is 'direct' (~50%)
- Range of international users
- Most popular: BPP, resource library and professional development

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## The Future

- National Workshop – 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> November, Etihad Stadium
  - Sharing case studies and best practice
  - Networking
  - Skill development workshops
  - Setting the agenda for CO-OPS
  - Registration extended to Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October – limited places still available
- Best Practice in rural areas
- Research – obesity monitoring systems
- Mandate to consult and travel, to source and develop relevant resources

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[melanie.nichols@deakin.edu.au](mailto:melanie.nichols@deakin.edu.au)

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