

PHRP celebrates 3 years of supporting public health policy and practice

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Article history

Publication date: December 2017

Citation: Nutbeam D. PHRP celebrates 3 years of supporting public health policy and practice. *Public Health Res Pract.* 2017;27(5):e2751740. <https://doi.org/10.17061/phrp2751740>

This issue of *Public Health Research & Practice* (PHRP) marks the third anniversary of the establishment of the journal in its current form. Building on an impressive 25-year history of the *New South Wales* (NSW) *Public Health Bulletin*, PHRP was an ambitious undertaking to create a modern online, open-access journal. Our aim is to publish impactful, peer-reviewed papers and provide an effective vehicle for dialogue and debate between public health thought leaders, researchers, policy makers and practitioners. There is much to be proud of in the progress achieved in these first 3 years.

The journal has built a subscriber base from scratch, and more than 2800 subscribers (and rising) receive the journal via our free quarterly newsletter on the date of publication. These subscribers reflect the ambitions of the journal to reach a mix of practitioners, policy makers and researchers (35% of our subscribers are policy makers). Similarly, we have achieved our goal of attracting high-quality papers, often jointly authored by academic researchers and practitioners. Indeed, reflecting the origins of the journal, about 50% of published papers have at least one author from the NSW health system or the Ministry of Health. However, the journal is not only focused on issues of relevance to NSW. Our goal has always been to publish papers that may have local origins, but have national and international significance – and we have good evidence that we are achieving this goal, with several papers being regularly cited, strong altmetrics and good media coverage of individual articles. We now regularly receive papers from across Australia, and increasingly from outside Australia. This is not surprising – although more than half of our readers are from Australia, the rest come from many other countries. For example, the US, UK, Canada and India account for a further 20% of readers.

The journal continues to advance. PHRP was accepted as a member of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) in August 2017. COPE exists to help journal editors identify and develop policies or processes that adhere to the COPE Code of Conduct and Best Practice Guidelines on publication ethics. This recognition is an important assurance to prospective authors in an era of rampant predatory journals. Other attributes that make the journal attractive to authors include indexing with Medline, Embase, Scopus and Web of Science among others, and our most recent innovation – online early publication.

The journal has run several themed issues addressing contemporary topics in public health, ranging from emerging infectious diseases through

to mental health, and progress with Indigenous health. All issues include proffered papers, and this current issue consists entirely of papers proffered to the journal. The quality and diversity of these papers provide a microcosm of contemporary issues in public health. The papers by Dodd and colleagues, and by Najjar and colleagues, highlight some of the continuing challenges of implementing best practice in cancer screening and immunisation; the papers by Watson and colleagues, and Hooker and colleagues illustrate the complexities of public communication and understanding of significant public health issues; while the paper by Lower and colleagues looks at the important but neglected issue of farm injuries. Future issues of the journal will focus on the complex challenges of refugee health and planetary health.

None of this progress would have been possible without the extraordinary commitment of the Editorial Board, Associate Editors and Guest Editors who have provided leadership over these past 3 years. The journal has been fortunate in attracting exceptionally experienced individuals to take on these roles, and all have had a fundamental impact on its success in this

first 'start-up' phase. No journal can successfully operate without the contribution of peer reviewers. As Editor-in-Chief, I get to read all of our peer review reports, and I am consistently impressed by the diligence of our reviewers and their willingness to go the extra distance to ensure that authors get the best possible feedback, regardless of whether the paper is accepted or rejected. I would like to use this opportunity to thank all our editorial team (present and past) and our extraordinary reviewers.

Finally, this is an opportunity to formally acknowledge the material support of the NSW Ministry of Health and the infrastructure support of the Sax Institute, which have provided the highly professional platform for PHRP. Throughout this first phase in the life of the journal, we have benefited from the enormous experience of Anne Messenger as Editor. This issue will be the last occasion Anne is in this role, and I would like to offer a special thanks to Anne and wish her well in retirement. This is the "end of the beginning" for the journal, and I fully anticipate that the next 3 years will see us meet our objective of becoming the most influential journal in Australia for public health policy and practice.

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