

7th HSRAANZ Health Services and Policy Research Conference
Welcome Reception Address

6pm for 6.10 start

HILTON HOTEL
VICTORIA SQUARE

(Check against delivery)

Good evening,

It is a pleasure to be here at the 7th Health Services and Policy Research Conference.

I am delighted to welcome the conference to Adelaide for the first time.

For interstate and international speakers and delegates, I hope you enjoy your time in our beautiful city.

To begin, I would like to acknowledge that the land we meet on is the traditional lands of the Kaurna people, and that we respect their spiritual relationship with their country.

I would also like to acknowledge:

- Professor Jackie Cumming, President, Health Services Research Association of Australia and New Zealand (HSRAANZ)
- Professor Jon Karnon, 2011 Conference Convenor
- Speakers, including international keynote speakers: Professor Elizabeth McGlynn, Director, Kaiser Permanente Center for Effectiveness and Safety Research, and
- Professor Jon Nichol, Professor Health Services Research, University of Sheffield
- Professor Chris Baggoley, Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health and Ageing

- Session presenters
- Ladies and gentlemen,

I understand that the Health Services Research Association of Australia and New Zealand celebrates its 10th birthday this year.

I'd like to offer my congratulations and thank the organisation for its strong advocacy of health services research and building better health care for people.

While Health Services Research may seem like a young field alongside others, the notion of using research and evidence to improve health services is not new.

Florence Nightingale pioneered the use of graphics to convince people of the health benefits of hygiene and compared the health outcomes from different London hospitals.

Here in South Australia in 1883, debate raged in the local newspaper on improving the hospital treatment of typhoid patients, with correspondents citing international research, statistics and observations.

As Minister for Health and Ageing, Mental Health and Substance Abuse, I am acutely aware of the importance of Health Services Research.

It is a key to improving our core business – providing effective, timely and efficient, patient-centred health care to the community.

To achieve this aim, we need to work in partnership with the health services and policy research sector.

Supporting professorial positions in Health Economics at Adelaide and Flinders Universities, and the University of South Australia is just one way SA Health maintains that partnership.

In South Australia, Health Services Research is shaping the way we tackle our most daunting health issues, including increasing rates of chronic disease, and the unacceptable gap in health outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Shortly SA Health will establish a research agenda that will focus on issues like these facing the health system.

Health Services Research is guiding our development of new models and pathways of care, better integration of services - particularly from acute to community - and stronger primary health care services.

It has also informed the major health system reforms we are implementing to deliver improved and more sustainable health care, including:

- ongoing expansion and redevelopment of SA's major hospitals and the building of the state-of-the-art new Royal Adelaide Hospital (RAH)
- establishing GP Plus Health Care Centres in city and country areas to deliver primary and preventative care, and
- development and evaluation of prevention programs, including the Obesity Prevention and Lifestyle (OPAL) program.

Health Services Research also underpins the design of our new RAH, which is expected to be completed in 2016.

A wealth of research indicates that a well-designed and comfortable hospital environment can promote healing and increase patient safety, as well as attracting and retaining staff.

The flow on benefit – better outcomes for patients and reduced length of stay – is good news for health systems weighed down by ever-increasing demand for hospital services.

With this in mind, the project specification for the new RAH included features like:

- single rooms to minimise risk of hospital acquired infection
- optimal use of natural light and fresh air
- rooms with external views
- healing garden spaces
- excellent staff facilities, and
- multiple access points and clear wayfinding

Alongside the new RAH site, the new South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI) is also taking shape, creating a vibrant health precinct.

SAHMRI will be our flagship research facility, building on South Australia's proud history of research excellence.

It's unique model, with all three South Australian universities and the State Government as collaborating parties, will significantly boost opportunities for cooperation between researchers and organisation, as well as multi-disciplinary approaches to health and medical research.

Earlier this year, Professor Steve Wesselingh was appointed SAHMRI's Executive Director.

Under his guidance, I look forward to seeing a significant amount of research being translated into the health system across themes of:

- Cancer
- Heart Disease
- Healthy Mothers, Babies and Children
- Nutrition and Metabolism
- Mind and Brain, and
- Infection and Immunity.

A focus on Aboriginal health will be integrated across all themes.

SAHMRI will forge a niche in the translational research area across these themes and create a unique environment, which encourages community involvement.

The Institute will position itself across the 'four pillars' of health and medical research: basic, clinical, population health, and, of course, health services research.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Presentations for this conference span numerous topics – from Indigenous health care, to chronic disease, healthy ageing and emergency care.

Given the pressures that health systems around the world are facing, now and into the future, we need to be forging more effective and more efficient ways of doing things, while keeping people at the centre of health care.

Your research efforts are vital to these aims.

I thank you all for the valuable part you play in protecting and promoting people's health, and wish you all the very best for the 7th Health Services and Policy Research Conference.