1. THE HEALTH SYSTEM CHALLENGE

Health systems and health professionals under pressure:
- Patient & community expectations of greater partnership in healthcare decision-making & improved outcomes are increasing exponentially
- The ageing of Australia's health workforce will exacerbate already existing workforce shortages
- Increasing incidents of chronic illness and lifestyle diseases places pressure on already stretched resources
- Health systems & health practitioners are required to deliver high quality, safe, patient-centred, knowledge-informed efficient & sustainable health services but be flexible, contextually responsive, innovative and engaged in a constant process of learning

2. DEVELOPING A HEALTH WORKFORCE THAT IS CAPABLE OF WELL DEVELOPED INTERPROFESSIONAL LEARNING (IPL) AND PRACTICE (IPP)

Interprofessional practice: two or more professions working together as a team with a common purpose, commitment and mutual respect

Interprofessional learning: learning arising from interaction between members (or students) of two or more professions

Any successful and sustainable response to addressing contemporary health system challenges, will need to be centrally embedded in, and developed as part of an integrated and well-developed IPL/IPP responsive curriculum, pedagogy, learning and assessment.

Interprofessional education is defined as:
Occasions when two or more professions learn from, with and about each other to improve collaboration and the quality of care.

Centre for the Advancement of Interprofessional Education (CAIPE) 1997 revised

3. WHAT IS REQUIRED?

New approaches to health professional curriculum development that mainstream interprofessional education (IPE):

The scoping study will:
- Establish an Australian development and research agenda for interprofessional education (IPE) and learning (IPL)
- Develop a national approach to the further development of the interprofessional education curriculum for health professional students within the higher education sector
- Describe what's happening in terms of health professional IPE across the Australian higher education sector
- Contribute to the further development of a community or network of academics, health practitioners, health service managers, policy analysts who have an interest in the development of IPE in the Australian and New Zealand health and higher education contexts
- Develop a web based IPE/IPL information exchange and communication clearing house - the recently formed Australasian Interprofessional Practice and Education Network (AIPPEN) has taken the lead in this development.

4. THE HIGHER EDUCATION CHALLENGE

Constraints:
- Many cultural and pragmatic challenges
- Much local activity driven by local champions
- IPE/IPL on margins of health professional curricula
- No national and cross-sectional approach to IPE/IPL health professional graduate attributes
- No national or cross-sectional approach to IPE/IPL

Project progress:
The project:
- Has established a national profile
- Is developing a national ‘community of practice’
- Has funded the development of a national web based communication/information exchange infrastructure (Australasian Interprofessional Practice Network - AIPPEN)
- Has conducted in-depth interviews with key health and higher education stakeholders
- Has conducted a national/international literature review
- Is about to launch a national Proposal for consultation and refinement

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- Professor Allison Lee, University of Technology, Sydney
- Associate Professor Jill Thistlethwaite, University of Sydney
- Ms Gillian Nisbet, University of Sydney
- Emeritus Professor Adrian Lee, University of NSW
- Dr Lynda Matthews, University of Sydney
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