



Review Implementation Committee Recommendations

New South Wales Implementation Report

Alliance of NSW Divisions

31 August 2005

Executive Summary

The Alliance received funding through the Australian Divisions of General Practice to develop a State Implementation and Support Strategy for the RIC Quality and Performance Framework.

The Alliance, in collaboration with the NSW state office of the Department of Health and Ageing and Executive Officers of Divisions in NSW, identifies six key areas of activity: supporting the implementation and use of the new Performance Framework Template; supporting the use and implementation of the new Financial Template; supporting the adoption of the new Multi-Program Funding Agreement; increasing stakeholder awareness of the new Reporting Framework and its implication for Divisional activity; supporting Divisional accreditation; and improving structural efficiency across the network. All six areas of activity were incorporated in the first Alliance implementation strategy (April – June 2005). The second implementation strategy incorporated only five of the six identified areas (stakeholder awareness was sufficiently addressed in the first strategy so that no further activity was deemed necessary as part of the second strategy).

As at 31 August 2005 the Alliance has delivered against all areas identified with varying levels of success.

The Alliance has supported 15 Divisions in NSW in the development of their 05-06 Annual Plans and has planned three separate workshopping opportunities for Division Executive Officers and Program staff to discuss issues surrounding the implementation of programs and the collection, aggregation and reporting of data. These workshops will also provide an opportunity to contextualise the new Reporting Framework, increase understanding within the network of the intent and purpose of the framework and assist neighbouring Divisions to work collaboratively to improve the effectiveness of their activities.

The Alliance ran a workshop in April 2005 for Division Finance Officers that was highly successful and eased the concerns and apprehension surrounding the new Finance Template. Ongoing advice and support provided on an ad-hoc basis to Division finance staff facilitated the smooth transition to the new template.

The Alliance was proactive in identifying specific issues both Division Executive Officers and Board members had with the first and then final version of the MPF Agreement and actively sought legal advice to place the Agreement in an appropriate commercial and governance context. Consequently, all but three Divisions in NSW had indicated that they would not sign the new agreement by 1 July 2005. Ongoing advice and support is being provided to those three Divisions so that appropriate systems and/or processes are in place to facilitate eventual signing of the Agreement.

The Alliance also developed generic information sheets for Divisions to use in explaining the new Reporting Framework to local stakeholders and met with NSW Health and other stakeholders at a state level (including the NSW Office of the RACGP) and non-government organisations to explain the new reporting framework and the impact it would have on the activity of Divisions.

The Alliance has actively supported Division in NSW in pursuing accreditation by developing generic templates and by employing External Consultants to be available to assist individual Divisions develop specific policies, procedures and protocols to assist with accreditation.

The Alliance has also promoted structural efficiency within the Divisions network in NSW and has worked collaboratively with the ADGP in developing a proposal for structural efficiency funding for the identification of an appropriate model for the provision of divisional services in the western Sydney area, has assisted three Divisions in the west of NSW to develop a structural efficiency proposal for imminent submission to the NSW state office of the Department and has presented to a number of Division Boards on potential benefits of boundary realignment and amalgamation.

Consequently, the Alliance believes that Divisions in NSW are advancing under the National Performance Framework and other RIC recommendations in an informed, well supported and proactive fashion. While the Alliance recognises that further, ongoing support is required we believe that both our state-wide implementation strategies have been effective and provided a positive impact on the Divisions network in this state.

Introduction and Background

In March 2005 the Review Implementation Committee responsible for implementing the Australian Government's response to the 2003 Divisions Review released its Future Direction implementation toolkit for the Divisions network and ran a series of information sessions for Divisions to orientate them to the new quality and performance framework.

The Alliance was provided funding through the Australian Divisions of General Practice under a contract with the Department of Health and Ageing to develop a State Implementation and Support Strategy for the RIC Quality and Performance Framework. An initial strategy, covering the period April – June 2005, and a subsequent (second) strategy, covering the period July – December 2005, both included the following key areas of activity:

1. Performance Framework Template
2. Financial Template
3. Funding Agreement
4. Accreditation
5. Structural Efficiency

Both strategies were developed based on feedback received from NSW Division Executive Officers and in consultation with representatives of the NSW state office of the Department of Health and Ageing.

Report against Activities

1. *Performance Framework Template*

The Alliance has supported Divisions in NSW to effectively report against activities and performance indicators contained in their 05-06 business (Annual) plans as per the requirements of the new reporting framework and to identify and provide instruction and/or guidance on issues related to the satisfactory completion of their 05-06 business (Annual) plans in preparation for development of 06-07 business (Annual) plans:

a) State-wide workshops

The Alliance planned for three state-wide support workshops to assist Division Executive Officers and Program staff to effectively report against activities and performance indicators contained in their 05-06 Annual Plans.

The first of these workshops is to be conducted as part of the Divisions Executive Network meeting on 1-2 September 2005. The agenda for the second day of this meeting will provide an opportunity for Divisions to identify issues and opportunities in implementing the new framework, an overview of current Division plans and KPIs that are being addressed. A session has been set aside to workshop specific issues in relation to the new reporting framework and individual Division plans so that Executive Officers and staff of the Alliance can identify appropriate strategies to address them. It is expected that Division will have issues with obtaining data from general practice to report on some KPIs, particularly those at Level 4. The afternoon session will be a presentation on external support services available to assist Divisions in developing and implementing particular programs and activities, sourcing relevant data for reporting purposes and evaluating the effectiveness of programs and activities.

Key speakers for this workshop include Associate Professor Libby Kalucy (Co-Director of the Primary Health Care Research and Information Service), Mr Gawaine Powell Davies (Centre for GP Integration Studies), Ms Vanessa Traynor (NSW Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation and Development program) and Ms Cath Sefton and Mr Scott Campbell (NSW State Office of the Department of Health and Ageing).

The second workshop is scheduled for 22-23 September and will be targeting Division Program Officers. The focus of this workshop will be on contextualizing the new reporting framework and on providing opportunities for Division staff to develop implementation strategies, evaluation methods and techniques for capturing/reporting appropriate data with their peers. As at 31 August 2005 more than 65 project officers from NSW Divisions have registered for the workshop. Key presentations from the Alliance, NSW Health and various program-specific experts will also provide generic updates and an overview of other state and national initiatives relevant to their respective fields. The workshop will have opening and closing plenary sessions and separate program-specific streams to allow more targeted presentation of information. It is anticipated that at the conclusion of the workshop Division program staff will feel more confident in being able to report against national KPIs contained within the reporting framework, particularly for Domains such as CDM, Integration and Practice Support.

The third workshop will be in conjunction with the next Divisions Executive Network meeting in early December 2005. The focus for this workshop will be on analyzing 05-06 Annual Plans with the NSW state office of the Department of Health and Ageing providing an overview of strengths

and weaknesses of plans submitted by NSW Divisions, education and training on how to write an effective business plan (with an emphasis on outcome performance indicators), using annual needs survey's to collect appropriate data for benchmarking/outcomes related to KPIs and hints and advice on reporting against the new framework (presumably using the new automated proforma). The agenda for this workshop is still in development.

To date, the Alliance has aided 15 Divisions in NSW in developing their 05-06 Annual Plans. Most of this assistance was provided as a result of the NSW state office of the Department of Health and Ageing rejecting the first version of the plans submitted on 29 April 2005. The Alliance review and commentary was provided after extensive consultation with the state office of the department and involved site visits and focused, one-one-one education on the development of Objectives, Strategies, Activities and appropriate Performance Indicators.

b) Sourcing Data

The Alliance has worked extensively with the NSW Health Epidemiology Branch in identifying key questions for inclusion in that departments rolling Public Health Survey. The department has agreed to add a series of chronic disease and population health questions to the survey specific relevant to activities and KPIs contained in the new reporting framework. The department has also agreed to provide (where possible) results of this survey three monthly to Divisions broken down by post-codes so that they may use this data for their 6 and 12 month reports.

The Alliance has also met with the NSW state office of the Department of Health and Ageing to reiterate the importance of the national Data Strategy being implemented as soon as practicable and advocating for the department to use its influence in encouraging the providers of clinical software to include tools and other functionality that would improve the ability of data required for reporting against the new framework (especially for Level 4 KPIs) to be extracted from their programs and aggregated by Divisions.

The Alliance will also promote the National Population Health Guide when available and provide through ongoing education advice to Division program staff on alternative sources of data for use in reporting against the framework, especially in relation to Local Domain/Objective KPIs.

2. *Financial Template*

The Alliance will continue to support Divisions in NSW to effectively use and report against the new reporting framework financial templates.

a) Finance Workshops/Visits

To date, NSW Divisions have not required nor requested specific support in relation to new Finance Template. The Alliance did hold a workshop in April 2005 for Division Finance Officers and expected that more assistance would be required before Divisions submitted their Annual plans to the Department. The Alliance expects that support may yet be required in February 2006 when Division Finance Officers report against the new Finance Template for the first time. Support will be provided in relation to this issue as required. A Listserv established by the Alliance for Finance Officers is expected to be the major conduit for future support in relation to this issue as opposed to site visits, teleconferences or workshops.

3. Funding Agreement

The Alliance will continue to assist Divisions that have not signed the MPFA as at 1 July 2005 to implement appropriate systems and/or processes to manage risks that will facilitate eventual signing of the contract:

a) Risk Assessment/ Management (Contract)

The Alliance has engaged an external consultant to develop a Risk Assessment tool for use by Division Executive Officers and Board members to determine the appropriateness of signing any new contract or developing specific programs and/or activities. This template has been distributed to NSW Divisions with some positive feedback. At least three Divisions used the template in determining whether they would sign the new MPF Agreement. This Risk Assessment template also complies with ISO 9001 requirements and has been used by the Alliance and other Divisions seeking accreditation under the ISO standards.

The Alliance has also developed, with the assistance of an external consultant, and distributed to all NSW Division Executive Officers and Board members a Conflict of Interest pro-forma that complies with the conditions of the new MPF Agreement.

The Alliance sought additional legal advice regarding the final version of the MPF Agreement based on specific issues and concerns raised through NSW Division Executive Officers and Board members through email lists and teleconferences. This legal advice allayed many of the fears and misinformation circulating throughout the network and was helpful in persuading some Divisions to eventually sign the new Agreement on or soon-after 1 July 2005.

4. Accreditation

The Alliance has committed to continually support Divisions in NSW to achieve accreditation before end June 2008.

a) Information and Resource provision

The Alliance has engaged external consultants to develop generic Human Resource and Finance policy and procedure manual templates that conform to ISO 9001 standards for use and adaptation by Divisions in NSW pursuing ISO and/or ACHS accreditation. In addition, the Alliance Risk Assessment template will also assist Divisions to achieve accreditation.

The Alliance has also responded to requests for the development (or assistance in developing) specific policies, procedures and protocol documents specific to the needs of individual Divisions. The Alliance will continue to work with Division over the next three years to aid and assist in becoming accredited wherever possible. Future Division Executive Network meetings will be used to showcase Divisions that have successfully achieved accreditation and will serve as a forum through which accreditation issues can be work-shopped as required.

The Alliance has also identified what accreditation standards/provider each Division in NSW will pursue (ISO and ACHS only) and will continuously map Division movement toward accreditation.

A meeting has been scheduled for Divisions pursuing ISO accreditation on 7 September 2005 to discuss various issues they are having with the process of accreditation and to provide advice and support where possible. Guest speakers will include representatives from SAI Global. It is envisaged that this workshop will result in these Divisions supporting each other where appropriate

to achieve accreditation. A further workshop will be scheduled for Divisions pursuing ACHS accreditation later in the year. (Note: while the Alliance does not agree that Divisions wanting to become accredited under ACHS standards should wait for the new ACHS standards to be completed/endorsed by the Commonwealth many Divisions have indicated they will wait until this has happened. Consequently, we are in no position to identify when such a workshop will take place.)

5. *Structural Efficiency*

The Alliance will continue to support Divisions in NSW to restructure and pursue structural efficiency wherever appropriate.

a) Coordinating the use of resources across the network

To date the Alliance has not identified which Divisions in NSW are willing and able to provide services to other Divisions or share personnel. This item has been placed on the agenda for discussion at the next Divisions Executive Network meeting on 1-2 September 2005 and it is expected that progress against this activity will be made over the coming months. It is the intention of the Alliance that it will hold and maintain a register and or operate central services or centralized outsourcing options for all NSW Divisions (e.g.: human resources, financial management) to improve structural and operational efficiency.

b) Changing boundaries

During the reporting period the Alliance has continued to sit on the Western Sydney GP Support Management Advisory Group and has met with the ADGP and representatives of WalterTurnbull Consultants to provide feedback on the development of a report into the preferred Divisional structure in the western Sydney region. The Alliance has facilitated the consultancy process wherever possible and will continue to provide whatever assistance is required in the establishment of an alternative Divisional structure to replace the Western Sydney Division of General Practice.

The Alliance has also assisted three Divisions in the west of the state (Barrier, Outback and Dubbo-Plains) in developing a proposal for structural efficiency funding based on shared staffing and centralized processes that should result in substantial cost savings and demonstrate administrative and functional efficiencies across all three Divisions. This support has been provided in collaboration with the NSW state office of the Department of Health and Ageing.

The Alliance has also presented at a number of Divisional Board meetings in the south/west Sydney area to promote the issue of structural efficiency and to identify potential strategies those Divisions could pursue internally and across neighboring Divisions.

The Alliance is yet to identify any Divisions that are committed to modify boundaries or amalgamate but is aware that a number of Divisions are investigating these options. The issue of boundary change and structural efficiency is expected to be discussed at length at the Divisions Executive Network workshop on 2 September 2005.

The Alliance will continue to address this activity by identifying and mapping Divisions that are thinking of different options and by facilitating between Divisions wishing to modify boundaries (e.g.: to match more closely with AHS or to eliminate shared postcodes etc) or wishing to amalgamate.

Key Areas that need strengthening

The Alliance is not aware at this point in time of any weak points in the RIC implementation that require strengthening. There are one or two Divisions in NSW that are yet to sign the MPF Agreement due to concerns Board members have with certain conditions within the Agreement but the Alliance continues to work with those Divisions to put in place the necessary procedures and protocols to address their specific concerns. To date, the absence of a national Data Strategy has not impeded implementation or adoption of the RIC recommendations or the new Reporting Framework, but the Alliance is aware that extensive delays in the development and dissemination of this strategy will seriously impede Division ability to effectively report against KPIs within the new framework, especially Level 4 KPIs.

Linkages with the state/ territory office of the Department of Health and Ageing

The Alliance has worked extensively in collaboration with the NSW state office of the Department of Health and Ageing on the:

- development of the first and second RIC implementation strategies;
- review and redrafting of a number of Division Annual Plans;
- development of a submission for structural efficiency funding for three Divisions in the west of the state; and the
- program for the Divisions Executive Network workshop on 2 September 2005, the Divisions Program Officer workshop on 22-23 September 2005 and the Divisions Executive Network meeting in December 2005. Representatives from the Department have agreed to speak at all three workshops to highlight both the strengths and weaknesses in Divisional adoption of the new framework and pursuit of structural efficiency that will assist the Alliance in providing the necessary support required.

Continuing work to support Divisions

The Alliance has committed itself to providing ongoing support to Divisions as required. At this point in time and based on advice from the state office of the Department the Alliance believes further support is required in upskilling Division Executive Officers and other staff in developing appropriate business plans, especially in relation to executing activities that will result in meaningful (Level 4) Performance Indicators. This is a long term strategy and will be implemented in conjunction with a workshop at the end of the year that will provide advice and support in completing the first (6 month) report under the new framework. Ongoing support will also be required for Divisions pursuing structural efficiency. Ongoing support will also be required to assist Divisions in collecting and collating practice level data to report against specific (Level 4) KPIs within the new framework. The ADGP can facilitate this support by encouraging the RIC to finalise and disseminate a national Data Management Strategy as soon as practicable.

Outlook

Overall the Alliance is quite satisfied with the support it has provided to Divisions in NSW and believes it has aided and assisted in the implementation of the RIC recommendations. While we

recognise that ongoing support is required we are cognisant that Divisions in NSW have responded positively to the new Reporting Framework, Financial Template and MPF Agreement. In collaboration with the NSW state office of the Department and Divisions across the state we are confident that further advances will be made and that NSW will become a national leader in the development, implementation and evaluation of innovative programs with demonstrable health outcomes within an efficient and cost-effective network environment.