

## Strengthening Health Workforce Education (SHWE) Program in Papua New Guinea (PNG)

**Brief 5: Fast Track Program 2 – Workshop 2 held at the Holiday Inn, Port Moresby, PNG  
Monday 25<sup>th</sup> to Friday 29<sup>th</sup> August, 2025**

**Background:** During Stage One of the Strengthening Health Workforce Education (SHWE) program which resulted in the revised Nursing and Community Health Worker (CHW) curriculums (implemented in 2024), it became clear that there was a crucial and urgent need to continue to build capacity in educators across PNG to enable them to effectively plan and deliver the new revised education programs. To sustainably build and improve capacity in teachers of health professionals in PNG, a local university was identified to deliver this education across PNG across in the longer term.

The University of PNG (UPNG) was the obvious organisation to provide this national improvement program. However, during initial stages of the SHWE program it also became apparent that staff from the UPNG School of Medicine and Health Science (SMHS) and in particular, the School of Nursing and Midwifery (SoNM) had limited capacity to design and deliver the programs that were needed. While they currently offer Bachelor of Nursing awards, no postgraduate programs are conducted by the SoNM and a need for mentoring and support was identified. This support provided

through Stage Two of the SHWE is designed to build and strengthen post-graduate programs, research and teaching capacity in the SoNM to further improve educational standards across PNG.

The purpose of Stage Two of the SHWE Program is to assist in strengthening teaching, learning and educational standards in the SoNM through an international partnership (Sister School model) between the SMHS at UPNG and the WHO Collaborating Centre for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Development at the University of Technology Sydney (WHO CCNM UTS) Faculty of Health, UTS in order to improve the quality of education of health professionals across PNG.

The program is implemented by the WHO CCNM UTS, in partnership with UPNG, the PNG National Department of Health (NDoH) and the PNG Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (DHERST) with funding provided by the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).



Workshop participants, with visitors from the NDoH, DFAT, PATH and the team from the WHO CCNM UTS.

This brief relates to Workshop Two in the second series of the Fast Track Program (Workshop One was conducted in April/May 2025 with participants from Nursing & CHW schools nationally and UPNG SoNM staff). This workshop was conducted with 32 educators (24 females and 8 males) from 14 Schools of Nursing (SoNs) and 16 CHW institutes across the country.

## Workshop Two

**Goal:** To assist participants to critically review and improve assessment practices in CHW and nursing programs through applying contemporary and evidence-based approaches to assessment strategies and processes.

### Objectives:

1. Review progress on Modules and assessments for Fast Track program.
2. Discuss how healthcare outcomes can be improved through increasing the rigor and effectiveness of assessment within teaching and learning programs.
3. Evaluate different teaching processes and approaches.
4. Describe how different beliefs and practices about teaching can affect student learning.
5. Review revised curricula and subjects and explore professional development needs related to subject implementation.
6. Review contemporary approaches to assessment and review new assessment processes and strategies in revised programs.
7. Applying different forms of assessment. What do teachers need to think about when deciding on assessment strategies?
8. Ensuring rigor, fairness and validity in assessments.
9. Identifying learning needs related to assessments.



Group work discussions during the workshop.

Each day focused on a different aspect of teaching and assessment. Day 1 focused on developing a deeper understanding of contemporary approaches to teaching and learning, with a number of interactive sessions that enabled participants to build on their existing knowledge and practice and to think about the most useful approaches to teaching for health professionals in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



Workshop participants with Education Specialist Ms Lisa Townsend, WHO CCNM UTS

Days 2 and 3 provided participants with an opportunity to review the subject resources in each of their programs and then choose an aspect of the revised program they would be teaching which required new knowledge or skill and work in groups to present this to the other educators as if they were teaching their own students. A range of interactive and student-centred teaching and learning activities were demonstrated and evaluated. This proved to very valuable as it ensured participants became familiar with the resources that have been developed for the new programs and were able to understand and apply new teaching strategies to the revised programs. They were also able to demonstrate a range of teaching and learning strategies to their peers to assist them to further develop their ideas about student-centred learning.

Day 4 focused on assessment and the need for student assessments to mimic the expectations of the world into which they will graduate. During this session standards and valid and reliable assessments were explored, which take account of student diversity and what that means. Participants then individually marked an assignment, working in groups marking the same essay, but using different marking criteria: one model



was marks against specific criteria and one model was a rubric. A round robin activity was used to look at the marks that had been awarded and out of a mark of 20 there was a range between 7 and 17. This led to a practice moderation session where participants began to understand the need to moderate assessment tasks and marking and how this can be done to ensure fairness, reliability and consistent standards.

Dr Ramez Alhazzaa, First Secretary and Ms Silentia Tulem from the Australian High Commission (AHC), and PNG – Australia Transition to Health (PATH) representatives Ms Sonja Tanevska, Delivery Lead, Frontline Health Outcomes Unit and Ms Belinda Nanareng, Senior Programs Manager also joined the workshop and met the educators for lunch and the afternoon session, observed teaching practices, and provided feedback on the program and their observations from visits to schools across PNG.



*Dr Ramez Alhazzaa from the AHC, with Ms Julie Dopsie from the NDoH and participants from the Fast Track program.*

In the afternoon participants worked on their modules for the program. This provided them with an opportunity to gain feedback from the UTS facilitators and with reassurance about their work.

Day 5 started with discussion of a variety of ways to think about and plan assessments. Backwards Design was explained as a way of planning and thinking about assessment, and how deciding on what outcomes are required from the subject or program might change the assessments, i.e. focus first on the student outcomes, then consider what they will need to do to demonstrate they have achieved that outcome and then decide on what will be taught. These were completely new ideas for many participants, but enthusiastically and thoughtfully discussed.

With the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of PNG Independence fast approaching, a small celebration was held to congratulate PNG on this important anniversary.



### UPNG activities

While the workshops were being conducted, Prof Di spent some time with staff at UPNG. Dr Buasi and Prof Di met with Prof Teferani to explore the status of the curriculum approval process for the Graduate Diploma in Health Professional Education (GDHPE). The curriculum document is currently with the University Senate for final approval which Prof Teferani believes will occur in the next few weeks.



*Dr Nancy Buasi, Prof. Teferani from the UPNG SMHS with Prof. Di Brown from the WHO CCNM UTS*

Prof Di was also able to meet with School of Nursing staff to discuss the programs and to begin to jointly develop a number of research projects related to the SHWE and the development of post graduate programs in the SON. Two research projects are to be developed. One will focus on assessing attitudes and knowledge within the SMHS of gender equality, disability and social inclusion and its importance in program development and delivery. The second will record and

evaluate the process of designing, developing and delivering post graduate nursing programs with a view to providing other developing countries with a framework to develop nursing programs in the future.



*Elizabeth Piskupe and Ms Lillian Temo from the UPNG SMHS with Dr Pamela Kamy , GEDSI Adviser for the SHWE Program*

Prof Di was also able to meet with the new PATH Team Lead Nicoleta Hurenebeanu and Sonja Tanevska at the PATH offices to provide a brief program overview and discussion.



*Ms. Sonja Tanevska (PATH), Ms Belinda Nanareng (PATH), Prof. Di Brown (WHO CCNM UTS) and Ms. Nicoleta Hurenebeanu (PATH)*

### Workshop & visit outcomes

At the end of the workshop the group discussed and agreed the expectations about the assessment and dates for submission. There was agreement about the work that would be completed between this workshop and the one planned for November.

Initial feedback from workshop participants was generally very positive. All participants completed workshop evaluations at the end of the week, and the majority (88%) indicated that they found the Fast Track Program learning content relevant and interesting, with the teaching methods appropriate for their

learning needs. The main things participants reported to have gained from the workshop included developing teaching strategies and assessments, and acquiring new skills for their teaching including student-centred learning. Juggling existing workloads and competing Program requirements remains a challenge for some of the educators involved.

### Ongoing work with UPNG

UPNG staff continue to work on their modules and a time frame for submission of the modules and assessment were agreed. Staff in the Division of Nursing at the SMHS have formed three working groups to design and implement a number of research projects related to the program: evaluating the changes to teaching and learning within the school, reflections and lessons from designing and developing the first postgraduate program offered by the Division of Nursing, and a GEDSI analysis which will assess, knowledge, skills and understanding of all staff (professional and academic) in the SMHS with a view to identifying professional development needs of staff prior to the implementation of the new university.

### Next steps

Fast Track participants will continue to work on their Fast Track Modules and complete the required assessment tasks. The next workshop is set for November 3rd for one week.

The UPNG team will work on their research proposals with Prof Di and complete the ethics applications within the next few weeks with a view to completing the research before the end of this year.



*Ms Mary Kililo and Mrs Julie Dopsie from the NDoH, with Prof. Di Brown.*