

# The National Men's Health Ambassador Speaker Program

**Jo Fairbairn<sup>1</sup>, Andrew Giles<sup>1</sup>, Erin Woodman<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia

The Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia (PCFA) [www.prostate.org.au](http://www.prostate.org.au) is the peak organisation for Prostate Cancer in Australia and our work is in three main areas: research, awareness and support. We support a national network of 85 Prostate Cancer Support Groups, have provided \$11,000,000 in Prostate Cancer Research Funding in 2007/2008 and have run National Men's Health Promotion Forums around Australia and Prostate Health Rural Road Shows during 2007/2008 attracting more than 3,000 people.

This soap box presentation will report on the overwhelming response from men and women in the community to become National Men's Health Ambassador Speakers with the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia (PCFA). The Australian Government funds the 2008–2010 National Men's Health Ambassador Speaker Program under the National Continence Management Strategy—National Men's Continence Awareness Project (NMCAP).

The model on which the program was developed will be shared. It is the intension of PCFA and the authors, that this template may have potential in remote and rural communities for communicating health messages and creating awareness of particular health issues, where the number of health professionals is low and the distances are vast.

The objective of the National Men's Health Ambassador Speaker Program is to conduct a series of public speaking presentations in the Australian community and to raise awareness of prostate health and continence health. The importance of men talking with health professionals and how to find them, is highlighted and also the benefits of early detection, health promotion and prevention of chronic illness. The National Men's Health Ambassador Speaker Program also seeks to improve the capacity of the community sector to provide effective messages about men's health in general by forming community partnerships with men's health organisations and ensuring a "whole man" approach to Men's health awareness raising.

The National Men's Health Ambassador Speaker Program community partners include the Continence Foundation of Australia, Rotary International, Lions Australia, and the National Network of Prostate Cancer Support Groups. A Special Interest Group (SIG) has been established to provide governance with representatives from each of the Community Partnership organisations, consumer consultants, a member of the PCFA national Board of Management and a representative from the Australian Government.

## Volunteer management policies

It is important to have all policies and procedures in place before the recruitment phase of the development of an Ambassador Speaker Program. These include at PCFA: Principles of Volunteering with PCFA; Code of Practice for Volunteer Services; Volunteer Rights; Volunteer Responsibilities; Recruitment Policy; Confidentiality Policy; Personal Records Policy; Equal Employment Policy; Insurance Policy; Benefits Policy; Reimbursement of Expenses Policy; Motor Vehicles Policy; Grievance Procedure Policy; Personal Care Policy. Forms that PCFA use include: Application Form; Registration Form; Volunteer Progress Report Form; Volunteer Expenses Claim Form; Volunteer Motor Vehicle Expense Claim Form; Volunteer Accident/Incident Form and Volunteer Services Exit Interview Form

## Ambassador Speaker Strategic Plan

PCFA has found great value in preparing a strategic plan around each aspect of the National Men's Health Ambassador Speaker Program. The template used included: strategic plan title; background; strategic goal; aim; objectives; stakeholders; strategies; resources; timeline. Each of the following areas were then planned: funding/sponsorship plan, special interest group plan; recruitment, marketing/advertising, selection and placement; Ambassador training; Ambassador monitoring; Ambassador support; Ambassador recognition; Ambassador volunteer management; program evaluation; program budget; termination of volunteers; training kits; and men's health kit.

## Ambassador speaker risk management matrix

By documenting a risk management matrix PCFA is taking all reasonable care to avoid and avert risk with all aspects of the Men's Health Ambassador Speaker Program in every state and territory in Australia. It has been developed to identify potential risks and have a plan in place to professionally and promptly manage any situations of risk that may occur.

The three areas included are:

- likelihood of risk
- consequence or impact of risk on Ambassador Program
- risk rating.

## Key evaluation areas

Professional evaluation consultants have been employed by PCFA to evaluate the National Men's Health Ambassador Speaker Program independently.

The key evaluation areas are:

- the contribution of the NMHASP to continence management policy
- project governance and infrastructure
- impact on target groups and potential beneficiaries
- impact of the program on health outcomes.

## National Men's Health Ambassador public speaking training

As the National Men's Health Ambassador speaker training is being held in every state and territory it has been an important investment for the program to offer standard public speaking training. This aspect of the program is professionally managed by RogenSi Executive Trainers.

## Conclusion

Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia will have completed the training phase of the National Men's Health Ambassador Speaker Program in VIC, NSW, TAS, WA, SA, QLD, CAN and NT by 10 May 2009. The next phase is marketing and promoting the National Men's Health Ambassador Speaker Program, particularly in rural and remote Australia. Trained Ambassadors will present on Prostate Health and Continence Health and will also distribute the National Men's Health Links to everyone in every audience. Their commitment is one presentation per month. There is no cost to have a National Men's Health Ambassador Speaker present on Prostate Health and Continence Health. The target is to reach 50,000 people with men's health promotion messages and to create awareness of prostate health and continence health in the community by June 2010.

## Presenter

**Jo Fairbairn** has a BA Melbourne University (German), BAppSci RMIT University (Microbiology), and a Dip Ed Melbourne University. Jo has an interest in health promotion, prevention and early detection of chronic illness. She is passionate about men's health and health inequity for rural Australian men. Jo is National Community Partnerships and Health Promotion Manager for Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia. Prior to this she was Enhanced Lifestyle Services and Health Promotion Manager with MS Australia. Jo's first professional appointment was in science and she worked in metropolitan and rural Australia and overseas (England and Germany) as a medical microbiologist specialising in paediatric meningitis and in HIV/AIDS.