

The Policy Liaison Initiative

Encouraging and supporting Australian policy makers to use Cochrane reviews – what have we learnt so far?

Australasian Cochrane Centre

Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing



Who's involved

Funded by

Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing

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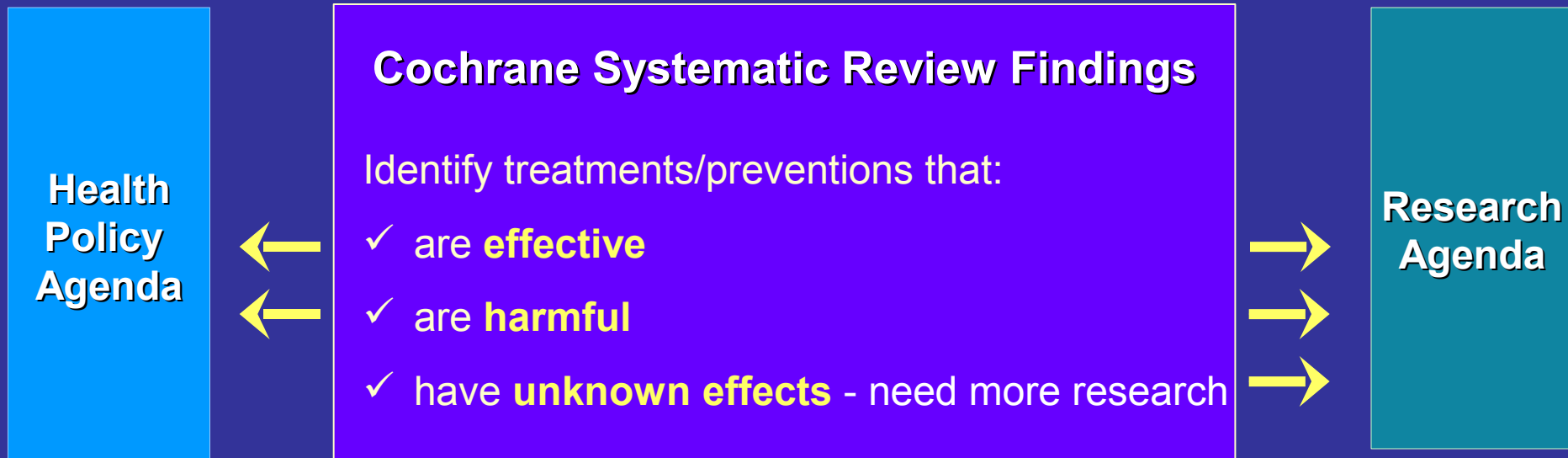


Presentation Overview

- Aim and potential impact
- The policy making context
- Barriers to using reviews
- Strategy to address barriers
- Evaluation of PLI
- What have we learnt?



AIM: Help policy makers use evidence from
The Cochrane Library



- Ensure research is not duplicated unnecessarily
- Ensure promising research leads are not missed

National Health Priority Areas (NHPAs)



Arthritis & musculoskeletal



Asthma



Cancer



Cardiovascular



Diabetes



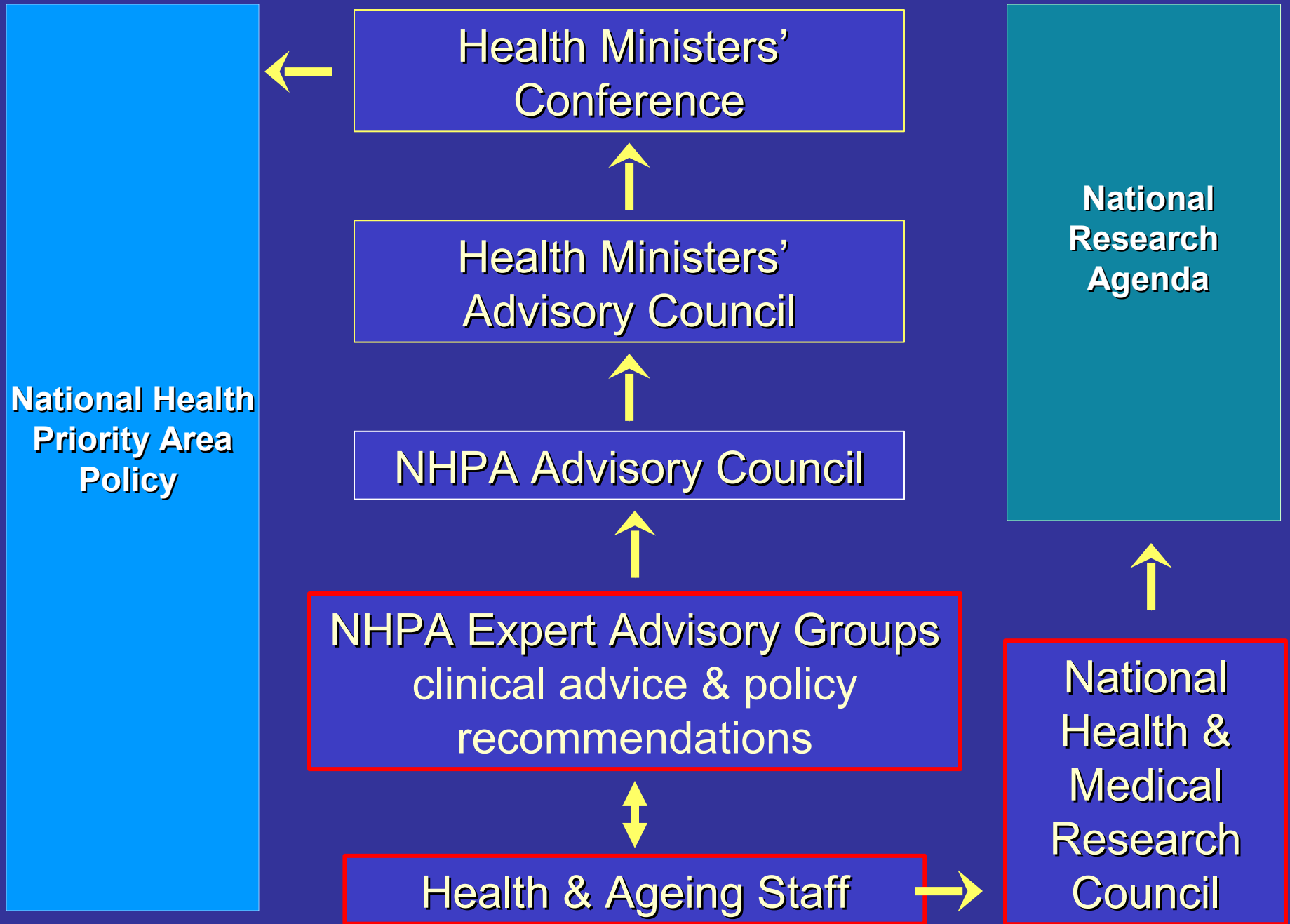
Injury prevention



Mental health

Reflect areas of greatest morbidity and mortality and greatest need for effective and efficient health service delivery





National Health
Priority Area
Policy

Health Ministers'
Conference

Health Ministers'
Advisory Council

NHPA Advisory Council

NHPA Expert Advisory Groups
clinical advice & policy
recommendations

Health & Ageing Staff

National
Research
Agenda

National
Health &
Medical
Research
Council

Use of Cochrane Reviews

Baseline Survey of DHA staff (October 2003)

- Knowledge and attitudes to evidence-based policy
- 29 respondents
- 76% agreed or strongly agreed that reviews provide relevant information

However

- Only 31% looked for reviews relevant to their work
- Only 10% reported using reviews often or very often



Barriers to using evidence

Most frequently ranked barriers:

- Lack of time (29%)
- Lack of research skills/ability to critically appraise literature (27%)
- Lack of information resources (16%)

Perception that using evidence based approaches would increase workload (80%)



Strategy

- Increase awareness
- Provide information and support to simplify access and use



Addressing the barriers

Increase awareness

- Personal contact :
dedicated policy liaison officer
- Target interested staff:
Evidence-Based Policy Network
(>200 EBPN members)
- Regular bulletin & seminars



Addressing the barriers

Increase skills & confidence

- EBP skills workshops (answerable questions, searching, critical appraisal, implementation)
- Helpdesk
- Expert Advisory Group support interpreting & using reviews



Addressing the barriers

Simplify & facilitate access

Summaries – tailored for NHPAs

- what works
- what doesn't work
- what needs more research
- 342 reviews, issues 4/2002 – 2/2005

Website

Disseminate all information
(summaries, bulletins, workshop material)



Evaluation

Follow-up survey (December 2004)

- Awareness of Cochrane reviews
- Skills and confidence
- Access to evidence
- Knowledge, attitudes and use of evidence by policy makers in DHA

31 of 166 EBPN members completed the survey



What have we learnt so far?

Increase awareness

- 97% agreed that EBP was necessary in policy making process
- 78% agreed that EBP would help them make decisions about health policy



What have we learnt so far?

Increase awareness

- Awareness of Cochrane reviews has increased three fold
- Use of Cochrane reviews has doubled
- Seven implemented policy proposals were developed using a Cochrane review



What have we learnt so far?

Increase skills & confidence

- Increased understanding of EBP and EBP terms
- Increased skills & confidence in:
 - Finding relevant research to answer

policy questions
 - Critical review of research



What have we learnt so far?

Increase skills & confidence

Workshops & Seminars

- 71% had attended an EBPN workshop or seminar
- 86% were able to take what they learnt back to their workplace
- Content was relevant & valuable
- Preference for interactive workshops



What have we learnt so far?

Simplify & facilitate access

Website

- ❑ Number of visitors varies
- ❑ 82% of visitors met their needs
- ❑ An effective tool to access evidence-based information
- ❑ Users value bulletins
- ❑ Bulletin and events pages are visited most consistently



What have we learnt so far?

Simplify & facilitate access

Summaries – tailored for NHPAs

- Overall usage of summary pages is low
- Focus on NHPAs may be limiting



What have we learnt so far?

Overall knowledge & attitudes

- Strong support for EBP and its role in health policy decision making
- Interest in learning or improving skills for incorporating EBP in their work
- Almost all respondents felt the Policy Liaison Initiative should continue
- Constructive suggestions on how the initiative could be used more effectively



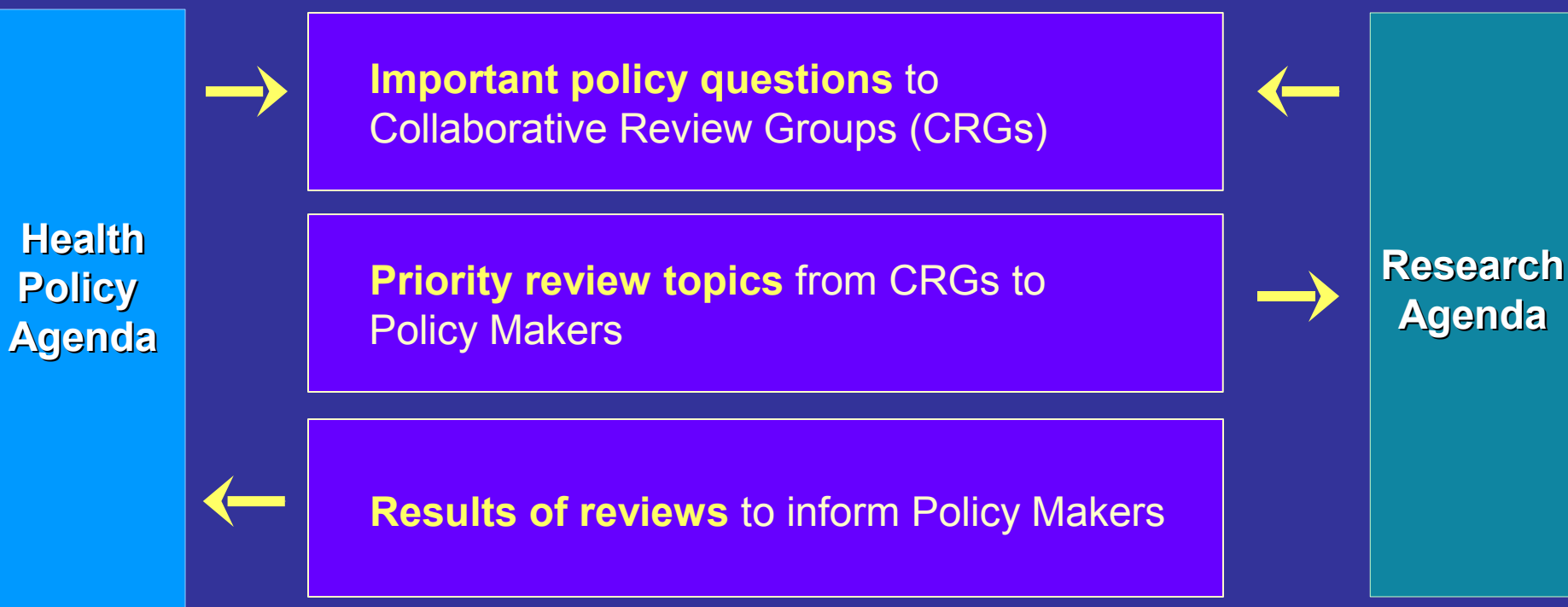
Next steps

- Follow-up evaluation of project
 - Repeat of survey
- Ongoing work with DHA to collate important policy questions and disseminate these questions to CRGs



Facilitate communication between the Collaboration and Health Policy makers to:

- Stimulate policy relevant reviews
- Encourage support for producing priority reviews



Conclusion

- Cochrane reviews are beneficial in the policy making process
- Use of Cochrane reviews in policy making has increased
- Skills and confidence has increased
- Website, bulletins, workshops and seminars were well received and used
- Overall use of summary pages was low



Conclusion

- Strong support for the initiative to continue
- We have built a community of practice between policy makers interested in evidence based policy



Acknowledgements

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http://www.cochrane.org.au/ebpnetwork

Policy liaison initiative: Relevant and accessible evidence from *The Cochrane Library*

Arthritis & Musculoskeletal Asthma Cancer Cardiovascular Diabetes Injury Mental Health

LINKING HEALTH POLICY TO THE LATEST EVIDENCE

A collaborative project to make The Cochrane Library more accessible for policy makers

The [Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing](#) and the [Australasian Cochrane Centre](#) have embarked on a collaborative initiative to encourage and support evidence-based approaches to policy making underpinned by Cochrane Reviews.

The project aims to:

- help policy makers identify, interpret and apply evidence from [The Cochrane Library](#) by preparing [summaries of Cochrane reviews](#)
- inform policy makers about gaps in primary research and review activity
- inform [The Cochrane Collaboration](#) of important policy questions

Policy Makers and interested others can participate in the initiative by joining the [Evidence-Based Policy Network](#). The Network will be your link to the project. Outputs of the project can be accessed through this website.

This initiative is funded by a grant from the Department of Health and Ageing.

RESOURCES ON THIS SITE:

For each Australian National Health Priority Area follow the links above to find:

- summaries of Cochrane reviews
- topics covered by Cochrane and reviews produced so far
- Cochrane people and Australia's contribution
- priority areas for future research
- impact of reviews on health policy

Cochrane work on [Effective Practice and Organisation of Care](#) and [Consumers and Communication](#) is also included.

For Evidence-Based Policy Network members:

- [Bulletin - August 2004](#)
- [Upcoming workshops and seminars](#)
- [Workshop material and slides](#)
- [Helpdesk](#)

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