

Taking the Journal online

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) holds as three of its objectives that it will encourage research and promote knowledge relating to the problems, needs and development of public health; promote and provide a forum for the regular exchange of views and information; and that it will promote the development and education of public health workers. The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health (the Journal) is the central vehicle that PHAA uses to do this.

However, the Journal is much more than this – it is a central piece of the public health infrastructure in Australian, New Zealand and wider. It provides access for policy makers, those delivering programs, students and others to current research and theoretical thinking about public health. As such it is “the jewel in the crown” of the Association.

As the editors have explained, we are in the age of electronic publishing. This is a time when the expectations of those undertaking research, or looking for the results of research, are increasingly using and depending upon the world electronic network for access to information. The corollary is that if information is not made available on this network it is less likely to be considered and used.

PHAA has elected to take an evolutionary step in the development of the Journal by taking it on-line. We are maintaining availability of printed copies, while ensuring that the Journal is able to reap the rewards of being more accessible to public health workers of all nationalities.

To do this, we have engaged Blackwell Publishing to provide the Journal’s on-line presence. Blackwell Publishing was selected after we had investigated several possibilities. They were selected because they were price competitive, they have a significant international exposure and track record in health and medical research publishing, they are able to provide on-going marketing and they meet PHAA’s requirement for the Journal to be made available free or at very low cost in countries where health resources are scarce. Most importantly, Blackwell Publishing has shown a clear willingness to work with our editors and our print production house, Substitution.

As part of the contract, PHAA will be providing Blackwell Publishing with as many of the back issues of the Journal as we can access in order for them to provide access to historic copies of the Journal and its predecessors on-line and in one place. This is something that PHAA has never had the resources to do for itself, and is something that will provide a wealth of information about public health in Australia across almost half a century.

While we don’t anticipate major changes to the current processes for submitting, reviewing and editing of articles for the Journal, the new on-line capacity will require some changes to the current contract between the Journal and authors. A new licensing arrangement is being put in place in order to maintain Blackwell’s on-line publishing rights and responsibilities. Copies of the license can be seen on the PHAA website at <http://www.phaa.net.au/> under Journal.

Public Health Association of Australia Journal Sub-Committee