

Public Health Practice in Australia: The Organised Effort, 2nd Edition

Vivian Lin, James Smith and Sally Fawkes
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Those interested in the way Australia is organised to tackle the maintenance and improvement of the health of its population will find the recently updated edition of this book most valuable. The editors each have a longstanding association with La Trobe University's public health teaching and research, and are recognised for their various engagements at community, state, national and international levels. The book is the most current available in its account of Australian practice and the contexts in which it occurs, from existing and emerging challenges through to guiding conceptual frameworks and infrastructure. In addition to its currency, the editors' application of systems thinking to the field of public health in Australia illuminates what this complex and often invisible endeavour actually is and its contribution to health, social and economic outcomes.

The book makes excellent use of two types of case studies throughout. The first type appears at the beginning of each chapter in the form of a 'challenge' that might easily be faced by a public health practitioner or agency; these case studies serve to orient the reader to the salience of the issues and concepts discussed in the chapter that follows. The second type of case study is the

more orthodox and illustrative summary presentation of real experiences, arrangements and interventions drawn from Australian practice.

Given the editors' stated aims for this book, which include demonstrating 'the "effort" that is organised to achieve and sustain public health', I felt there was one important omission – the lack of reference to the very significant investment by Australian governments in population health data linkage infrastructure and capability at both national and state/territory levels since 2008. This capability, which is relatively new, is up and running. It is world-leading and has the potential to provide a cost-effective platform for exponential growth in policy-driven multidisciplinary public health research and evidence-based practice if taken up by the public health research community in partnership with policy makers, practitioners and communities.

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