

beliefs — such perspectives are not always given standing.

So how could it have been improved? The demography of New Zealand is changing. Perhaps in a future edition, the health of Asian people will be considered deserving of a chapter. Like Pacific people in earlier periods, Asian people are now no longer referred to as ‘Other’ on census forms.

I warmly recommend this well edited text. It will be used within New Zealand universities. It deserves a much wider readership.

Reviewer rating: ★★★★★

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Future investment

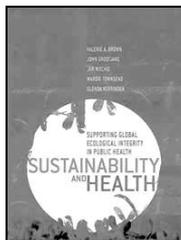
Sustainability and health: supporting global ecological integrity in public health

Valarie A Brown, John Grootjans, Jan Ritchie, Mardie Townsend and Glenda Verrinder (editors)

Allen and Unwin, 2005

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SUSTAINABILITY IS ONE OF those buzz words that is often used, but I suspect is poorly understood. In the last few decades of the 20th century, scientific support began to demonstrate overwhelming evidence for global climate change and major environmental impacts that have the real possibility of resulting in significant impacts on the health and well-being of current and future generations. Unfortunately, up until now, public health practitioners have not seemed to play as pivotal a role in the process as is necessary. Given this background, the text *Sustainability and health* provides some welcome answers to the question “What is the role for public health practitioners in the sustainability governance process?”



This text is the product of a 3-year collaboration between a number of mainly local public health academics and practitioners. Participants contributed to web-based discussion groups to clarify issues surrounding sustainability and health, and then participated in a writing workshop to prepare the first draft of the text. The text therefore approaches the issues from the viewpoint that multidisciplinary collaboration is necessary to address health aspects of sustainability, and in fact, public health practitioners require a new world view and way of working if they are to provide solutions to the complex issues we are facing.

The text aims to answer three central questions: Why is sustainability of key importance to public health? Why does sustainability require a new approach for public health? What difference does sustainability make to my current practice? Through the use of learning activities, readings, international case studies and an open learning approach to present conceptual frameworks and theoretical perspectives, the chapters of the text are structured around answering these questions by specifically discussing the following topics: living sustainably; listening to multiple perspectives; grounding in collaborative frameworks; acknowledging multiple forms of evidence; scoping the global and local context of public health action; acting for global integrity; innovating for global integrity; and managing for the sustainability of health and environment in the long-term future.

Given the large spectrum of information covered in the text and the new “mind set” that it advocates, the concepts and issues discussed will require the reader to take their time to absorb and understand the material, but will also encourage discussion with colleagues. If public health practitioners will invest this time in the text, I am sure that it will provide a solid platform and key resource for addressing critical issues in sustainability and health and will help public health practitioners more fully engage in the sustainability debate.

Reviewer rating: ★★★★★

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