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| **Oceans and human health: the canary in the coal mine** |
| **Conference sub-theme addressed**  Climate change adaptation strategies  **Relevant experience or practice**  In 2016 and 2017, I was invited to join two expert panels and advisory boards for different Oceans and Human Health projects. This has involved me in a global movement to improve the marine environment so as to improve health and wellbeing of communities, countries and whole regions. The first project the “Blue communities” is a large multi-disciplinary, multi-national project, funded by the Global Challenges Research Fund in the UK (12 million AUS dollars) that aims to “*develop interdisciplinary research capability and lasting collaborations that: facilitate innovative application of integrated planning in the marine environment … and contribute to the UN SDGs of no poverty, zero hunger and good health and well-being for coastal communities through the sustainable use of marine resources*".  The second project is the Seas and Oceans in Public Health (SOPHIE) which is coordinated by the European Marine Board and funded by the EU Horizon 2020 programme. SOPHIE has carriage over 5 EU projects and responsibility for setting the Oceans and Health research agenda for the next 15 years. The first meeting of the expert group has resulted in the development of a framework that is helping professionals from different areas to understand the interconnection of elements.  **Implications for health promotion.** Oceans are critical for all life on earth, and just like the canary in the coal mine they provide early warning when things are not going well. We have seen aquaculture devastated by small changes to sea surface temperatures, food security is threatened and bio-hazards created. While some areas report health enhancing benefits from close proximity to the ocean, for the majority of the globe failure to attend to these early warning systems will have dire implications for poverty, hunger and wellbeing. This is an area for health promotion to engage at a global level.  **Implications for sustainable development.** Sustainable development is about understanding the systems and the impact of certain actions upon these systems. We humans are interdependent as are the various man-made and environmental systems and yet for many issues we understand the minutia but often fail to understand whole. These multi-disciplinary projects are attempting to bring together experts to better understand the whole and so create solutions that are sustainable and beneficial to oceans and health. |