Lessons in developing a national collaborative research agenda in oncology social work

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Introduction
The difficulty of combining research into busy clinical social work schedules has been well documented. However, the need for oncology social workers to grow research in this specialist area has also been well documented internationally. This presentation will report on a unique research agenda developing between Sydney and Melbourne in the area of oncology social work and outline what we have learned so far, our thinking, and possible ways forward.

Methods
The University of Sydney has been working with oncology social work clinicians across three states, and through the Psycho-Oncology Co-Operative Research Group (PoCoG), to develop a research process and understanding of who oncology social workers are and what they are doing. In parallel, The University of Melbourne has been growing a research agenda with Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre. Through discussion between the Universities it was identified that there could be a benefit in bringing together these initiatives and what we have learned to see how we could complement each other and work collaboratively.

Discussion
Meetings are held between team members at opportune and ad hoc times, and the agenda is progressed as time allows. We will discuss our learning so far of our unfunded program in terms of thinking about creativity in a resource poor environment; developing patience to allow the research to take the time it requires; investing in collaboration to share the load and increase ideas. The presentation will also outline the benefits of clinical departments partnering with academic organisations in practice-based research activities.