

## Welcome

Gordon Stacey<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Conference Convenor

Well, what a fantastic performance and what a beginning to what should be a remarkable conference. Welcome all. My name is Gordon Stacey, and I'm the Conference Convenor, which means that I think I get to thank lots of people for the hard work that has been put into organising this conference. Firstly, I must acknowledge our traditional owners and show my respects to the traditional owners of Nuga(ph) country, and that's where I also live and work, so it's also my country. Well, we have got over a thousand delegates to this conference this year, and that is the premier Rural Health Conference in Australia. So welcome all. We've had people come from all around Australia, and indeed internationally, and a very special welcome to Professor Kazuzo, who has just flown in with the most circuitous route from Japan, following the devastation of the earthquake and the tsunamis there. So a special welcome.

I'd like to thank my very hard-working conference advisory committee, and with your indulgence, I'm going to name them, because they've provided me with an amazing amount of support and advice, and that has culminated in this very varied event. So, Amy Stephenson, Ann Larson, Karina Lawler, Frank Meany, Glenda Humes, Heather Wieland, Irene Mills, Janie Smith, Jessica Machin, Senator Judith Adams, Lesley Fitzpatrick, Lexia Smallwood, Lou Andreatta, Michael Anderson, Michelle Kosky, Pauline Wardle and Ruth Smiles. Thank you so much for your help and advice along the way. Thanks also to the NRHA staff for their work. I think I threw in Lexia in over there, but also to Gordon Gregory, Peter Brown, Leanne Coleman and Kelly Sydlarczuk. A great appreciation also, goes to our principal sponsors. Thank you, Kim, on behalf of the Alliance, the West Australian Rural Health WA Country Health Service was a major sponsor of the conference, and so was beyondblue, and to our other principal sponsors as well: Silver Chain, HESTA, Lotterwest, Heart Foundation, the Australian Government Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, the Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet, the ANU National Institute for Rural and Regional Australia, the Perth Convention Bureau, Miwatj Aboriginal Health Corporation and Airnorth. So thank you all.

And look, it's going to be a remarkable event, and I'd encourage you to participate fully in the educational and also the social programs. There is going to be a formal dinner on, tomorrow evening, and get into the spirit of it; that the theme is going to be Super Heroes. So, you know, we can expect to see some remarkable costumes. Some of my council members have been unkindly encouraging me to come as Flash Gordon, and I'm not quite sure that it would be quite the theme. But welcome all. Welcome to Perth. I think that this is going to be a remarkable—yeah, three days coming our way, and do enjoy yourselves. Take the opportunity to go and meet people, if you haven't met them before. Network and just generally enjoy the experience.

Thank you very much.