National Rural Health Alliance E-forum 9 January 2009

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10th NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE
17-20 May 2009, Cairns, Qld

The 10th biennial National Rural Health Conference, to be held at the Cairns Convention Centre from 17-20 May, will seek to identify how people living in rural and remote areas are coping with the threats and opportunities they face.

It will highlight both the serious challenges those people face and their resilience at a time when ecological issues remain serious and when the fiscal and financial environment has changed beyond recognition.

Promoting Cairns as "The Place to Be" the organisers have been under pressure to fit into the program the many threads, topics and research reports which this biennial event brings together. The result is a program rich in content and variety that is now accessible at http://www.ruralhealth.org.au

The packed program will feature 18 keynote addresses from leaders in the health sector, as well as researchers and political identities. About 120 of more than 350 papers submitted for consideration will be delivered in concurrent sessions, interspersed with eight lengthier participatory workshops.

Workshop topics include the role of the health sector in mitigating the effects of climate change; setting an Australian rural ethics agenda; and drought, drying and rural mental health.

There will be a strong arts-in-health stream, with the North Queensland organisation Arts Nexus curating events.

The previous two biennial conferences each attracted more than 1,000 delegates and the organisers, led by the NRHA, are expecting similar registration numbers.

"It's good to have the Conference back in Queensland after 18 years away and even better to have it in North Queensland - the first time in the tropics," said Atherton-based
physiotherapist and conference convenor, Owen Allen.

"We'll roll out a warm welcome and then get down to the serious business of making sure that the political change underway in the health sector provides some of the answers we've been looking for in rural and remote areas," Mr Allen said.

Further Contact:
Lyn Eiszele - Conference Manager: (02) 6285 4660
Marshall Wilson - Media: 0419 664 155
http://www.ruralhealth.org.au

SBS Documentary: Desperately Seeking Doctors

Starts Tuesday, 6th January 7:30PM AEDT (3 Part Series)

Australia has a chronic shortage of doctors and nowhere is this more evident than in the bush. Country towns right across the country are so desperate for a GP they've recruited doctors from lands as far away as India, South Africa and the UK. Overseas trained doctors have now become commonplace throughout the land - but how do these foreign doctors cope once they've arrived in the middle of nowhere? And, just as importantly, how do the locals in the middle of nowhere cope with them?

Further information, and an online discussion forum, is at http://www.sbs.com.au/blogarticle/108819/Desperately-Seeking-Doctors/blog/Documentaries-SBS

The Australian Journal of Rural Health is a multidisciplinary journal, which aims to facilitate the formation of interdisciplinary networks to build and advance rural practice for all health professionals.

Get published in the Australian Journal of Rural Health!
The Journal welcomes short reports and letters to the editor as well as review articles, original research articles and clinical perspectives. For useful tips on submitting your manuscript, read the FREE editorial, How to get published in the Australian Journal of Rural Health.
Manuscripts can be submitted online at http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ajrh Manuscript Central or posted toAJRH.

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December 2008 issue now available. Contents include:
Editorial - Mental health academics in the university departments of rural health: Roles and contributions

Suicides on farms in South Australia, 1997-2001

Young driver restrictions: Does the evidence support them?

Cervical cancer risk factors and predictors of cervical dysplasia among women in south-west Nigeria

Mental health of farmers in Southern Queensland: Issues and support

Critical health infrastructure for refugee resettlement in rural Australia: Case study of four rural towns

Lung cancer: An exploration of patient and general practitioner perspectives on the realities of care in rural Western Australia

General practitioners' management of patients with mental health conditions: The views of general practitioners working in rural north-western New South Wales

Expanding the role of paramedics in northern Queensland: An evaluation of population health training

A rural/urban comparison of the roles of the general practitioner in colorectal cancer management

Short Reports

Improving inpatient management of community-acquired pneumonia in remote northern Australia

Do patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease receive smoking cessation advice and interventions in rural Crete? Report from a medical audit study

Mothers' knowledge, beliefs and attitudes towards their obese and overweight children living in rural north-west of New South Wales

Doctor and physician assistant distribution in rural and remote Texas counties

Further information at http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/loi/ajr

Students and researchers keen to learn more about the changing facts surrounding Indigenous health are encouraged to consult the 2008 'virtual issue' of the prestigious Australian Journal of Rural Health. Freely available through the website http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/loi/ajr readers can access 22 key reports published in the last decade covering some of the most pressing topics in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

FUNDING FOR RURAL PHARMACY PROJECTS

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia is inviting submissions for small health care projects in rural and remote communities in the third round of available funding. As part of the Small Project Funding Scheme, grants of up to $20,000 are available for projects that provide health benefits to rural communities and display a capacity to continue these benefits after completion. The Small Project Funding Scheme aims to support the role of community pharmacists in rural and remote communities so that innovative ideas and services can be developed and implemented.

To be eligible for the grant, projects must involve a pharmacist or pharmacy related organisation and applicants must be Australian citizens. Applications are invited from community pharmacists, schools of pharmacy and other interested organisations. Projects must have a time frame of no more than 12 months and be completed by 31 March 2010. All
applications for the project grants must be submitted to the Pharmacy Guild of Australia by 5pm Friday 30 January 2009.


RHEF UPCOMING PROGRAMS
(From http://www.rhef.com.au/upcoming-programs/)

Tue 27 Jan 2009 8.00 pm
901: A is for Asthma: Managing Asthma in Primary School Kids

Fri 30 Jan 2009 12.30 pm
901: A is for Asthma: Managing Asthma in Primary School Kids

Sun 1 Feb 2009 9.30 pm
607a: Start Strong

Fri 6 Feb 2009 7.30 pm
607a: Start Strong

Sun 8 Feb 2009 9.30 pm
607b: Grow Strong

Fri 13 Feb 2009 7.30 pm
607b: Grow Strong

Sun 15 Feb 2009 9.30 pm
606: Keep Safe

Tue 17 Feb 2009 8.00 pm
902: Stay Strong

Tue 17 Feb 2009 8.30 pm
903: Strong and Deadly

Fri 20 Feb 2009 12.30 pm
902: Stay Strong

Fri 20 Feb 2009 1.00 pm
903: Strong and Deadly

Fri 20 Feb 2009 7.30 pm
606: Keep Safe

Sun 22 Feb 2009 9.30 pm
710: Indigenous Mental Health: An Interview with Professor Ernest Hunter
The next edition of Partyline, the Newsletter of the National Rural Health Alliance is now available. It scrutinises the current range of government reviews and workforce initiatives and looks at future investment in rural health in the light of the current economic environment. Pat Anderson speaks candidly about making a difference in Aboriginal health and Justine Caines reflects on the current Maternity Services Review. There is a focus on the 10th National Rural Health Conference in Cairns next year, a beyondblue feature, NRHA news and letters and stories from readers.

Partyline No. 34 is available in hard copy and online - go to http://www.ruralhealth.org.au, then to Publications, then Partyline.

If you would like to subscribe to Partyline please email your contact details to
STRATEGY FOR PLANNING COUNTRY HEALTH SERVICES IN SA

The Strategy for planning Country Health in SA has been released, following a consultation period that drew around 1200 people to public meetings across the state and took in around 100 written submissions.

The Strategy, which sets out the ten planning principles for future services in rural and regional South Australia, has been amended in response to the consultation.


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Join friends of the Alliance now for 2009 and get discounted registration for the 10th Conference in Cairns in May. People who pay the friends fee after 1 September are members for the whole of the following calendar year. friends members will also receive the updated CD 'Rural and Remote Health Papers 1991-2009' (due out in late 2009), connection with the Alliance’s policy work and regular issues of the Partyline newsletter.

Above all, membership of friends gives you the opportunity to support the Alliance and its work.

The friends Advisory Committee is: Alicia Eaton (Vic), John Ferguson (Qld), Jane Fisher (ACT), Janet Fletcher (NT), Pauline Glover (SA), Nigel Jefford (WA), Marie Lally (SA), Suzanne Little (Qld), Irene Mills (WA), Beth Smith (TAS), Janie Smith (NSW), Janet Struber (NT), David Templeman (ACT), David Thompson (Vic) and Robin Toohey (NSW).

Members of the Committee are soon to elect a Chairperson, who will be a Member of the NRHA Council.

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RAMUS SCHOLARSHIPS - APPLICATIONS FOR 2009 ARE NOW OPEN

Apply online now! At [https://www.nrha.net.au/ei/rs.esp?id=84&scriptid=RAMLOGIN](https://www.nrha.net.au/ei/rs.esp?id=84&scriptid=RAMLOGIN)

Applications close 5:00pm AEDST 19 January 2009. Late applications will not be accepted

To be eligible you must:
* be an Australian citizen or permanent resident of Australia
* have lived in an Australian rural area for a defined minimum period of time. A minimum of five consecutive years, or eight cumulative years from your fifth birthday up to the time you enter medical school
* be studying full-time in an accredited Australian medical degree. You can apply for RAMUS if you are applying to study medicine or if you are already enrolled, and in any year of your medical studies. Accredited medical courses include both undergraduate and graduate-entry courses.
* be a member of, or agree to join, your university's student rural health club
Further information at
http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/scholarships/?IntContId=14716&IntCatId=7

LIFELINE INFORMATION SERVICE - 1300 13 11 14
Your Rural Mental Health Information Service
Lifeline's Information Service is a rural mental health information service. Information provided includes: referral to services and web sites, printed material and a range of self help resources. The self-help resources focus on practical steps to help promote mental health in a range of areas. For information and copies of resources call or visit
http://www.lifeline.org.au/infoservice and further information is available at
infoservice@lifeline.org.au and http://www.lifeline.org.au

AUSTRALIAN ORGAN DONOR REGISTER ONLINE
The Australian Organ Donor Register is Australia's only national organ and tissue donor register and serves as a lifeline to the people on the organ transplant waiting lists. Register online at http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/public/services/aodr/register.jsp to be an Australian Organ Donor now!

BUSH CRISIS LINE - 1800 805 391
Bush Crisis Line is a twenty-four hour confidential telephone support and debriefing service for multi-disciplinary remote and rural health practitioners and their families. It is staffed by qualified psychologists with remote and cross-cultural experience, is toll free and available from anywhere in Australia. For more information http://www.bushcrisisline.org.au

RURAL HEALTH ON THE ABC
(See http://www.abc.net.au/health/healthyliving/yourhealth/ruralregionalhealth/)

Indigenous health at risk from rising temperatures: researchers
Researchers are warning climate change will have a bigger impact on Indigenous people than it will on non-Aboriginal Australians.

Condobolin woman awarded medical scholarship
A woman from Condobolin in New South Wales has been chosen as the inaugural recipient of a scholarship named in honour of the late Peter Andren.

Bourke in desperate need of Aboriginal health workers
A remote Aboriginal Health Service is struggling to attract staff to fill a fifth of its positions, despite one job being advertised for more than a year and a half.

Govt pledges $2.3b to fight Indigenous illiteracy
Acting Prime Minister Julia Gillard has confirmed the Government will be spending more than $2 billion to combat illiteracy and truancy among Indigenous students.  

Academic warns Govt to support 'Close the Gap' campaign
A Melbourne academic fears that the Close the Gap campaign, aimed at minimising the differences between mortality rates in Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, is already running out of puff.  
http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2008/s2452358.htm

Funds boost sought for rural mental health
A new report has called for the Federal and Queensland governments to provide more funding for mental health services in the bush.  

NT Govt failing to provide follow-up health care: AMA
The Australian Medical Association's Northern Territory branch says the Territory Government is failing to provide adequate follow-up treatment for Aboriginal children in remote communities.  
http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/12/19/2451728.htm

Country health plan changes released
A revised strategy for South Australia's country health care has been released by the South Australian Government.  

Fed Govt releases NT Aboriginal health snap shot
The Federal Government has released a report providing a snap shot on what has come from the roll out of child health checks in Northern Territory Aboriginal communities.  
http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/12/19/2451501.htm

Indigenous health linked to climate change fight
A new report by the Desert Knowledge Co-operative Research Centre says pastoralists and Aboriginal people have a key role to play in helping reduce the effects of climate change.  

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QUALITY GUIDELINES FOR INDIGENOUS AGED CARE

The Australian Government is now at its next stage in developing the first set of quality standards for flexible Indigenous aged care services, according to Minister for Ageing Justine Elliot. The Department of Health and Ageing is seeking tenders from experienced individuals or organisations to develop the Quality Framework for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flexible Aged Care Program. Tenders close on February 17, 2009 and work is expected to begin in March 2009.

The Minister's statement is at  
Tender inquiries should be addressed to the Project Officer Roslyn Goddard on 02 6289
Access by rural specialists to peer support and to continuing professional development (CPD) programs are significant factors in their decision to practice in rural areas, according to an article published in the latest edition of the Medical Journal of Australia.

The Support Scheme for Rural Specialists (SSRS) was established to improve this access.

Study co-author and former National Program Director of the SSRS, Mr Gary Disher, says there are well-documented geographical, financial, social and professional barriers to CPD and peer support for rural medical practitioners.

Under the SSRS - established by the Committee of Presidents of Medical Colleges and funded by the Federal Department of Health and Ageing Office of Rural Health - funding is available to specialist medical colleges and their faculties to develop, implement and evaluate short-term rural-specific CPD programs.

"Projects funded under the scheme have focused mainly on providing clinical and professional skills, or on strengthening systems for clinical improvement," Mr Disher said.

An evaluation of the scheme by the Hunter Institute of Mental Health found several positive outcomes, including a decrease in professional isolation and increased access to CPD for rural specialists.

Mr Disher says there are still limitations to the scheme. "Some colleges have expressed concern that there is an expectation that all colleges have comparable capacity and infrastructure to compete for program funds. In addition the 12 month project funding timeframe is too short to develop and implement CPD programs aimed at facilitating practice change."

In another article, Darwin psychiatrist Robert Parker says that efforts to improve Australia’s woeful record on Aboriginal health are being held back by poor co-ordination, and greater strides could be made by setting up a national college bringing together medical, nursing and other professionals.

Under his plan, the national college of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health would for the first time take charge of the credentialling, education and championing of Aboriginal health workers, who work in many communities in a variety of nursing and paramedical roles.

But the proposed body would also encompass all others working to improve the health of indigenous people -- including those with experience rather than formal qualifications. Among the college’s key roles would be the setting of standards and ethics codes, establishment of training programs, defending its members’ interests, conducting research and
advising governments and policy institutes.

In another article, researchers warn climate change will have a bigger impact on Indigenous people than it will on non-Aboriginal Australians. The article says resources are needed now to deal with the problem as temperatures could rise by at least three degrees Celsius in the north by the year 2050. It says that will be a major problem in remote communities, where cardiovascular and respiratory disease is rife and facilities are not adequate to shield people from the heat. The report also warns of an increase in communicable diseases. It says rising temperatures will create good breeding grounds for disease carrying mosquitoes. Potentially deadly bacteria, already rampant in Indigenous communities, will also thrive under the warmer conditions, while research shows the incidence of bacterial diarrhoea alone could rise by up to 18 per cent.

Editorials
Current management of pre-eclampsia
Disproportionate burdens: the multidimensional impacts of climate change on the health of Indigenous Australians
Access to eMJA: 2009
Research
Child homicide in New South Wales from 1991 to 2005
Pattern of childhood malignant tumours in a teaching hospital in south-western Nigeria
Health Care
Telemedicine across the ages
The changing face of radiology: from local practice to global network
The Profession - Helping medical specialists working in rural and remote Australia deal with professional isolation: the Support Scheme for Rural Specialists
Research Enterprise - A decade of NHMRC People Support expenditure in review: is support for Indigenous health research increasing?
Viewpoint - Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: time to rethink
Indigenous Health - Why Australia needs a national college of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health
Clinical Update - Management of symptomatic colonic diverticular disease
Notable Cases - Cardiac arrest in a young man following excess consumption of caffeinated "energy drinks"

ARTICLE IN "RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH"

'Vietnamese-born health professionals: negotiating work and life in rural Australia'
Many nations are now culturally and ethnically diverse and this extends to their health workforce. However, in Australia relatively few overseas-born, Australian-trained health professionals take up rural or remote positions. This small qualitative study on Vietnamese-born, Australian-trained health professionals practising in rural Australia raises questions about their acculturation process, with direct implications for recruitment and retention. http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=1062

From: Shane Barnes
Subject: Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA) conference

The Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA) is holding its forthcoming conference titled "Direction in a time of change" in February 2009
19-20 February 2009
Jasper Hotel, Melbourne, Vic
For further information and to register visit: http://www.vaada.info/
If you have any questions or require further assistance please contact me
Shane Barnes
Conference Organiser

From: Bowcock, Robyn
Subject: New inquiry on remote community stores in Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities

The operation of local community stores in remote Indigenous communities is the focus of a new inquiry by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs.

The Committee invites submissions by Friday, 20 February 2009. Further details on the inquiry, including the terms of reference and advice on making submissions can be obtained on the Committee's website at http://www.aph.gov.au/atsia or by contacting the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4559 or emailing atsia.reps@aph.gov.au.

NAIDOC Week celebrations for 2009 will be held from 5 to 12 July. Further information at http://www.naidoc.org.au/

CONTRIBUTION AND SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION AND DISCLAIMER

The NRHA e-forum is published fortnightly. Contributions are sought on any topic relevant to rural health concerns. Please send contributions to the moderator at grovesc@winshop.com.au (do not "reply" to this email - send contributions to grovesc@winshop.com.au). Contributions received by the Friday of publication will be included in the e-forum.

The NRHA e-forum is edited by a third party moderator, Jim Groves. As such, the Alliance does not control postings and the contents do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Alliance. Nor do postings necessarily reflect the view of Jim Groves or any organisation he is associated with. Jim Groves can be contacted at grovesc@winshop.com.au

Please forward a copy to any colleague you think may be interested.