Media Release

2 May 2000

6th National Rural Health Conference will include Infront-Outback’s Scientific Stream

A recent decision made in Toowoomba will see the creation of a single biennial national conference on all aspects of rural and remote health research and policy.

The Toowoomba Hospital Foundation, The Cunningham Centre and the National Rural Health Alliance have agreed to merge the Infront-Outback Rural Health Scientific Conference with the National Rural Health Conference.

Steve Clark, Chairperson of the NRHA, has warmly welcomed the decision. “There will now be only one biennial rural and remote health conference, not two, so that the focus of rural people, researchers, governments and policy makers on the event will be even stronger. This will make the biennial conference an even more exciting and important event.”

Peter Rookas, Chair of the Toowoomba Hospital Foundation, also emphasised the benefits. “It’s a bit sad for us in Toowoomba, of course, but rural people will clearly benefit from the closer relationship between scientific health research and the policy development that will remain the focus of the National Rural Health Conference. We’ve produced a healthy adolescent in Toowoomba and now’s the time for the adult Infront-Outback to make a stronger national contribution”, Mr Rookas said.

Lesley Fitzpatrick is Director of the Cunningham Centre, the other local body involved with Infront-Outback. Ms Fitzpatrick is a Member of Council of the NRHA and is on the organising committee for the 6th National Rural Health Conference.

“We’ve only just had the most recent Infront-Outback in Toowoomba, and we’re asking rural and remote health researchers to saddle up again and to contribute to the Infront-Outback stream at the 6th Conference in Canberra next year.” Ms Fitzpatrick will be involved with the refereeing process for scientific papers to be put in place for the 6th Conference.

“There’s no doubt in my mind that an integrated conference, in which there are both empirical studies and policy evaluations, will contribute most to improving health programs and so to better rural health,” Ms Fitzpatrick said.

The 6th National Rural Health Conference will be held at the National Convention Centre in Canberra on 4-7 March 2001. The Call for Papers will be available in May 2000 from the Office of the NRHA in Canberra (conference@ruralhealth.org.au).

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