

Excellence in rural and remote health research

The 5th Rural and Remote Health Scientific Symposium in Canberra on 6/7 September 2016 will bring together a broad range of rural and remote health researchers, national data agencies and policy makers to discuss current and future directions for rural and remote health research in Australia.

Dr Kim Webber, CEO of the National Rural Health Alliance said "The Symposium is very grateful to the University of Wollongong, Curtin University, University of Queensland and the Sydney University School of Rural Health for their generous support of the Symposium".

Proceedings will be opened by the Hon Dr David Gillespie, Assistant Minister for Rural Health and Dr Stephen Duckett from the Grattan Institute will discuss his recently released report '*Perils of Place: identifying hotspots of health inequality*' that demonstrates how good preventative and primary health care can prevent hospitalisations. Not surprising, a significant number of the identified 'hotspots' are in rural and remote Australia where we know that preventative healthcare is often a much lower priority to acute care. Dr Duckett will highlight some learnings from his research and how this may inform Government policy design into the future.

The National Heart Foundation will explore how geography influences health with their new 'Australian Heart Maps'. The Maps bring together for the first time a national picture of hospital admission rates for heart-related conditions at national, state, regional and local government levels. The Heart Maps compare rates of heart related admissions across Australia and highlight the association between socioeconomic disadvantage and remoteness with heart health outcomes.

There will be a special session on research and evidence relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health led by Dennis McDermott from the Poche Centre for Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Adelaide, Alasdair Vance from the University of Melbourne, and Carol Davy and Elaine Kite from the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute's Wardliparingga Aboriginal Research Unit.

Day two will include presentations from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Department of Health. This will be followed by the 'Rural and Remote Health Services Research' session with leading researchers Professor Jane Farmer, Professor John Wakeman, Emeritus Professor Lesley Barclay and Dr Vahid Saberi. This session will cover the issues of health workforce, maternity services, mental health and the role of small public hospitals in a modern health system.

The Symposium is being convened by the National Rural Health Alliance in partnership with the Primary Health Care Research and Information Service (PHCRIS); the Australian Rural Health Education Network (ARHEN); and the Federation of Rural Australian Medical Educators (FRAME).

The full program is available on the Symposium website at www.ruralhealth.org.au/symposium2016

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