



PARTYline at the Conference

For those of you who are not familiar with this brand and logo, let me introduce you to PARTYline, the newsletter of the National Rural Health Alliance. PARTYline is produced quarterly, is distributed free of charge to all those interested in rural and remote health and has a current distribution of over 8000. By registering for the Conference, you have been captured on the Alliance's database and will soon become one of those waiting for the next edition to arrive in your mailbox.

Now in its third year of production, PARTYline has become an important conduit for information exchange between the Alliance and those with an interest in rural, regional and remote health. With everyone leading such busy lives and a tendency for information overload, PARTYline has been a quick reference for people to focus on the big picture and to keep informed of developments in their own areas of interest.

Each edition has a mix of good news stories and policy information, capturing something from all health groups including allied health, the medical workforce and nursing, as well as students and



Looking for your comments at the Conference will be PARTYline's roving reporters Michele Foley and Irene Mills – keep an eye out for them

consumers. A special section is dedicated to Indigenous health. There is information from government on programs, policy, funding opportunities and pending inquiries as well as contributions from people on the ground about health models that are working in their community. A calendar of conference events and a list of "who has gone where" in the health workforce have also provided quick reference points to help you stay in touch.

The Editorial Group from PARTYline have their ear to the ground for possible stories. Contributions are warmly received. Whether it is something you are doing in your community that you think others could learn from, or you have a particular view to share, PARTYline is a great vehicle to spread the word to the wider rural health community. Watch out for one of the Editorial Committee at the Conference – your face may well be in the next edition!

Happy reading.

Michele Foley, Editor

Meet the New Council members

Three new national organisations have been welcomed into the Alliance in recent months, bringing the total number to twenty-four. PARTYline would like to introduce you to those who will represent these new organisations on the Alliance Council. If you see them at the Conference, make sure you say hello.

Lynne Sheehan is the inaugural delegate to the Council of the Alliance from the Catholic Rural Hospitals Forum of Catholic Health Australia. Lynne is the Chief Executive Officer of the Mater Misericordiae Hospitals at Rockhampton, Yeppoon and Gladstone in Queensland. Lynne is a Member of the Central Queensland University Council and represents the health sector on the Regional Communities Forum for the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Keith Fletcher is the inaugural delegate for the Rural Sub-Committee of the Australian Divisions of General Practice. Keith is CEO of the Murrumbidgee Division of General Practice, based at Leeton in the Riverina. He has been in Leeton for about four years and before that was at Colleambally having trained at Wollongong and worked in Sydney in publishing.

Bruce Robertson represents Rural Pharmacists Australia. He has spent over twenty years as a community pharmacist at Wangaratta in Victoria. Apart from his passion for all things rural, Bruce has been a rally driver of some note – a hobby he maintains "when time permits". He says that Cape York and the Pilbara are the only bits he hasn't visited on the ground. So if you're from those parts ...



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at the Conference

Things not to miss

The 7th National Rural Health Conference program has been heralded as one of the most comprehensive yet. With so many options, the biggest problem will be in choosing what to see.

- Don't miss the Opening Ceremony: the PM is invited. Help us to begin to weave the magic.
- Dr Florence Manguyu is an inspirational speaker from Kenya and a strong advocate for women and children (Saturday, 6.00 pm).
- We have featured Frank Meany in the program because of his wonderful videos (not to mention the sound, staging and other technical help).
- There's a chance to meet Don Perlgut, new CEO of the Rural Health Education Foundation (Sunday, 10.10 am).
- Martin London promises some inspirational theatre about rural practice – and he's come all the way from Christchurch to prove it (Sunday, 11.15 am).
- Stream B2 (Sunday, 11.15 am to 12.25 pm) features three papers on carers, a group who often don't get enough recognition.
- If you miss Neil Thomson's symposium on Sunday at 3.00 pm, catch him at the Exhibition area where you can try out the Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet for yourself.
- The three papers in C1 (Sunday, 4.10 pm to 5.20 pm) will answer some of your questions on how to measure access (are you an ARIA, ASGC or a RRMA person?).
- Don't miss Larry Towney on Monday (9.45 am) talking about his great work in Narromine, NSW.
- If you think you can't sing – think again. Fay White's singing workshop will have you lifting the rooftop (Monday, 2.20 to 3.30 pm).
- Cinderella and the Hairy Godmother appear on Monday afternoon (shortly before other curious people – Members of the Alliance's Council). A must see (Monday, 1.35 pm).
- Remember the Dinner Dance: it is also included in your registration and is a great chance to catch up with people socially (Monday 8.00 pm).
- Get up to speed with the latest from the Women's Health Australia Longitudinal Study at F5 (Tuesday, 9.30 to 10.40 am).
- For a motivational and slightly zany last session catch the Hobart Playback Theatre (Tuesday, 1.35 to 2.20 pm).

Note: please check these times against any last-minute changes to the Program! Keep abreast of all changes by checking the whiteboard near the Registration area.

What to expect

Ray Walker, Conference Writer, tells PARTYline about some themes emerging from this year's Conference.

The presentations planned for the 7th Conference will give everyone who attends an opportunity to explore current issues, developing themes and unexpected and innovative aspects of bettering the health of people in rural and remote Australia.

There will be lots of discussion about actively involving and supporting individuals in their own care from the viewpoint of coping with particular problems such as Dementia (Session B6), Diabetes (C4) and Cancer (C6). At the same time sessions on Carers in the country (B2), Sustaining regional communities (D4 and E4), Chronic disease (D8), Supporting the Indigenous health workforce (E5), Infront Outback research reports (F1), Integrated care (F6) and Infrastructure for the elderly in remote Australia (G8) cover more general aspects of providing information, skills and support to patients, their immediate carers and volunteers.

The positives and negatives of practising as a health professional in the bush are covered in: "Towards Unity for Health applied – participation and partnerships in north-west New South Wales" (A8 – 2); Rural practice (C2); Heal thyself (D2); Allied health (E1) and Learning from the past (F3).

The heavy stuff of assessing overall needs and capturing resources to meet those needs is covered in sessions such as "Sustaining the intent of policy into practice" (A4 – 2); Measuring access and isolation (B1 and B2); Regional health services (C3); Grassroots voices (D1); Local success stories (E8) and "Holding the hologram" (G6).

There are many activities and programs that are helping people to live better and more fulfilling lives, for example: The Self-expression, Gentle Exercise and Music Group (A5–2); Food (B4); Fishing, swimming and well-being (B5); Child and family health (C5); Women and health (D5) and Therapies (F8).

Don't forget

If in doubt about anything, ask one of the National Rural Health Alliance staff or Committee members. They are identified by the bright green polo shirts.