

## National Rural Health Alliance eforum - 9 March 2010

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### **One foot forward: Alliance encourages States to support reform blueprint**

The National Rural Health Alliance has encouraged the States and Territories to sign up to the National Health and Hospitals Network blueprint which has the potential to benefit people in rural and remote areas.

The full text of the Alliance statement is at

<http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/mr%20rudd%203%20march%20final.pdf> and is reproduced below.

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### **February 2010 E-news from the Alliance**

Australian Journal of Rural Health: leading rural health journal

In an independent study of more than 20,000 scientific publications, the Australian Journal of Rural Health received a B ranking from the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA). This places the journal alongside the US Journal of Rural Health, with which a joint issue of AJRH is planned later in 2010.

The Australian Journal of Rural Health is available to subscribers online and in hard copy. Abstracts from the current and back issues can be found on the Wiley Website.

### **Policy work**

The Alliance is meeting this week with consultants, Siggins Miller, about the new national strategic framework for rural and remote health. The Alliance is collaborating on this with the Rural Health Standing Committee of AHMAC and expects the new document to be compatible with other emerging reform announcements, including in terms of performance measurement and reporting.

The Alliance's Budget Submission describes some of the characteristics of a new regionalised health service and reiterates the key priorities relating to maternity services, oral health and workforce issues. The Submission is at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/publications/budget%20submission%20final%20as%20sent%201%20february.pdf>

Following the release last week of the Government's response to the Senate Inquiry, Alliance Chair Jenny May has urged the Commonwealth to lead on reform of patient assisted travel schemes by providing incentive payments to the States. Media Release is at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/mr%20pats%2025%20feb%202010.pdf>

The Alliance provided input to the consultation on Draft National Safety and Quality Healthcare Standards - see <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/publications/final%20nrha%20draft%20sqhs%20jan%202010.pdf> and made a submission to the National Health Workforce Agency on Clinical Placements, at [http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/publications/hwa-clinical\\_placements.pdf](http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/publications/hwa-clinical_placements.pdf)

There is a new e-health section on the Alliance website at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/e-health/?IntCatId=45> where you can share information about e-health solutions that are working in rural and remote Australia, and case studies of e-applications being used by your organisation.

### **RAMUS 2010**

All applicants for 2010 have now been notified about the outcome of their application. Information about the RAMUS Scheme is at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/scholarships/?IntCatId=7>

### **Next issue of Partyline out soon**

The next edition of Partyline will be published in March in conjunction with the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute at the ANU. To contribute to future editions (article, photo, letter to the editor, poem), contact [partyline@ruralhealth.org.au](mailto:partyline@ruralhealth.org.au). Back copies are available on the Partyline page of the website at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/publications/?IntContId=57&IntCatId=6>

### **NSW Regional Dentistry Scholarship**

The NSW Regional Dentistry Scholarship is for a first year dentistry student from regional New South Wales. Applications closed on 24 February 2010 and the successful applicant will

be advised soon. Details at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/otherscholarships/?IntCatId=43>

**'Rural and Remote Health Papers 1991-2009' DVD Now Available**

The updated 'Rural and Remote Health Papers 1991-2009' has been mailed to friends of the Alliance. Make sure your membership is up-to-date for 2010 to receive your copy. A membership form is available on the friends page of the Alliance's website.

**Positions Vacant**

The Alliance has a vacancy on its staff for a Conference Manager. Details can be found on the Positions Vacant page of the website at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/about/?IntContId=14848&IntCatId=2>

**Follow the Alliance on twitter**

Follow the NRHA on twitter at <http://twitter.com/NRHAlliance>

**11th National Rural Health Conference**

Set aside the date now: in Perth, 13-16 March 2011

Please continue to keep in touch with us on all things rural and remote  
<http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>

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**Patients' assisted travel must have Commonwealth support**

The Commonwealth Government's "hands-off" response to the Senate's Inquiry into patient assisted travel schemes will bitterly disappoint people in rural and remote areas.

The full text of the Alliance statement is at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/mr%20pats%2025%20feb%202010.pdf> and is reproduced below.

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**NRHA on TWITTER**

From <http://twitter.com/NRHAlliance>

- 1 The river at St George is so high that "the town is in uncharted waters" - <http://bit.ly/a4BGx4>
- 2 Health plan: v. hard to distinguish intellectual, public policy and technical issues from politics - but we must try. <http://bit.ly/aLOO8j> 9
- 3 PM's plan: ok to start with hospitals but get to primary, preventive & aged care v. soon - and their interrelationship. <http://bit.ly/LiRu3>
- 4 The not-for-profit sector creates \$43 B pa (4 pc of GDP) not I ncluding 5m volunteers (\$14.6 B in unpaid work) - <http://bit.ly/bTsZAd>
- 5 a national hospital funding authority, outcomes reporting, regional PHOs - plus mental health? aged care? <http://bit.ly/cO3Bn9>
- 6 At last PM clarifies re hospitals: it was always a two-Election commitment: <http://bit.ly/cYpybE>
- 7 Why did the Opposition not have a speaker in the Reps MPI on rural health? Transcript

here: <http://bit.ly/bKQzER>

8 Did you see this weekend's NRHA e-forum? <http://bit.ly/czyTJ4>

9 Don't miss the 11th National Rural Health Conference Perth 13-16 March 2011

10 Visited the NRHA's Youtube channel? Head over to <http://tiny.cc/youtube571>

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### **NRHA on YouTube**

(<http://www.youtube.com/user/RuralHealthAlliance>)

Nurse TV: The Country's Voice

Public Seminar 2009

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### **Medical Education Study**

The Australian Medical Education Study has now been released. The synthesis report and associated documents of the Australian Medical Education Study (AMES) *What makes for success in medical education?* commissioned by then Minister Nelson are now available as internet-only publications at <http://www.deewr.gov.au/MedEdStudy>.

The Study undertook a systematic examination of critical educational factors contributing to the outcomes of undergraduate medical education in Australia, in terms of how well it prepares graduates for their work as interns and meets the requirements of postgraduate training for future medical careers. There was also consideration of how undergraduate clinical education contributes to these outcomes, in terms of the effectiveness of different models of clinical education. Submissions to the review in response to public invitations are summarised in the synthesis report, as are the implications of the research reports commissioned within the project. The commissioned research reports themselves are also available for download.

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### **Subject: AAQHC 2010 Call for Abstracts**

From: AAQHC 2010 Conference Managers

### **Back to the Future - Unlocking the Potential**

We are pleased to announce that the abstract submission for 8th Australasian Conference on Safety and Quality in Health Care is now open!

Go to <http://aaqhc2010.cmail5.com/t/y/1/ojklh/udityupl/t> to Submit your abstract

The Conference theme is **BACK TO THE FUTURE - UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL**. This central theme will be addressed in a different light on each day. On day 1, the theme will be Looking Back; Learning from the Past. Speakers will be reinvigorating and representing the evidence for those interventions that have been proven to be effective for improving the quality of health care. We know what we should be doing, so why aren't we? On day 2, the theme is Here and Now; Doing it Better. Speakers will be required to present strategies that we are currently using to improve health care and those strategies that we could be utilising

more efficiently to achieve this. On day 3, the theme will be Looking forward; on to the Future. Speakers will be asked to excite the Conference delegates with new, innovative and proven strategies for improving health care in the future. For more information on submitting your abstract, please go to <http://aaqhc2010.cmail5.com/t/y/1/ojklh/udityupl/i>

To ensure that you remain abreast of all new information and the latest program developments as they become available, please visit the 2010 conference website at <http://www.aaqhc2010.org.au> On behalf of the Organising Committee; we look forward to the opportunity of welcoming you to another successful and exciting program ahead.

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**Creating Futures 2010 - Harnessing creativity and social enterprise for mental health and wellbeing**

Cairns, Far North Queensland

20~24 September, 2010

Announcement and Call For Abstracts

Closing date for receipt of abstracts: Thursday 1 April, 2010

*Creating Futures 2010*, auspiced by the Centre for Rural & Remote Mental Health Queensland, is the fourth conference in a series in which the populations of interest are indigenous peoples from Australia, New Zealand, North America and the Pacific Islands and people living and working in rural and remote areas.

As with the previous *Creating Futures* conferences, there will be a focus on the social determinants of health. *Creating Futures 2010* will also highlight creativity and social entrepreneurial approaches, posing the question: *How is it possible to harness the creativity and energy of the social enterprise sector to address the underpinning social determinants of mental health and wellbeing in the populations of interest?*

A National Workshop about *Me and My Community*, a Centre for Rural & Remote Mental Health Queensland project aimed at developing leadership capacity and mental health and wellbeing knowledge among young people and women working in the farming sector in rural and remote Australia, will be held on Friday, 24 September. This will follow a dedicated stream of presentations addressing the impact of environmental and other challenges impacting on rural and remote communities on 23 September.

For more information visit the website at <http://www.crrmhq.com.au>

**Invitation to attend**

Creating Futures convenor, Professor Ernest Hunter, and the Centre for Rural & Remote Mental Health Queensland cordially invite you to attend this exciting, inspiring event that will develop your professional practice and challenge your thinking about mental health and wellbeing in the 21st century.

If you wish to be included in the mailing list to receive the advance program and registration brochure, please email your postal address with "Creating Futures" in the subject line to [info@conorg.com.au](mailto:info@conorg.com.au)

Please email abstracts to: [info@conorg.com.au](mailto:info@conorg.com.au)

Or post on a CD to: Creating Futures Conference  
c/- The Conference Organiser, 146 Leicester Street, Carlton, Victoria 3053

For further details regarding the meeting, please contact:  
The Conference Organiser Pty Ltd, 146 Leicester Street  
Carlton, Victoria, AUSTRALIA 3053  
Phone: Australia: (03) 9349 2220 Email: [info@conorg.com.au](mailto:info@conorg.com.au) Fax: Australia: (03) 9349  
2230 <http://www.conorg.com.au>

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**Subject: beyondblue & prostate cancer - nurse survey**  
From: Carolyn Salmon

A key priority for *beyondblue: the national depression initiative* is to raise awareness of depression and anxiety in men with prostate cancer. *beyondblue* is conducting a survey to determine how *beyondblue* can best support nurses to identify depression and anxiety in men with prostate cancer and provide appropriate follow up. The online survey is open until 14 March 2010 and is available at: <http://beyondblue.nurses-survey.sgizmo.com>

It would be greatly appreciated if you could please pass this information on to your networks.

Carolyn Salmon, Program Manager - co-morbidities & chronic illness  
*beyondblue: the national depression initiative*  
Phone: (03) 9810 6164 Fax: (03) 9810 6111  
Mobile: 0419 100 080 *beyondblue* info line: 1300 22 4636  
<http://www.beyondblue.org.au/http://www.youthbeyondblue.com>

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### **Rural and Remote Health Papers 1991 - 2009 DVD**

Where can you easily access 3,189 references to the words 'rural health'?

All 3,189 documents can be found on the updated 'Rural and Remote Health Papers 1991-2009' DVD available when you join friends of the Alliance (see <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/friends/?IntCatId=4> )

You will also find 2,510 references to 'remote health', 526 references to 'health reform', 1,359 references to 'aboriginal health', and 315 references to 'oral health'.

What will you search for when you get your copy?

The DVD contains the proceedings of all ten National Rural Health Conferences, all Alliance policy documents, annual reports, media releases and newsletters.

Don't forget friends of the Alliance also receive a discounted registration for the 11th National Rural Health Conference to be held in Perth, 13-16 March 2011.

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**Invitation to participate in Research Project - Managing tensions in professional statutory practice: Living and working in rural and remote communities**

(From Newsletter of **Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health Queensland Newsletter**, <http://www.crrmhq.com.au/>)

Who is conducting the research?

Professor Lesley Chenoweth and Dr Donna McAuliffe, School of Human Services and Social Work, Griffith University; Associate Professor Barrie O'Connor, Institute of Disability Studies, Griffith University; Dr Paula Jervis-Tracey, School of Education and Professional Studies, Griffith University; Professor Daniela Stehlik, Division of Humanities, Curtin University of Technology. The Australian Research Council has provided funding for this research project.

**Why is the research being conducted?**

To map the scope and practice requirements of statutory roles across health, justice, education and human services; To determine the characteristics of the relationships between professionals with statutory responsibilities who live and work in rural communities, and the communities in which they operate; To explore the strategies different professionals use effectively to negotiate the multiple relationships generated by their work and living situation; To determine what factors contribute to more collaborative relationships and more effective outcomes of statutory work in rural and remote communities; and To identify the inter-relationships between working in rural/remote environments and being 'managed' from central agencies or departments.

**What are the expected benefits of the research?**

When professionals have mandatory responsibilities (in child protection, law enforcement or mental health matters), tensions can arise between workers and the community in which they live. The study will explore solutions to the complex medical, legal and social issues that arise for different professional groups in the discharge of their duties. It will increase current knowledge about the nature of their roles and responsibilities in small communities, and about improving professional practice and retention, leading to improved service delivery and outcomes for individuals, families and communities.

**What's involved?**

Workers will be asked to fill in an online survey during March - July 2010. The survey will ask questions pertaining to professional's experience of statutory work in rural and remote communities. The survey should take approximately 45 minutes to complete, and participants can opt to enter a draw for a \$100 gift card.

**How do I become involved?**

To express your interest please contact:

Natalie Clements,

Senior Research Assistant

Phone: (07) 3382 1134

Email: [N.Clements@gu.edu.au](mailto:N.Clements@gu.edu.au)

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**Join friends in 2010**

2010 is shaping up to be another interesting and important year for health in rural and remote areas. We would like to encourage you to join or renew your membership of friends of the Alliance for another year. The cost of membership is unchanged: \$44 (including GST) for an individual, \$165 for an organisation of less than 50 people, and \$330 for a large organisation.

On joining you will receive a friends membership pack including a certificate, the Rural and Remote Health Papers CD, lapel pin, fact sheets and the latest annual report. A membership form can also be found on the friends page of the Alliance website at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/friends/?IntCatId=4>

The NRHA values the input of friends and finds its advice and contributions invaluable to the work of the Alliance. We look forward to working with you again in 2010.

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**Framework for Measuring Wellbeing: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, 2010 - ABS Cat 4703.0**

This publication describes a framework to map statistical information about Indigenous people, in the context of the interrelationships with their social and physical environments. Not only does it provide a means to present existing data, the framework also provides the means to identify potential data gaps. <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4703.0?OpenDocument>

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Partyline is the newsletter of the National Rural Health Alliance. Partyline enables communication within the rural community and invites contributions about issues relating to health and wellbeing in rural, regional and remote parts of Australia. Subscription is free. All back copies of Partyline are available at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>

The December *Partyline* (#37) considers what's at risk of being forgotten in the climate change debate; reflects on the importance of education, employment and empowerment for Indigenous health; and promotes the benefits to be derived from a more positive approach to ageing. Other articles in this issue focus on roles of the health workforce and its national distribution, health promotion, rural health research, responses to health reform and the celebration of excellence in rural and remote service delivery.

Subscription to *Partyline* is free (email [partyline@ruralhealth.org.au](mailto:partyline@ruralhealth.org.au)) or it can be accessed on the website of the National Rural Health Alliance (<http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>).

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**Closing the life expectancy gap for Indigenous Australians**

A new research program will investigate ways to achieve healthy pregnancies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. The rate of premature births in Indigenous communities is

almost twice that of non-Indigenous communities<sup>1</sup> and Aboriginal babies are twice as likely to be born excessively small compared to non-Aboriginal babies.

The 'Gomeroi gaaynggal - Gomeroi babies' program comprises two parts - a scientific research program led by Professor Roger Smith from the University of Newcastle, and an ArtsHealth program delivered through community groups to Aboriginal women of childbearing age.

Researchers in Newcastle and at the University Department of Rural Health in Tamworth, will examine possible causes of premature birth, the births of small babies and babies with reduced renal function, in the Indigenous community. The team will focus on the health of Aboriginal babies as they grow and develop inside the uterus, and factors affecting the timing of birth. The ArtsHealth program will feed back to the community, the knowledge gained through medical research, to improve the health of Aboriginal mothers and their children.

More details at <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/news/2010/02/closingthelifeexpectancygap.html>

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CLICK TO GIVE FREE MAMMOGRAMS

<http://www.thebreastcancersite.com/clickToGive/home.faces?siteId=2>

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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 to AJRH. The Australian Journal of Rural Health is published on behalf of the National Rural Health Alliance by Blackwell Publishing Asia Pty Ltd 155 Cremorne Street Richmond Vic. 3121 Tel: +61 (0)3 9274 3100 Fax: +61 (0)3 9274 3101 E-mail: [melbourne@johnwiley.com.au](mailto:melbourne@johnwiley.com.au)

February 2010 issue now available. Contents include:

**Editorials**

- Colorectal cancer screening and rural Australian communities
- Determinants of mental health and well-being in rural communities: Do we understand enough to influence planning and policy?
- Special Report - Ethics and trauma: lessons from media coverage of Black Saturday

**Original Articles**

Exploratory study examining barriers to participation in colorectal cancer screening

Mental health and well-being within rural communities: The Australian Rural Mental Health Study

Distress among rural residents: Does employment and occupation make a difference?

Mental health impact for adolescents living with prolonged drought

Synergy and sustainability in rural procedural medicine: Views from the coalface

**Short Report** - Greater Green Triangle Diabetes Prevention Program: Remaining treatment gaps in hypertension and dyslipidaemia

**Grazing** - A child-eating nutritionist?

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

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### **AIHW REPORT**

Hip fractures decline among older Australians, more so for women than men

The incidence of hip fractures among older Australians declined consistently between 1997-98 and 2006-07, but more so for women than men, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report, *The problem of osteoporotic hip fracture in Australia*. Over the ten year period, the incidence rate for osteoporotic hip fracture decreased by 14% for men and by 20% for women. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were more likely than their non-Indigenous counterparts to be hospitalised for an osteoporotic hip fracture. They were also, on average, much younger at the time of their hip fracture.

Media release at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/mediacentre/2010/mr20100305.cfm>

Full publication at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10695>

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### **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](mailto:infoservice@lifeline.org.au) and <http://www.lifeline.org.au>

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### **FEDERAL GOVERNMENT NEWS**

#### **83 New Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Outreach Workers to be Placed Around the Nation**

National efforts to close the gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a generation received a boost with the announcement of 83 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Outreach Worker placements across Australia.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr10-ws-ws013.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2010&mth=2>

### **A National Health and Hospitals Network for Australia's Future**

The Rudd Government announced major structural reforms to Australia's health and hospital system. The Government will deliver better health services and better hospitals by establishing a National Health and Hospitals Network. The new National Health and Hospitals Network will end blame shifting and cost shifting, and provide national leadership on health and hospitals with increased local control.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr10-nr-nr038.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2010&mth=3>

<http://www.pm.gov.au/node/6535>

<http://www.alp.org.au/news/national-health-and-hospitals-network-australias-future>

### **Taking Full Funding Responsibility for GP and Primary Health Care**

The Australian Government will take full policy and funding responsibility for GP and primary health care services in Australia. This change amounts to a \$18.7 billion takeover of funding responsibility for primary health care and GP services from the states and territories over the upcoming forward estimates. For example, in practice this will mean being able to bring together State Government community services such as community health clinics with allied health services such as dietitians and psychologists, together with Commonwealth services such as GP services in the one setting.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr10-nr-nr039.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2010&mth=3>

<http://www.pm.gov.au/node/6536>

### **Release of Delivering Sustainable Health Funding for the Future**

The Rudd Government's new National Health and Hospital Network will help ensure the long-term sustainability of Australia's finances and underpin high-quality health services into the future. Because the expected growth in health care costs outpaces the growth in GST revenues, the Australian Government will shoulder the burden of funding the rapidly rising health costs of the future.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr10-nr-nr040.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2010&mth=3>

<http://www.pm.gov.au/node/6537>

### **Taking Majority Funding Responsibility for Public Hospitals**

The Australian Government will for the first time become the majority funder of the public hospital system. This action will permanently reverse the decline in Commonwealth funding for public hospitals.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr10-nr-nr041.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2010&mth=3>

<http://www.pm.gov.au/node/6538>

### **Local Hospital Networks to Deliver on Local Needs**

Local Hospital Networks will be established across the country and paid directly by the Australian Government for each public hospital service they provide. Local Hospital Networks will be made up of a small group of hospitals that will work together to provide a range of hospital services and manage their own budgets.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr10-nr-nr042.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2010&mth=3>

<http://www.pm.gov.au/node/6539>

**\$10.7 Million to Combat Indigenous Smoking**

Fourteen sites across Australia will benefit from Australian Government funding round to promote innovative anti-tobacco campaigns and prevention strategies.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr10-ws-ws015.htm>

**National Health and Hospitals Network Good for Rural Health**

Rural and regional health services stand to benefit from the National Health and Hospitals Network announced by the Prime Minister, Treasurer and Health Minister.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr10-ws-ws016.htm>

**Australian Government Tackles Petrol Sniffing In Remote WA**

The Australian Government is providing an additional \$2.3 million dollars to rollout Opal fuel in the Goldfields region of Western Australia to help curb petrol sniffing in the region's Indigenous communities.

[http://www.jennymacklin.fahcsia.gov.au/internet/jennymacklin.nsf/content/jm\\_wapetrolniffing\\_4march2010.htm](http://www.jennymacklin.fahcsia.gov.au/internet/jennymacklin.nsf/content/jm_wapetrolniffing_4march2010.htm)

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**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!

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**Rural Health Services to be Big Losers - Opposition**

The proposed health plan outlined by the Prime Minister this week is short on detail and high on unrealistic expectations, according to Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Health Services, Health and Wellbeing, Dr Andrew Southcott MP. "Victorian rural health organisations turned their backs on case-mix funding ten years ago as it was not viable then. It is still not viable now for many rural and regional hospitals," Dr Southcott said. Dr Southcott's statement is at <http://www.liberal.org.au/news.php?Id=4971>

**In other reaction from the Opposition:**

\* Senator the Hon Ian Macdonald, Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Northern and Remote Australia, said that the belated announcement from Mr Rudd on public health funding doesn't solve one of the critical issues facing Northern and Remote Australians - the drastic underspend on public health facilities. See <http://www.liberal.org.au/news.php?Id=4953>

\* Opposition leader Tony Abbott spoke of the implications for indigenous health - see <http://www.liberal.org.au/news.php?Id=4950>

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**BUSH SUPPORT SERVICES (formerly Bush Crisis Line) - 1800 805 391**

The Bush Support Services Line is a 24 hour confidential telephone support service for workers, and their families, who work in health related services in remote and isolated

situations. 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.bss.crana.org.au>

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### **RURAL HEALTH ON THE ABC**

(See <http://www.abc.net.au/health/healthyliving/yourhealth/ruralregionalhealth/> )

#### **Rural nurses get theatre training**

A course that prepares nurses for working in operating theatres will be offered in rural Queensland for the first time. Nurses at Dalby on southern Queensland's Darling Downs will start studying peri-operative procedures, which involves preparing patients for theatre.  
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/03/01/2832625.htm>

#### **Prescription for more efficient health system: AMAQ**

The Australian Medical Association Queensland (AMAQ) has presented the State Government with a plan to improve efficiency in the state's health system. The plan calls for extra orthopaedic and trauma wards to stay open overnight and on the weekends. It also wants a greater use of telemedicine, and surgery teams flown to regional hospitals instead of patients being flown out.  
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/02/26/2831456.htm>

#### **ABORIGINES TRAVEL HUNDREDS OF KILOMETRES FOR DIALYSIS** (The World Today: 25/02/2010)

<http://abcmail.net.au/t/900075/614869/15836/0/>

#### **Concern in regional areas over health reforms**

<http://www.abc.net.au/worldtoday/content/2010/s2836400.htm>

#### **Staffing incentives to support health reforms in bush**

The Minister for Indigenous, Rural and Regional Health admits it'll be a tough road ahead to get enough health workers to the bush under the Federal Government's hospital reforms.  
<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/201003/s2836259.htm>

#### **Aboriginal health services welcome federal overhaul**

An alliance of Aboriginal medical services has welcomed the Prime Minister's plan for a new national health system.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/03/04/2836466.htm>

#### **AMA says on-call funding deal not enough**

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) has described an agreement between the Rural Doctors Association and Country Health SA for on-call funding and arrangements as a bargain for the State Government.  
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/02/23/2827919.htm>

#### **Snowdon wants outreach workers to be local**

The federal Minister for Indigenous Health says he wants the new national workforce of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander outreach workers to come from local communities.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/02/19/2824791.htm>

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## **RDAА NEWS**

Hospital and health reform shows promise, but doctor shortage must be fixed to deliver real benefits

3 March 2010

[http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded\\_documents/Hospital%20and%20health%20reform%20shows%20promise%20--%20March%202010.pdf](http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/Hospital%20and%20health%20reform%20shows%20promise%20--%20March%202010.pdf)

**PM warned: hospital reform will fail in the bush unless it addresses rural doctor shortage**

2 March 2010

[http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded\\_documents/Hospital%20reform%20--%20March%202010.pdf](http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/Hospital%20reform%20--%20March%202010.pdf)

**Rural doctors serve up key issues for federal pollies at pre-election breakfast briefing**

24 February 2010

[http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded\\_documents/Breakfast%20briefing%20media%20release%20--%20February%202010.pdf](http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/Breakfast%20briefing%20media%20release%20--%20February%202010.pdf)

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Get Regional is the new information and referral service for people living and working throughout country Australia. Engaging and interacting rural, regional and remote communities, via dynamic interactive technologies, to ensure a more sustainable future for the bush. The most up-to-date and independent information service with a wide range of broadcast distribution services.

<http://getregional.com.au>

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## **CRCAH NEWS**

(From <http://www.crcah.org.au/> )

The Lowitja Institute (incorporating the CRC for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health) was launched last week on Wednesday 24 February 2010. The Institute is named after our Patron and Chair of the CRC for Aboriginal and Tropical Health (1997-2003), Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue, AC CBE DSG, who spoke at the launch. She concluded her speech, saying "I am delighted to accept the great honour that you have bestowed upon me. And it is with great pleasure, that I pass my name to you. I trust that in your capable hands, the Institute will become widely known for its excellence and outcomes."

<http://www.crcah.org.au/communication/downloads/Launch-of-the-Lowitja-Institute-Feb-2010.pdf>

**Congress Lowitja to be held in Sydney on 23-24 March 2010**

The Lowitja Institute: Australia's National Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research, incorporating The Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander Health (CRCATSIH) is hosting the first Congress Lowitja in Sydney from Tuesday 23rd to Wednesday 24th March 2010.

This event will showcase findings from the former CRCAH and provide an opportunity to discuss the future CRCATSIH and the Lowitja Institute research agenda and stakeholder involvement.

[http://congress.crcah.org.au/assets/documents/overview\\_program.pdf](http://congress.crcah.org.au/assets/documents/overview_program.pdf)

A fortnightly bulletin distributed by the Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (CRCATSIH) through our partners - with information on media, reports, events, funding opportunities and new publications.

<http://www.crcah.org.au/communication/downloads/2010-03-01-CRCATSIH-e-bulletin.pdf>

**The Let's Start: Exploring Together Preschool Program will launch its evaluation report** on Wednesday 17 March 2010 in Darwin.

<http://www.crcah.org.au/research/downloads/letsstart-flyer-032010.pdf>

[http://www.crcah.org.au/research/lets\\_start.html](http://www.crcah.org.au/research/lets_start.html)

<http://www.crcah.org.au/communication/downloads/lets-start-evaluation-report-2010.pdf>

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## **CURRENT ISSUE OF eMJA**

(Available at <http://www.mja.com.au/> )

Blinding endemic trachoma remains a major public health problem in many Indigenous communities, despite the knowledge that has been gathered about its control since the 1930s, according to the authors of a study published in the *Medical Journal of Australia*. Prof Hugh Taylor, Harold Mitchell Chair of Indigenous Eye Health at the University of Melbourne, and his co-authors conducted a national, random cluster sample survey of eye health in Indigenous children (5-15 years) and adults (40 years and older) in 30 communities across Australia.

<http://www.ama.com.au/node/5370>

## **Current issue: 1 March 2010**

From the Editor's Desk: The Stanford 25

### **Editorials**

Clinical-quality registries: their role in quality improvement

Troponin measurement and the new assays: how low can we go?

### **Research**

The prevalence of trachoma in Australia: the National Indigenous Eye Health Survey

Cardiovascular risk perception and evidence-practice gaps in Australian general practice (the AusHEART study)

Health Care - The cost of overweight and obesity in Australia

### **Position Statement**

CICADA: Cough in Children and Adults: Diagnosis and Assessment. Australian Cough Guidelines summary statement

Diabetic kidney disease: act now or pay later

Research Enterprise - Ethics review of multisite studies: the difficult case of community-based Indigenous health research

Notable Cases - Hyperhaemolysis in sickle cell disease - an unusual and potentially life-

threatening complication

**Viewpoint** - Fit for the future - a regional governance structure for a new age

The Profession - Motives for migration of South African doctors to Australia since 1948

**Letters**

National registration legislative proposals need more work and more time

A case study evaluation of ethics review systems for multicentre clinical trials

Winds of change: growing demands for transparency in the relationship between doctors and the pharmaceutical industry

Making cars and making health care: a critical review

Book Review - Ethics in practice. Moral theory and the professions

Correction - AUSDRISK: an Australian Type 2 Diabetes Risk Assessment Tool based on demographic, lifestyle and simple anthropometric measures

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**Consumer-Centred Health Care: Policy Innovation and Empowerment**

**National Conference, Melbourne 22-23 March 2010**

**Angliss Conference Centre**

This conference will explore the agenda of consumer-centred health care, with a particular focus on consumers with complex and chronic health needs including disability, chronic and mental illness, and aged frailty. Day 1 will explore opportunities and scenarios in various sectors. Day 2 will explore challenges in implementation, with a focus on health plans for communities and consumers with common interests.

**Key speakers include:**

Christine Bennett, Chair, National Health and Hospital Reform Commission

Ian Hickie, Executive Director, Brain and Mind Research Institute

Just Stoelwinder, Chair, Health Services Management, Monash University

Maxine Drake, Health Consumers' Council of WA

Philip Davies, Health Systems and Policy, University of Qld

Samantha Thomas, Head, Consumer Health Research Group, Monash University

Barry Welsh, Ministry of Health, New Zealand

**Key themes include:**

Commonwealth reform initiatives: making change happen

Organising and empowering health consumers

Self-care and self-management in health

Consumer-directed aged care

Consumer-centred innovation in mental health

Consumer-centred innovation in drug and alcohol rehabilitation

Consumer-centred systems

Consumer-centred funding arrangements

Chronic illness consolidated budgets

Capitation-based payment systems

Health brokers, care co-ordinators, health intermediaries

Community engagement in health reform

*Medicare Select*: opt-in health plans

Partnerships between practitioners and consumers

Website information at <http://www.partnerships.org.au:80/NationalConference2010.htm>

Contact information: Vern Hughes  
03 9824 4713 0425 722 890  
[info@partnerships.org.au](mailto:info@partnerships.org.au)

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**Subject: International *Healthy Parks Healthy People* Congress**  
From: Elisia Dowling [edowling@parks.vic.gov.au](mailto:edowling@parks.vic.gov.au)

With the increasing recognition of the value of nature to human health and wellbeing worldwide, Parks Victoria will host the inaugural International *Healthy Parks Healthy People Congress* at the new Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, Australia from 11-16 April 2010.

This will be a unique opportunity to bring together delegates from all relevant sectors (i.e. planning, community development, physical and mental health, tourism, climate change, education, recreation, ecology and park management) to explore how we can take better advantage of the way nature significantly contributes to our wellbeing and broader societal benefits.

We are seeking proposals under the following themes: Healthy Communities, Healthy Parks, Healthy Participation, Healthy People and subthemes.

In addition to the partners displayed on the website, the support of the World Health Organisation, United Nations World Tourism Organisation, US Federal Centers for Disease Control & Prevention and the Australian Federal Government Department of Health & Ageing is being sought.

<http://www.healthyparkshealthypeoplecongress.org>

Elisia Dowling, Project Officer  
International Healthy Parks Healthy People Congress April 11-16, 2010  
Parks Victoria  
Level 10/535 Bourke Street, Melbourne, Vic 3000, Australia  
Ph: (03) 8680 2138 Fax: (03) 9613 4722 M: 0428 598 322

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**Sustaining Rural Communities**

Social research for rural communities and all its industries. Lets plan and act for our future.

Date: April 19 - 21st, 2010  
Venue: The Crossing Theatre, Narrabri (800 delegates)  
Format: Morning sessions - presentations. Afternoon sessions - engagement, workshops, planning and networks  
Registration: Essential. Details available on request  
Cost: No entry cost

**Conference Streams**

- 1. 19th April - The Research (social research concerning rural communities and economies, impacts of climate change, drought, water reforms, resources boom and global food / fibre security)
- 2. 20th April - The Workforces (responses to creating and sustaining regionally fl exible workforces with resilient communities)
- 3. 21st April - The Capacity (the Culture of Learning, building the capacity of rural people and their communities)

For more information: Please contact Kate Schwager on 02 6799 2477  
<http://www.cottoncrc.org.au>

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**Effective Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Service Delivery 2010**

Beyond Consultation to Shared Responsibility  
 20-21 April 2010  
 Crowne Plaze, Alice Springs, NT

Despite the best of intentions, for centuries governments have struggled to deliver services that are in-line with traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lifestyles. Facilitating Indigenous mobility practices and the rich cultural traditions of diverse clans has emphasised the need to move away from a one-size fits all model, to empowerment of individual communities in driving their own service delivery. When you attend this conference you will take away:

- \* Increased awareness on cultural norms and protocols for effective service delivery
- \* Tools on negotiating with government, the private sector and communities
- \* Methods on how to have ongoing input during implementation of services
- \* Case studies on service delivery initiatives that break through common barriers

Criterion is delighted to offer a select number of scholarships for indigenous community representatives to attend. The conference brochure is now available to download at <http://www.thewebconsole.com/process/link.php?lId=698932&cId=1156791>

For more information regarding this conference, please call 1300 316 882 or visit <http://www.indigservicedelivery.com>

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**TOWARDS SOCIAL INCLUSION**

A practitioner's guide to building a more inclusive Australia  
 20-21 April 2010  
 National Convention Centre  
 Canberra

In launching the statement, A Stronger, Fairer Australia, the Minister for Social Inclusion, Julia Gillard, said the provision of opportunities, resources, capabilities and responsibilities would ensure that no Australian is left behind. The social inclusion statement set out a new approach to break down the barriers preventing disadvantaged Australians from getting a ' fair go'. Ms Gillard said the principle of social inclusion had underpinned a number of recent

reforms, including early childhood education and schools, social housing, the pension system and Indigenous affairs.

Ongoing conversations about social inclusion are critical to ensuring we achieve it. Don't miss out on the opportunity to become involved in this important conversation!

Attend and you will take away:

- \* A greater understanding of Australia's social inclusion agenda
- \* Strategies for weaving a social inclusion focus into policies and programs going forward
- \* A greater understanding of other sectors with whom it is important to collaborate
- \* Practical advice on how to focus your organisations work to build a more socially inclusive Australia

Towards Social Inclusion speakers include:

- \* Dr John Falzon, St Vincent de Paul Society, National Council of Australia
- \* Kerry Graham, Chief Executive Officer, The Inspire Foundation
- \* Damian Ferrie, Executive Director, Community Programs, Department of Planning and Community Development, VIC
- \* Desley Hargreaves, National Manager, Social Work Services, Centrelink

**How to register:**

Don't forget to register before 12 February and you can save up to \$600

Online: go to <http://www.thewebconsole.com/process/link.php?Id=718824&cId=1156791>

Tel: 1300 316 882 | Fax: 1300 918 334

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**Beyond Evidence on Reducing Health Inequities Symposium:**

What works, why and how, 27 - 28 April 2010, Adelaide

This will be the final policy event for the NHMRC-funded Australian Health Inequities Program. The aims of the Symposium are to present research-based examples of policies and programs that were designed to intervene on the social determinants of health inequities; to contribute to debates about the ways in which policy makers can build social determinants of health inequities perspectives into programs inside and outside of government; to compare progress in the uptake of social determinants of health inequities perspectives in Australia and other countries; and to consider how social determinants of health can contribute to the goal of Closing the Gap. Confirmed international speakers include Professor Sir Michael G. Marmot.

Symposium website: <http://som.flinders.edu.au/FUSA/PublicHealth/AHIP/2010/>

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**The 2nd Rural & Remote Health Scientific Symposium** is to be held in Brisbane, 9-11 June 2010. Further information [conference@ruralhealth.org.au](mailto:conference@ruralhealth.org.au)

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**Inaugural National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Conference (NIDAC 2010):** Listening, Learning and Leading.

16 - 18 June 2010  
Adelaide Convention Centre, Adelaide, South Australia

The National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Conference aims to assist and contribute to further develop the capacity of those working to address the harms associated with the use of alcohol and other drugs in meaningful and practical ways. The Conference will also showcase and celebrate the quiet efforts and achievements of those striving to improve the health and well being of our communities. It is a time for listening, learning and leading the way on what can be accomplished on this important health and social issue within Australia. To view flyer and details go to <http://www.nidaconference.com.au/>

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**Primary health care research and health reform: Improving care Conference**  
Wednesday 30 June 2010 - Friday 2 July 2010  
Darwin, Northern Territory

Come to Darwin for the 2010 PHC Research Conference - *Primary health care research and health reform: Improving care*, and participate in one of the premier primary health care networking events.

This conference is a must for anyone with an interest in primary health care research, evaluation and development. It will provide essential opportunities for researchers, decision makers, practitioners and consumers to share ideas, debate critical PHC matters, form collaborations and network with speakers and other delegates.

The program is an exciting blend of plenary sessions, workshops, symposia, poster and paper sessions, and influential presenters from both Australia and overseas. Funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, it is supported by both the Australian Association of Academic Primary Care (AAAPC) and the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute (APHCRI, based at ANU).

Earlybird registration is available until Friday 14 May  
Call for abstracts closes Friday 19 March

Presented by PHCRIS  
Event website: <http://www.phcris.org.au/conference/2010>

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**NAIDOC WEEK**  
4-11 July 2010  
<http://www.naidoc.org.au/index.aspx>

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**2010 Secretariat for National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) Conference**  
Alice Springs, 27-29 July  
<http://www.snaicc.asn.au/policy/conference>

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**9th World Indigenous Women and Wellness Conference**

Hosted by the Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation  
22-25 August 2010, Darwin

The corporation welcomes all people who are interested in, or concerned with, Indigenous women and wellness to get involved in the conference and particularly encourages the participation of Indigenous women. More information from Jodie Farrow, Community Health Engagement/Health Promotions Officer, Danila Dilba Health Service, email [jodie.farrow@daniladilba.org.au](mailto:jodie.farrow@daniladilba.org.au) , T: 08 89435100, F: 08 89435101, W: <http://www.daniladilba.org.au>

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**Healing Our Spirit 2010**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers and researchers are advised to start planning now for Healing Our Spirit Worldwide The Sixth Gathering, which is due to take place on the island of Honolulu in Hawaii from 3 to 10 September 2010. The goal of Healing Our Spirit Worldwide (HOSW) is to celebrate the diverse and unique cultural strengths, knowledge and talents of Indigenous peoples around the world, with a particular focus on successes, best practices and common issues in health, healing and addictions.

The Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health is a proud supporter of and committed participant in the gathering, which will be hosted by native Hawaiian healthcare organisation Papa Ola Lōkahi (<http://www.papaolalokahi.org>) .

For more information:  
Maria Halkitis - Contract Manager, 08 8943 5020  
Mick Gooda - CEO, 0409 688 403

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**Rural Medicine Australia 2010**

Scientific forum and conference

Rural Medicine Australia 2010, the national conference of ACRRM and the Rural Doctors Association of Australia, will this year include a scientific forum. The theme for this important gathering of doctors and others passionate about rural and remote medicine is 'Bringing it all together'. The venue is Hotel Grand Chancellor, Hobart. RMA 2010 will run from 22 to 24 October. Almost 300 people attended Rural Medicine Australia 2009 in Melbourne. We will shortly be calling for abstracts and launching the RMA 2010 website with registration and accommodation information.  
<http://www.acrrm.org.au/news/rural-medicine-australia-2010-0>

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**The 11th National Rural Health Conference will be held in Perth on 13-16 March 2011.**

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**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 views 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.

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**Media Release**

**3 March 2010**

**One foot forward: Alliance encourages States to support reform blueprint**

The National Rural Health Alliance has encouraged the States and Territories to sign up to the National Health and Hospitals Network blueprint which has the potential to benefit people in rural and remote areas.

"We welcome the Commonwealth move under the new National Health and Hospitals Network strategy to become the majority funder of public hospitals and to take full responsibility for primary care," said Alliance Chair, Dr Jenny May.

"As long as the funding formula takes account of the increased costs and difficulty of providing services in rural and remote areas, the Commonwealth undertaking to fund 60 per cent of hospital activities, infrastructure and training will give hope for the revitalisation of rural hospitals," Dr May said.

The current National Healthcare Agreement has an undertaking about these formulae, expressed in terms of "the Community Service Obligations for small and regional hospital services".

"The size of the proposed new local hospital networks should allow local leadership to flourish and ensure effective relationships among services in the region and with their communities."

"A focus on local health care networks also gives us the chance to stitch the fabric of our healthcare together in a way that works for our own particular towns and regions. Close articulation of hospitals, aged care and emergency services with the primary care sector is central to good health in smaller communities," Dr May said.

Another priority was the need to address workforce shortages, with very serious mal-distribution being a serious limiting factor on service development in the bush. "Rural hospitals can make the difference between having doctors in town working with other health professionals, some visiting and some local, or no doctors at all," Dr May said.

In the next round of health announcements it is hoped that the Commonwealth will focus on rural and remote workforce issues and on building preventive care, primary care, hospitals services and aged care in each region to ensure they work together to meet local needs.

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**Media Release**

**25 February 2010**

**Patients' assisted travel must have Commonwealth support**

The Commonwealth Government's "hands-off" response to the Senate's Inquiry into patient assisted travel schemes will bitterly disappoint people in rural and remote areas.

Dr Jenny May, Chairperson of the Alliance, said that having the Commonwealth "committed to working with state and territory governments to improve the system" but not leading or investing is a serious setback.

"We understand that the Commonwealth does not welcome financial exposure to these schemes, but we are convinced that it needs to lead. The best way of doing this effectively would be to provide incentive payments to the states and the Northern Territory," Dr May said.

"Having waited so long for this response to the Senate Report<sup>1</sup>, it gives us little confidence to know that the Commonwealth is still considering the issues through its various reform and collaborative processes. But we live in hope," she said.

The formal response to the report, published today, lists the many programs funded since the election of the Rudd Government and the reviews undertaken, but makes no substantive response to the specific recommendations from the Senate nor indeed to the clear proposal from the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission that PATS should be better funded.

The Senate's recommendations were referred to a task force established in March 2008 to consider the issue. But all that today's response reveals is that the Commonwealth is continuing to participate with the states and territories to progress the work.

"Having drawn a blank today, people in rural and remote areas will hope that something as important as patient assisted travel can be specifically dealt with in the upcoming health reform announcements," Dr May said.

