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### ALLIANCE BACKS BUSINESS COUNCIL CALL FOR HEALTH SYSTEM RESTRUCTURE

The peak body for rural and remote health has backed the call from the Business Council of Australia (BCA) for reform of the nation's fragmented national health services. The full text of the Alliance statement is at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/support%20for%20bca%20submission%2020%20march.pdf> and is reproduced below.

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### ON-LINE, ON-TIME AND A BOON FOR RURAL AND REMOTE AREAS

A new on-line resource to help rural and remote health professionals to diagnose and support people with Parkinson's disease has been launched less than 12 months after instigation of the project. The full text of the Alliance statement is at [http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/parkinsons\\_resource\\_launched\\_mr\\_18\\_03\\_09.pdf](http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/parkinsons_resource_launched_mr_18_03_09.pdf) and is reproduced below.

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CAIRNS TO HOST COURSE IN BLOOD BORNE VIRUSES AND STIs

A one-day course in Blood Borne Viruses and Sexually Transmitted Infections (BBV/STIs) will be held in Cairns ahead of the 10th National Rural Health Conference from 17-20 May. The full text of the Alliance statement is at [http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/conference\\_bbv%20sti%20course.pdf](http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/conference_bbv%20sti%20course.pdf) and is reproduced below.

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10th CONFERENCE WILL FOCUS ON IMPROVED CANCER SERVICES

Solutions to the widespread unaffordability and unavailability of cancer services in rural and remote areas are high on the agenda for the 10th National Rural Health Conference to be held in Cairns from 17-20 May. The full text of the Alliance statement is at [http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/nrha\\_mr\\_17.2.09.pdf](http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/nrha_mr_17.2.09.pdf)

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CONFERENCE TO ADD TO THE GOOD NEWS FOR RURAL HEALTH

Chair of the National Rural Health Alliance, Dr Jenny May, said figures released on Friday by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) reveal some good and bad news about rural health and highlight the particular intransigence of the health challenge in remote areas.

According to the report, *Health and community services labour force 2006*, Australia's health workforce increased by 23 per cent between 2001 and 2006 - but this is countered by the bad news that there was a fall in supply in very remote areas. The remote health workforce decreased by 346 workers per 100,000 people. Nation-wide, in 2006 there were 2,649 health workers for every 100,000 people, compared with only 1,379 per 100,000 in very remote areas.

The full text of the Alliance statement is at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/conference%20to%20add%20to%20the%20good%20news%20for%20rural%20health.pdf> and is reproduced below.

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*friends* Photography and Poetry Competition and *friends* Unsung Hero Award

In conjunction with the 10<sup>th</sup> National Rural Health Conference, *friends* of the Alliance is holding an amateur photography and poetry competition to highlight life in rural and remote Australia. *friends* are invited to enter by submitting entries about rural people at work or play; capturing the unique feel of life in rural/remote Australia; vibrant rural communities; the advantages of living outside a capital city; description of the beauty and reality of life in rural/remote Australia; healthy rural lifestyles; or any rural or remote theme. First prize in each category will be \$500. Further information and an entry form is available at

[http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/friends/docs/ppc2009/friends\\_ppc\\_entry\\_form\\_2009.pdf](http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/friends/docs/ppc2009/friends_ppc_entry_form_2009.pdf)

There are many people who work tirelessly for their rural or remote communities and contribute greatly on issues about which they are passionate. Rural and remote communities are much richer for their contribution, yet we often don't know who they are. They might be the quiet achiever, the volunteer, or the worker who constantly goes above and beyond their normal role to contribute to their community. The purpose of the *friends* Unsung Hero Award is to recognise these grassroots people who have made a significant contribution to the health of their remote, Indigenous or rural community. Nominations close 17 April 2009. Further information and an entry form are available at

[http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/friends/docs/uha2009/uha\\_entry\\_form\\_2009.pdf](http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/friends/docs/uha2009/uha_entry_form_2009.pdf)

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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>

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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 2009 issue now available. Contents include:

Editorial - Rural health research

Articles

Health status differentials across rural and remote Australia

Influence of socioeconomic and cultural factors on rural health

Impact of rurality on environmental determinants and hazards

Innovative rural and remote primary health care models: What do we know and what are the research priorities?

Integration and coordination of care

Key considerations in delivering appropriate and accessible health care for rural and remote populations: Discussant overview

Multi-level rural community engagement in health

Multidisciplinary management of complex care

Impact of rurality on health practices and services: Summary paper to the inaugural rural and remote health scientific symposium

Evaluating the outcomes of rural health policy

Rural-urban disparities in health: How does Canada fare and how does Canada compare with Australia?

Grazing - Evidence-based policy versus evidence-based rural health care reality checks

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

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

Tue 14 April 8 pm RPT 820: Sleep and Health: A Wake-up Call Channel 23

Fri 17 April 12.30 pm RPT 820: Sleep and Health: A Wake-up Call Channel 23

Tue 28 Apr 8 pm 907: Helping Children With Autism Channel 4

Fri 1 May 12.30 pm 907: Helping Children With Autism Channel 23

Tue 12 May 8 pm 910a: Caring for Women with Ovarian Cancer, Part 1 Channel 4

Fri 15 May 12.30 pm 910a: Caring for Women with Ovarian Cancer, Part 1 Channel 23

Tue 26 May 8 pm 908: Mulling It Over: Cannabis Intervention in Primary Health Care Channel 4

Fri 29 May 12.30 pm 908: Mulling It Over: Cannabis Intervention in Primary Health Care Channel 23

Tue 9 Jun 8 pm 909: Women in General Practice Channel 4

Fri 12 Jun 12.30 pm 909: Women in General Practice Channel 23

Tue 16 Jun 8 pm 910b: Caring for Women with Ovarian Cancer, Part 2 Channel 4  
Fri 19 Jun 12.30 pm 910b: Caring for Women with Ovarian Cancer, Part 2 Channel 23

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## RURAL HEALTH IN THE QUEENSLAND ELECTION

Patient travel subsidy boosted under Springborg Government  
Patients who travel to Brisbane and major regional centres for medical care will have their travel payments doubled and accommodation subsidies tripled under a Springborg Government.

<http://www.springborg.com/policy/policy-page/patient-travel-subsidy.html>

## ALP MUMS AND BUBS" POLICY FOR SUPPORT CLOSER TO HOME

Pregnant women in rural Queensland will receive extra care closer to home while more mothers will receive parenting support at new clinics, under a plan to support mothers and their children.

[http://www.qld.alp.org.au/01\\_cms/details.asp?ID=510](http://www.qld.alp.org.au/01_cms/details.asp?ID=510)

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## POLICY NEWS

Culture and wellbeing: the case of Indigenous Australians

A recurring theme in the debate surrounding Indigenous affairs in Australia is a tension between maintenance of Indigenous culture and the achievement of 'equity' in socioeconomic outcomes: essentially 'self-determination' versus 'assimilation'. Implicit in this tension is the view that attachment to traditional culture and lifestyles is a hindrance to the achievement of 'mainstream' economic goals. This paper argues the need for a renewed focus on the wellbeing of Indigenous Australians, and for empirical evidence on the link between culture and socio-economic wellbeing instead of ideological debate.

[http://www.apo.org.au/linkboard/results.shtml?filename\\_num=267662](http://www.apo.org.au/linkboard/results.shtml?filename_num=267662)

What job, which house? Simple solutions to complex problems in Indigenous affairs

In a recent paper, former Keating government minister Gary Johns advocates a 'no job, no house' policy for remote Indigenous communities. Johns' proposal is the latest in a line of offerings from conservative politicians and commentators on Aboriginal affairs. What arguments and evidence support such proposals? What do they say about the state of Indigenous politics in Australia? Will they work?

[http://www.apo.org.au/linkboard/results.shtml?filename\\_num=267615](http://www.apo.org.au/linkboard/results.shtml?filename_num=267615)

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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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## AIHW REPORT

International Group for Indigenous Health Measurement 2006

Significant health disparities exist between indigenous and non-indigenous populations in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States. But how can policy makers reduce these disparities if high-quality data isn't available? The International Group for Indigenous Health Measurement is committed to the highest quality collection, dissemination, and use of data related to indigenous health. The second meeting of the Group was held in Canberra, November 2006. In this publication you will find the proceedings of that meeting including abstracts and biographies and also information on how these different countries identify, collect and count data on their indigenous populations.

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10719>

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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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## 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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## PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION STUDY ON THE NOT FOR PROFIT SECTOR

On 17 March 2009, the Productivity Commission received a terms of reference from the Government asking it to undertake a commissioned study on the contributions of the not for profit sector. The study's focus is on improving the measurement of the sector's contributions and removing obstacles to maximising its contributions to society.

Further information at <http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/study/not-for-profit>

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## 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>

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## CAUSES OF DEATH, 2007 (ABS Cat 3303.0)

In 2007, there were 137,854 deaths registered in Australia, approximately 4,000 (3.1%) more than the number registered in 2006 (133,739). The standardised death rate (SDR) in 2007 (6.0 deaths per 1,000 standard population) was the same as in 2005 and 2006, which was the lowest on record.

In 2007, Ischaemic heart disease, defined as ICD-10 codes I20-I25, was the leading underlying cause of death in Australia. Ischaemic heart disease includes angina, blocked arteries (heart) and heart attacks, both new and old. It was the underlying cause of 16% of all registered deaths in Australia. It accounted for 17% of all male deaths, and 16% of all female deaths registered in 2007.

There were 2,421 deaths registered across Australia in 2007 where the deceased person was identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin, or both (Indigenous).

Details at

<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/3303.0Main+Features12007?OpenDocument>

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## RURAL HEALTH ON THE ABC

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

### AMA wants urgent Rockhampton Hospital revamp

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) is calling for an urgent upgrade of the Rockhampton Hospital in central Queensland.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/03/18/2519273.htm>

### Health report recommends second-rate rural services: AMA

The Australian Medical Association (AMA) says regional Australians have been treated like second-class citizens in a new interim health report.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/03/17/2518472.htm>

### Birthing unit site found for Aboriginal health service

A site has been found for a birthing unit being established by the Orange Aboriginal Medical Service.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/03/17/2518031.htm>

NCMEC joins push for Southern Cross medical school

The push for Southern Cross University (SCU) to have its own medical school has been joined by the North Coast Medical Education Collaboration (NCMEC).

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/03/11/2513261.htm>

Doorknock against diabetes

Indigenous people in Arnhem Land have taken the prevention of chronic disease into their own hands, starting up a program of door-knocking against diabetes.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/200903/s2514399.htm>

Rural doctors oppose foreign recruitment program

State and Territory governments will join together to recruit foreign trained doctors as part of a \$63 million program. Rural and regional Australia rely heavily on doctors trained overseas. But the chief executive of the Rural Doctors Association, Steve Sant, says the money would be better spent by governments on enticing domestic students.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/200903/s2512120.htm>

LNP pledges to boost bush medical services

The Liberal National Party (LNP) say they will reinvigorate bush medical services if they win the Queensland election.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/03/09/2511005.htm>

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RDAA NEWS

Lessons need to be learned to deliver a sustainable rural health workforce

20 March 2009

[http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded\\_documents/RDAA%20media%20release%20-%20response%20to%20ANAO%20report%20-%2020mar09.pdf](http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/RDAA%20media%20release%20-%20response%20to%20ANAO%20report%20-%2020mar09.pdf)

Submission to the DoHA Review of Rural Health Programs 2009

10 March 2009

[http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded\\_documents/rural%20program%20review%20issues%20paper%20submission%20feb%202009.pdf](http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/rural%20program%20review%20issues%20paper%20submission%20feb%202009.pdf)

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AMA NEWS

Rural Australians abandoned in health debate

Fears that rural Australia has been abandoned in the health debate were raised by doctors today at a meeting of the Federal Council of the Australian Medical Association in Canberra.

<http://www.ama.com.au/node/4513>

NT Indigenous health better in very remote communities than in less remote areas

<http://www.ama.com.au/node/4516>

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ARTICLE IN "RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH"

'The Sustainable Farm Families Project: changing attitudes to health'

A farm injury affects not only the immediate family but also the community where the injured farmer lives. This article from Australia shows that better progress could be made in educating farmers to look out for their own safety.

<http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=1012>

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CURRENT ISSUE OF eMJA, 16 March 2009

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

From the Editor's Desk: Care and compassion

Editorials

After the fires: looking to the future using the lessons from the past

Water recycling - forwards or backwards for public health?

The "alcopops" tax: heading in the right direction

Research

Incidence and survival after acute myocardial infarction in Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in the Northern Territory, 1992-2004

Natural history of chronic kidney disease in Australian Indigenous and non-Indigenous children: a 4-year population-based follow-up study

Patterns of mortality in Indigenous adults in the Northern Territory, 1998-2003: are people living in more remote areas worse off?

Public Health

Are babies getting bigger? An analysis of birthweight trends in New South Wales, 1990-2005

Position Statement

Calcium and bone health: position statement for the Australian and New Zealand Bone and Mineral Society, Osteoporosis Australia and the Endocrine Society of Australia

Review

The benefits of oestrogen following menopause: why hormone replacement therapy should be offered to postmenopausal women

For Debate

Non-inferiority trials: determining whether alternative treatments are good enough

Lessons from Practice

Subclavian stenosis causing angina after coronary artery bypass grafting

Notable Cases

Clinical, electrophysiological and genetic features of a large Australian family with paramyotonia congenital

Letter - Homicide and rates of renal transplantation in the United States and Australia

Snapshot - Valsalva retinopathy induced by vigorous nightclub dancing

Correction - National mental health reform: less talk, more action

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From: Jane Howorth <[jane@eastcoastconferences.com.au](mailto:jane@eastcoastconferences.com.au)>

Subject: Invitation to Register for AAG NSW Rural Conference

Australian Association of Gerontology (NSW Division) Rural Conference  
1st & 2nd April 2009  
Broken Hill Entertainment Centre, Broken Hill NSW

Come to *Silver City*, Broken Hill in Far West NSW, where the "outback comes alive" for a unique and exciting conference on ageing. The theme for the conference is 'Ageing in a Changing Environment' and reflects on the implications of a changing world on an ageing population, and how we respond to these changes to meet the challenges and opportunities that they bring. Set in Broken Hill, the conference also invites a perspective on ageing and aged care from the outback heart of Australia and will give rare insight into the innovative and clever ways that people are meeting and beating the challenges of providing care in rural and remote settings. The conference will inspire practitioners, researchers and academics to rethink what ageing means in a changing environment.

To register: Complete the registration form on conference website <http://www.aagruralconference.com>. Further information: <http://www.aagconference.com> or please contact Conference Managers on 1300 368 783 or email [jane@eastcoastconferences.com.au](mailto:jane@eastcoastconferences.com.au)

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National Close the Gap Day 2009  
Thursday 2 April National  
National Close the Gap Day is on Thursday 2 April this year. The day gives people the opportunity to show their support for closing the 17-year life expectancy gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other Australians.

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ACOSS National Conference 2009 : Building a fair Australia in tough economic times  
2-3 April 2009, Sydney NSW  
This major annual event will examine the impact of the economic downturn on fairness in Australia. How will low income and disadvantaged Australians be affected and how should policymakers and the community and welfare sector respond? The annual ACOSS Conference brings together ACOSS members, community sector leaders, academics, non profit organisations and philanthropic organisations with an interest in social justice as well as federal and state government representatives. ACOSS is the peak council of the community services and welfare sector and the national voice for the needs of people affected by poverty and inequality.  
<http://www.acoss.org.au/>

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Creative Communities: Sustainable Solutions to Social Inclusion  
15-17 April 2009 QLD  
The Centre for Public Culture and Ideas, Griffith University, with support from the Innovative European Union Centre is hosting a three-day international conference. This conference is affiliated with Griffith University's Strategic Research Program on 'Social

Change and Well-Being', and will feature contributions from academic researchers and practitioners from the Pacific Rim, the European Union, Asia and North America. The purpose of the conference is to provide a forum for the sharing of ideas and knowledge about the value of creativity as a means of engendering social inclusion.

<http://www.griffith.edu.au/arts-languages-criminology/centre-public-culture-ideas/news-events/creative-communities-conference>

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From: Nysha Thomas  
Subject: Consumer Research Forum

Cancer Council NSW will be conducting a Consumer Research Forum on Thursday 14th May 2009. The Forum will be held from 8:30am to 12noon in a Sydney CBD location. The aim of the forum is to identify an agreed set of NSW cancer consumer research priorities across the cancer control spectrum (from prevention through survivorship and bereavement). Involving consumers in research priority setting has been shown to support funding agencies to reconcile the different needs and agendas of researchers and the wider community, and to result in more balanced funding of pragmatic (research that directly addresses a relevant patient or health system need) and explanatory research.

Nysha Thomas  
Project Officer Research Strategy and Scientific Development Unit  
Cancer Council NSW  
PO Box 572  
KINGS CROSS NSW 1340  
153 Dowling Street, Woolloomooloo NSW 2011  
Tel: +612 9334 1993 Fax: +612 9356 3866 Email: [nyshat@nswcc.org.au](mailto:nyshat@nswcc.org.au) Website:  
<http://www.cancercouncil.com.au>

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From: Al Parmeter  
Subject: Community Skills Workshop, Sunday 17 May 2009

The 10<sup>th</sup> National Rural Health Conference will be held in Cairns 17-20 May 2009. You can find everything you need to know about the Conference on the conference website at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>

As part of the Conference we are holding some pre-Conference events. One in particular that may interest you or your colleagues is the Community Skills Workshop. This workshop will provide delegates with a range of skills to use in their own communities.

The Workshop on the Sunday is free for 10<sup>th</sup> Conference delegates, students and those not in the paid workforce.

Registrations can be made online via the Conference website.

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National Palliative Care Week - 24 - 30 May 2009

<http://www.palliativecare.org.au>

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9<sup>th</sup> WONCA RURAL HEALTH WORLD CONFERENCE

June 12-14, 2009

Heraklion, Crete, Greece

<http://www.ruralwonca2009.org/>

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NAIDOC Week celebrations for 2009 will be held from 5 to 12 July. Further information at

<http://www.naidoc.org.au/>

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General Practice & Primary Health Care Research Conference 2009: Driving Change

15-17 July, Melbourne VIC

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, form collaborations and network with speakers and other delegates.

<http://www.phcris.org.au/conference/2009>

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Catholic Health Australia 2009 National Conference - Hand in Hand Hotel Grand Chancellor

Hobart, 17 - 19 August 2009 <http://www.cha.org.au/>

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7<sup>th</sup> Australasian Conference on Safety and Quality in Health Care

6-9 September 2009

Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre

Darling Harbour, Sydney

<http://www.aaqhc2009.org.au>

[aaqhc2009@tourhosts.com.au](mailto:aaqhc2009@tourhosts.com.au)

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Year of the Blood Donor 2009

An anticipated doubling of demand for blood and blood products within 10 years has led the Australian Red Cross Blood Service to launch a nationwide recruitment drive in 2009 Year of the Blood Donor. The Blood Service is appealing for more than 100,000 new blood donors this year, in addition to the 40,000 who registered across Australia to give blood in the week after the Victorian bushfires.

[http://www.healthinsite.gov.au/news/Year\\_of\\_the\\_Blood\\_Donor\\_2009](http://www.healthinsite.gov.au/news/Year_of_the_Blood_Donor_2009)

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### Healing Our Spirit 2010 - Call for Abstracts

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 ([www.papaolalokahi.org](http://www.papaolalokahi.org)).

Event organisers are now accepting abstracts, presentations and proposals for the sharing of cultural practices and performing arts. These need to be submitted by 8 September 2009 via the link on the home page of the HOSW website (<http://www.hosw.com>).

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

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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](mailto:grovesc@winshop.com.au) (do not "reply" to this email - send contributions to [grovesc@winshop.com.au](mailto: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](mailto:grovesc@winshop.com.au)

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

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Media Release  
9 March 2009  
Conference to add to the good news for rural health

Chair of the National Rural Health Alliance, Dr Jenny May, said figures released on Friday by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) reveal some good and bad news

about rural health and highlight the particular intransigence of the health challenge in remote areas.

According to the report, *Health and community services labour force 2006*, Australia's health workforce increased by 23 per cent between 2001 and 2006 - but this is countered by the bad news that there was a fall in supply in very remote areas. The remote health workforce decreased by 346 workers per 100,000 people. Nation-wide, in 2006 there were 2,649 health workers for every 100,000 people, compared with only 1,379 per 100,000 in very remote areas.

Conversely, very remote areas experienced a rise in the rate of community services workers (a category including child and youth service, family services and aged and/or disabled care workers, as well as child care and welfare centre managers).

"People living and providing health services in remote parts of Australia will not be surprised by these findings, but it is a very serious matter that those people whose health status is poorest are falling even further behind where the health workforce is concerned," Dr May said.

The report provides mixed news with regard to the Indigenous health workforce. Despite a 45 per cent increase between 2001 and 2006 in the number of Indigenous health workers (doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers), they are still only 1 per cent of the total health workforce. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people comprise 2.5 per cent of Australia's population.

"Recruiting and retaining health professionals in rural areas is an ongoing challenge that will be addressed at the 10th National Rural Health Conference in Cairns in May this year," Dr May said.

"Lessons will be drawn from studies in South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania regarding the impact of identity, culture and lifestage on personal decision-making for health professionals, and the influence of an individual's experience of community and environments. There will be a focus on the allied health professions - for whom data and evidence are particularly scarce. There will also be success stories of localised solutions to rural workforce shortages that have been achieved through active engagement between professional, educational and rural communities."

The conference run from 17-20 May 2009. Registration and program are available at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>

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Media Release  
16 March 2009  
10th Conference will focus on improved cancer services

Solutions to the widespread unaffordability and unavailability of cancer services in rural and remote areas are high on the agenda for the 10th National Rural Health Conference to be held in Cairns from 17-20 May.

"It's been a long standing concern that rural women may choose to have a mastectomy, rather than radiotherapy, because of the associated impositions of travelling long distances and lengthy absences from home," said Dr Jenny May, Chair of the National Rural Health Alliance which is organising the event.

"Decisions best made on the basis of medical indications and a person's individual health needs often have to be made in response to personal costs, accessibility of services, the care needs of children and other family members and the difficulty of periodically replacing oneself in the workplace," Dr May said.

Because of its significant impact on the lives of rural people, concurrent streams at the Cairns conference will be devoted to papers dealing with the challenges of cancer in rural areas with speakers from the Clinical Oncological Society of Australia (COSA) and the Medical Oncology Group of Australia (MOGA).

Dr Adam Boyce will look at the future of regional and remote cancer service delivery; Professor Patsy Yates will examine a care co-ordination project; Prof David Goldstein will present the results from a survey on burnout in cancer health professionals; and Dr Sabe Sabesan will present novel ways to enhance rural access to medical oncological services. In addition, COSA/MOGA will present two panel sessions and Associate Professor Bogda Koczwara will facilitate a workshop on the Education Program in Cancer Care (EPICC).

Other speakers will present a range of papers on cancer services. Bob Neumayer will report on the Cooma Oncology Unit Pilot Project which achieved improved rural service delivery through metropolitan partnerships. Stephen Margolis will discuss the Royal Flying Doctor Service's Primary Care Skin Cancer Clinic. Jane Phillips will profile CanNET, a new service model linking regional and metropolitan cancer services into single networks; and Leanne Brown will describe a dietetic service model for rural patients undergoing chemotherapy.

For the full Conference program and on-line registration go to <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>

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#### Media Release

17 March 2009

#### Cairns to host course in Blood Borne Viruses and STIs

A one-day course in Blood Borne Viruses and Sexually Transmitted Infections (BBV/STIs) will be held in Cairns ahead of the 10th National Rural Health Conference from 17-20 May.

This pre-Conference event is presented by the Australasian Society for HIV Medicine (ASHM) and aimed at healthcare workers who provide clinical services in the primary care setting and are in contact with patients who have, or are at risk of, BBVs and STIs.

The course on 17 May will provide an overview of the epidemiology, testing principles, pathogenesis, natural history and treatment of HIV, hepatitis B and C infections and common STIs. Taking sexual history and performing a sexual risk assessment will also be covered. The course has a regional and local focus, providing an overview of local service provision and referral pathways within the area. Information will be presented in a variety of formats, including interactive question and answer sessions, case discussions, facilitated small group

work and short presentations.

ASHM is a key partner in the Australian response to HIV, hepatitis and related diseases. The Society works closely with government, advisory bodies, community agencies and other professional organisations to foster education for health professionals and the public through the provision of continuing education courses. The BBV/STI course has an important role to play in up-skilling all members of the primary care multidisciplinary team.

Application has been made for points for RACGP QA & CPD (Category 1), ACRRM and College of Nursing. For more information, please contact ASHM on (02) 8204 0700 or [ashm@ashm.org.au](mailto:ashm@ashm.org.au)

The course will be held between 8.30am and 5 pm at The Sebel Cairns, 17 Abbott Street, at a cost of \$80 for ASHM members (\$100 for non-members). ASHM is pleased to be working with the NRHA on presentation of this special event.

Registration for the BBV/STI course and for the 10th National Rural Health Conference is available on-line at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>

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Media Release

18 March 2009

On-line, on-time and a boon for rural and remote areas

A new on-line resource to help rural and remote health professionals to diagnose and support people with Parkinson's disease has been launched less than 12 months after instigation of the project.

Dr Jenny May, Chair of the Alliance, congratulated those responsible for the development of the resource.

"Parkinson's Australia has done a wonderful job both to contribute \$132,000 to the project and to lead so effectively the parties involved in it," Dr May said.

"This successful project has perhaps set a new benchmark in expedition, showing just what can be achieved quickly when all parties are focused on a common goal and can work together in an agreed fashion and with energy and commitment. It should inspire those of us working to secure project breakthroughs in other areas."

Key contributions were provided *pro bono* by Professor Martin Krause, Dr Simon Lewis and others with the support of a \$90,000 Department of Health grant and backing from the Parliamentary Friends of Parkinson's. The on-line site has been developed by Brisbane-based company Medeserv-PrimEd.

The on-line educational and support program is available for use by all health professionals, with a focus on the particular needs of doctors and others in rural and remote areas.

In launching the program, Parliamentary Secretary Senator Jan McLucas said the program provides a complete overview of Parkinson's disease, and offers assistance with decision-

making, advice about medications and the treatment of related factors such as depression, anxiety and lifestyle changes.

Senator McLucas acknowledged the special contribution of John Silk, Treasurer of Parkinson's Australia, and his wife Rebecca.

In rural and remote areas where health specialists are scarce, the need is to increase the general understanding of Parkinson's among whatever health professionals are available in order to improve ongoing quality of life for those with the condition. This new resource will go some way to meeting that need.

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Media Release

20 March 2009

Alliance backs Business Council call for health system restructure

The peak body for rural and remote health has backed the call from the Business Council of Australia (BCA) for reform of the nation's fragmented national health services.

"The National Rural Health Alliance welcomes the BCA's contribution to the health debate and continues to call for improvements in the effectiveness and efficiency of the healthcare sector," said Chair of the NRHA, Dr Jenny May.

"We believe the changes are particularly crucial in rural and remote Australia which have poorer health outcomes and less than adequate primary and acute care services.

"Like so many others the Alliance is concerned at the rising incidence of chronic disease including cancer, heart disease, diabetes and mental illness. It is responsible for a significant burden of disease for individuals, communities and the national economy. It is costing billions of dollars every year, putting undue pressures on the acute care systems and on illness management at the expense of health promotion and early intervention."

The BCA estimates that if these factors are left unattended Australia's total health expenditure will double in the next 30 years - from 10 per cent of gross domestic product to around 20 per cent by 2040.

"We also agree that research efforts must be stepped up and that priorities in structural change include the need to overhaul current funding processes, with a single level of accountability to monitor and gauge health outcomes.

"Undue delays in establishing an e-health network are costing patients and fragmenting their care," Dr May said.

The Alliance continues to advocate the essentiality of a patient-centred system, focussed on health promotion, co-ordinated care of people with chronic illness and strong financing and accountability systems to promote health outcomes and quality of service.