

National Rural Health Alliance E-forum – 5 July 2002

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7th NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

The 7th National Rural Health Conference is to be held at the Grand Chancellor in Hobart Tasmania from 1 - 4 March 2003. Registration for the Conference will be available in September 2002. This will include online registration for the first time. The Conference website is at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/seventhconf/seventhconf.htm>

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ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH WORKFORCE NATIONAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing recently released the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce National Strategic Framework endorsed by the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Committee in May. The framework presents a 5-10 reform agenda. The report is available at <http://www.health.gov.au/oatsih/pubs/wrkstrgy1.htm> (the link to the document is incorrect – add an "f" to the URL).

Chair of the AMA's Taskforce on Indigenous Health, Dr Paul Bauert, described the document as "unacceptable" and "nothing new". Dr Bauert repeated the AMA's call for a Commonwealth-funded training program for a targeted health workforce to cater to the specific health needs of Indigenous Australians." The full text of the AMA statement is available at <http://domino.ama.com.au/AMASWeb/MediaRel.nsf/Media?OpenView>

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Interested in becoming a "friend" of the Alliance? Become more involved with the work of the Alliance by becoming a "friend". "friends" support the Alliance by being an integral part of the Alliance's policy and evaluation process. They also receive other benefits. For more

information on membership see <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/friends.htm>

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From: Robyn James <[robyn.m.james@health.gov.au](mailto:robyn.m.james@health.gov.au)>  
Subject: Innovative Rural Projects supporting the Rural Chronic Disease Initiative

The Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing is seeking applications from capable and experienced individuals and organisations to undertake projects funded by the Innovative Rural Projects Funding Pool of the Rural Chronic Disease Initiative (RCDI).

The objective of the RCDI is to assist people in rural Australia, especially those in small rural communities, to prevent and better manage chronic diseases such as asthma, heart disease, stroke, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, chronic airways disease, certain cancers, and depression resulting from chronic disease, as well as depression and disabilities caused by preventable injuries such as farm accidents.

The Innovative Rural Projects Funding Pool will provide funding for up to 25 Projects that actively seek to pilot new and innovative ideas, demonstrating local solutions for the prevention and better management of local health issues concerning chronic disease and injury. Project proposals must show broad support for the Regional Health Strategy and objectives of the RCDI, have a budget of no more than \$50,000 and be completed within 12 months (a limited number of Projects may receive funding of up to \$70,000).

An Application Pack including Guidelines, to assist with the preparation of Project Proposal(s), can be downloaded via <http://www.health.gov.au/tenders.htm> or obtained by contacting the RCDI Senior Project Officer, Robyn James ph (02) 6289 5982 or 1800 020 103 ext: 5982 e-mail [robyn.m.james@health.gov.au](mailto:robyn.m.james@health.gov.au). More information about the RCDI is available at <http://www.chronicdisease.health.gov.au>

Applications close 5:00pm Eastern Standard Time on Friday 9 August 2002 in Canberra.

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## GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO INDIGENOUS FUNDING REPORT

Indigenous Affairs Minister Philip Ruddock has outlined the Federal Government's plans to improve the delivery of mainstream programs to Indigenous Australians and increase the ability of Indigenous-specific programs to meet the urgent needs of those in remote areas. The plans are set out in the Government's response to the Commonwealth Grants Commission's Report on "Indigenous Funding 2001". The Commission found that while the needs of Indigenous Australians are high in every region, the highest needs are in the remote regions where people are often beyond the reach of mainstream programs. Mr Ruddock's media release is available at <http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/atsia/media/media02/r02030.htm> and the Grants Commission report is available at [http://www.cgc.gov.au/IFI\\_Pages/ifi\\_final\\_report\\_complete.htm](http://www.cgc.gov.au/IFI_Pages/ifi_final_report_complete.htm)

Chair of the AMA Taskforce on Indigenous Health, Dr Paul Bauert, said that Mr Ruddock misses the key point that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have poor health

outcomes no matter where they live. "We need a significant funding boost on a needs basis across the board. The Report suggests that average per capita spending for Indigenous Australians should be double that spent on services for other Australians. As a start, the Primary Health Care Access Program must be better funded and supported to deliver effective services on the ground as soon as possible. "The Federal Government must also provide more funding and a coordinated strategy to get properly trained doctors and other health personnel in greater numbers to support primary health care in the communities – urban and remote," Dr Bauert said. The full text of the AMA statement is available at <http://domino.ama.com.au/AMASWeb/MediaRel.nsf/Media?OpenView>

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PARTYline is the official newsletter of the National Rural Health Alliance. Keep up to date with rural health policy information and good news stories on living and working in the rural health community. Available online on <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/partyline.htm> or receive a hard copy by emailing [michele@ruralhealth.org.au](mailto:michele@ruralhealth.org.au)

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## AUSTRALIA'S HEALTH 2002

By world standards Australians are living long lives, health risks are being actively tackled, and access to high quality health services is very good and generally improving, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's two-yearly report card on the nation's health.

Australia's Health 2002 shows that these results are being delivered by a complex health system employing 640,000 people, and accounting for around \$54 billion a year in health services (8.5% of GDP).

Death rates from heart attacks and stroke have fallen by over two-thirds over the last 30 years, and cancer 5-year survival rates have improved. As a result life expectancy continues to increase (now 82.1 years for females, 76.6 years for males). There are also fewer people smoking overall, improved levels of immunisation, and a fall in the prevalence of high blood pressure.

Despite many great health gains for Australians, the health status of the Indigenous population remains poor. Health expenditure in this area has risen, but large service gaps remain.

Cardiovascular disease and cancer remain the biggest killers of Australians, with major tolls on the health system also being exacted by diabetes, mental health disorders and respiratory diseases such as asthma, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

In response, the Minister for Health and Ageing, Senator Kay Patterson, identified Indigenous health, bowel cancer screening and better awareness of diabetes as key areas for continuing efforts to improve the health of Australians.

The AIHW release on the report is available at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/media/2002/mr020627.html>. The full report is available at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/aus/ah02/index.html>. Senator Patterson's statement is

available at <http://www.health.gov.au/mediarel/yr2002/kp/kp02061.htm>

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**FUNDING FOR GP INDIGENOUS HEALTH PROJECTS**  
(extract from ADGP e-newsletter)

The Department of Health and Ageing has funded the Rural Faculty of the RACGP to co-ordinate two National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health projects, one focussing on GP Registrars and the other on General Practitioners.

As part of these projects the Library of the RACGP has funding to provide access to its resources and services, free of charge, for General Practitioners who aren't members of the RACGP and others working in Indigenous Communities, such as Aboriginal Health Workers and Nurses.

To find out more, or to request a brochure, contact the Library of the RACGP: Phone (03) 9214 1519 Fax (03) 9214 1403 Email [library@racgp.org.au](mailto:library@racgp.org.au) or go to the RACGP Website at <http://www.racgp.org.au> and look at the Indigenous Health Resources section within the Library area. You may also register your interest with us by submitting the online registration form.

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From: Charmaine Weeks [Charmaine.Weeks@hunter.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Charmaine.Weeks@hunter.health.nsw.gov.au)  
Subject: Australian Resource Centre for Hospital Innovations Toolkit Seminars

Linking GP, Hospital and Community: Thursday 29th and Friday 30th August 2002, Adelaide

**Aims of seminar**

- \* Review achievements, to date, in establishing effective linkages between hospital, GPs and Community-based healthcare
- \* Identify issues that still need addressing and barriers that need to be overcome to move beyond discrete programs towards more systematic communication and integration between hospitals, GPs and the community
- \* Articulate a way forward and identify the priorities for enhancing the integration infrastructure

For further information, phone the ARCHI National Office on (02) 4985 3165 or email [Admin@archi.net.au](mailto:Admin@archi.net.au)

To find out more about ARCHI visit the ARCHI website at <http://www.archi.net.au>

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From: Jenny Jankowski <[j.jankowski@ala.asn.au](mailto:j.jankowski@ala.asn.au)>  
Subject: Adult Learners' Week 2002

Adult Learners' Week is celebrated internationally and provides an opportunity to celebrate, promote and advance all forms of adult learning. This year Adult Learners' Week in

Australia will be held from 2 to 8 September. More information about Adult Learners' Week is available from our website at <http://www.adultlearnersweek.org>

Whilst Adult Learners' Week is celebrated across the community, this year we have developed some campaign materials that specifically target men over 45 years, particularly those in rural Australia. This group was chosen primarily because they are under-represented in the adult learning sector despite having to face unexpected change and difficult transitions brought about by industry collapse and unexpected unemployment.

The theme for our campaign is "never stop learning" and in it we are encouraging men in our target group to become involved in all types of learning opportunities. We have developed some large display posters and some A4 flyers. The promotional material may be viewed at <http://www.adultlearnersweek.org/downloads.html>

Jenny Jankowski  
National Coordination Team  
Adult Learners' Week 2002  
phone 02 6251 9887

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SECTION OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PSYCHIATRY of THE ROYAL  
AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND COLLEGE OF PSYCHIATRISTS –  
TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE, CAIRNS, 12-14 SEPTEMBER 2002

Theme: Setting Strategic Directions in Mental Health Policy and Practice: The Challenge of Understanding and Addressing the Social Determinants

Enquiries to: the Conference Organiser Pty Ltd  
PO Box 385  
Malvern  
Australia 3144

Ph: +61 (03) 9509 7121  
Fax: +61 (03) 9509 7151  
Mob: 0401 555 842  
email: [conorg1@optushome.com.au](mailto:conorg1@optushome.com.au)

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The "Australian Journal of Rural Health" is a refereed journal with a national and international reputation for quality scholarship. Its focus is multi-disciplinary and it includes articles of interest to general practitioners, nurses, allied health professionals, pharmacists, health administrators, universities and rural health units. Reduced rates apply to members of some organisations. For more information see <http://www.blackwell-science.com/ajr>

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From: Yvette Massey <[Yvette.Massey@utas.edu.au](mailto:Yvette.Massey@utas.edu.au)>  
Subject: Allied Health Researcher (Capacity Building)

The University Department of Rural Health (UDRH), Tasmania is committed to enhancing research capacity and supporting Tasmanian allied health professionals in research activities.

It is proposed to contract an Allied Health Researcher (Capacity Building) for a limited time to assist in the development of research capacity among allied health professionals and to promote a culture of research within allied health clinical practice. This position would require seven days in Tasmania and four days off site, and would take place in the latter half of 2002.

Expressions of Interest are invited from persons with appropriate clinical and research experience to:

- \*-facilitate research strategic planning sessions and education forums for allied health managers and staff in Tasmania
- \* review and provide critical feedback on research proposals and submissions
- \* provide one-on-one advice to potential allied health researchers
- \*-advise on the development of research support networks.

Please forward your Expression of Interest by 5 August 2002 to  
Jenny Barns  
Allied Health Education Coordinator  
UDRH Tasmania  
Locked Bag 1-372  
Launceston TAS 7250  
Contact Jenny Barns on (03) 6324 4000 or by email [Jenny.Barns@utas.edu.au](mailto:Jenny.Barns@utas.edu.au)

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### HEALTHCONNECT TRIALS

The Federal Government has announced funding of trials in Tasmania and the Northern Territory of the new national health information network, HealthConnect.

The Tasmanian trial will be held in the Clarence region of Hobart and will focus on adults with diabetes and would aim to deliver improved care by sharing information among health care providers and consumers. The Northern Territory trial is to be held in the Katherine area and will focus on indigenous health issues affecting a mobile population in a remote area.

The HealthConnect concept aims to improve the flow of information across the health sector, and ultimately quality and safety in health care, by allowing patient information to be collected in an electronic format, safely stored and exchanged within strict privacy safeguards.

Senator Patterson's media statements are available at  
<http://www.health.gov.au/mediarel/yr2002/kp/kp02058.htm> and  
<http://www.health.gov.au/mediarel/yr2002/kp/kp02059.htm>

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ICT IN HEALTH FORUM

A forum was convened by the National Office for the Information Economy on May 30 2002 to improve dialogue between Commonwealth health agencies and Australian IT companies with health delivery expertise. The forum included some very interesting presentations on IT issues in health delivery. These presentations are available at <http://www.noie.gov.au/Projects/ecommerce/ehealth/index.htm>

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CONTRIBUTION AND SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION AND DISCLAIMER

The NRHA e-forum is edited by a third party moderator, Jim Groves. 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).

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).

The e-forum is sent to a mailing list of the Alliance and those have indicated interest through the subscription box at the NRHA Web site (<http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>). This issue is going to 1,153 recipients. Please forward a copy to any colleague you think may be interested.

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