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\$250 MILLION DOLLARS NEEDED TO ATTACK AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL SHAME: ABORIGINAL HEALTH

Australia's peak national body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health has called for an additional \$250 million dollars a year to seriously address the poor health standards of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Speaking in a National Press Club Address in Canberra, the Chairperson of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (NACCHO), Pat Anderson, said that a substantial injection of funding and resources is needed to bring significant change to the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

"To make a significant change to our health status, there needs to be an substantial injection of funds into Aboriginal health - conservative estimates [by Health economists J. Deeble and S. Jan] call for an extra \$245 million per year, perhaps a more realistic figure would be an extra \$400 million a year," Ms Anderson said.

In calling for greater funding and resource levels, Ms Anderson noted that Aboriginal communities receive considerably less health resources comparative to their levels of need than mainstream Australia.

"Aboriginal people are at least three times as sick as the general population. Given this, one would expect at least three times as much per person to be spent on Aboriginal health as on non-Aboriginal health."

Ms Anderson also called for the need to develop a 'community and administrative capacity'. Firstly, where Aboriginal communities should be supported in their attempts to tackle its own health problems, and secondly for the mainstream system to interact with Aboriginal people collectively in a productive mutual process.

"Currently there are over a hundred Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health services across Australia, and while they differ greatly in size and social setting, they continue to have in common these two fundamental principles: the delivery of holistic primary health care and

structures guaranteeing the control by the community that they serve," she said.

In 1999-2000 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services delivered approximately 1.2 million episodes of care – 140,000 more than the previous year.

Ms Anderson said that despite the desire for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health services to rectify their own health levels, all Australians should take responsibility towards improving the health standards of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islander people.

"Sooner or later Australia has to address these challenges – sooner or later we have to fix Aboriginal Health. The question is when?"

The full text of the NACCHO statement is available at <http://www.naccho.org.au/media2808.html> and

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From: Rommie Masarei <cppawa@arach.net.au>
Subject: State Rural Health Conference

WA State Rural Health Conference: The Spirit of Rural Health - Local communities making their own future is to be held at Rendezvous Observation City Hotel, Scarborough, on 31 Jan - 1 Feb 2003.

The purpose of the Conference is to;

- * address the unique issues facing rural health in Western Australia,
- * investigate and discuss future opportunities to improve the health of rural residents,
- * explore partnerships between health professionals and the wider community for better health and
- * share our experiences and models of service amongst delegates.

To assist in the development and planning of the Conference we extend an invitation to health professionals, managers and community representatives to submit abstracts for consideration under the Conference themes. Following an assessment of the abstracts, authors may be asked to provide a paper (short interactive presentation) or a poster presentation. Abstracts need to be limited to one page or 250 words and be in 12 font single spacing. The Abstract needs to clearly convey the intent of the paper or poster presentation for consideration by the conference organisers.

Abstracts need to be completed and submitted in electronic form to masarei@arach.net.au or faxed to 08 9384 9663 no later than 30 September 2002.

PLEASE EMAIL IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN RECEIVING A REGISTRATION PACKAGE.

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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: David McSwan <David.McSwan@jcu.edu.au>
Subject: Taking Charge: Rural Community Empowerment in Rural Development, Rural Health and Rural Education

This Conference and exchange of experience is organised by the Arkleton Centre for Rural Development Research at the University of Aberdeen and the UHI Millennium Institute based in Inverness, on behalf of the International Rural Network.

Building on previous events in Queensland, Australia and Vancouver Island, Canada the 5-day Conference aims to bring together practitioners from rural communities with rural policy makers and scholars. The emphasis of the event is on sharing practical experiences and highlighting the way in which communities have exerted power over education, health, welfare, environment, quality of life, governance, and economic development to provide positive outcomes for the people living in them. In keeping with the aims of the Conference, the agenda is being developed from the bottom up. Suggestions for workshops and presentations are being sought from participants and these can be forwarded to the co-ordinators via the Conference website, details of which are provided below.

The Conference will be based in Inverness in the Scottish Highlands, an area which experiences various challenges due to its rural and peripheral nature. It is however extremely fortunate to have a number of long established support organisations and there will be an opportunity to visit a broad range of local community based initiatives as part of the Conference.

If you would like to Register to attend the Conference or have suggestions for workshop topics please go to the website at <http://workforce.cup.edu/wyman> Alternatively, you can send an email to takingcharge@abdn.ac.uk or send a fax to Rhys Evans at +44 (0) 1224 273902

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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

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TELECOMMUNICATIONS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Commonwealth Government has announced another inquiry into telecommunications services in regional, rural and remote Australia. This is only two years after the last inquiry, which the Government justified as being "appropriate" because of the "considerable investment and improvements" since that time. Two of the three members of the inquiry also participated in the previous review. The full text of Senator Alston's announcement is at http://www.dcita.gov.au/Article/0,,0_4-2_4008-4_110829,00.html.

MODERATOR'S COMMENT: This inquiry is clearly linked in the Government's mind, and in the public debate, to the issue of full Telstra privatisation. This connection is illogical: the relevant issue for full privatisation is whether full privatisation will have an effect on services, which has nothing to do with the current status of services. That said, any review that may result in further improvements in services is to be welcomed, particular the emphasis in the Minister's announcement on improving access to broadband services.

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IT TAKES HOLD IN EUROPEAN DOCTORS' SURGERIES – SURVEY

(Extract from THE 2002 UPDATE: AuNz Net and Information Industry Briefs, 18 August 2002. Subscribe by email to acreed@netspace.net.au with the words "Subscribe Update" in the subject line.)

The regular use of IT by doctors varies dramatically from nation to nation. A 2001 survey of European practices illustrates this, and also provides an idea of how IT and the Net is being used on a national scale in some of the most developed nations.

A new survey by Harris Interactive claims medical practices in Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and the UK are using IT more than most other European countries:

- * 95% of primary care physicians in Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden, Germany and the UK use PCs in their practice. Only 37% do so in Portugal;
- * 31% of GPs in the Netherlands also use PDAs, in front of 18% in the UK and 17% in Spain ... and almost none in Italy;
- * all doctors surveyed in Finland and the Netherlands use the Net in their practice or are linked to a healthcare network, followed by 93% in Sweden, 87% in the UK and 80% in France ... only 27% in Greece and 19% in Portugal are online;
- * in Sweden, 90% of GPs use electronic medical records, followed by 88% in the Netherlands, 62% in Denmark and 58% in the UK. Portugal and Greece are again on the bottom of the ladder joined by Greece in this section;
- * 63% of Finnish medical practices have Web sites, compared to 47% in the Netherlands, 42% in Sweden and 27% in the UK.

More information is at http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/newsletters_healthcare.asp

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INTERNET PHARMACIES ARE NOT WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED
(ABC Health Minutes: 29/8/2002)

The Internet has spawned a new phenomenon: the e-pharmacy. A research pharmacist at the Monash Institute of Health Services Research has been trying to find out whether these e pharmacies are safe and responsible. Many were doing the right thing and being professional, but there was a tendency to provide inadequate safety information, and some were fraudulent. Full story at <http://abc.net.au/health/minutes/stories/s661541.htm> and <http://abc.net.au/rn/talks/8.30/helthrpt/stories/s659505.htm>

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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 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.crana.org.au/pandp_psn.html

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From: Lisa Murray <Lisa_Murray@mater.org.au>
Subject: Leadership in Health Conference

We are holding a Leadership in Health conference in November 2002 which may be of interest to your members. There are nursing, medical and health administration streams offered.

International keynote speakers:

Dr Peter Senge - Massachusetts Institute of Technology - Expert on leadership and learning organisations.

Dr Lester Levy, CEO, New Zealand Blood Services - Business leader, medical doctor & author.

Sr Carol Taylor, Director, Centre for Clinical Bioethics, Washington, USA - Nurse & ethicist.

Dr Peter Ellyard, Executive Director, Preferred Futures, Melbourne - Futurist & strategic analyst

November 20 & 21, 2002,

Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre

To register, or for more information call 07 3840 8544 email edcentre@mater.org.au or visit <http://www.matereducation.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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IMPACT OF CHANGING FARM BUSINESS STRUCTURES ON RURAL COMMUNITIES

(Extract from RIRDC Online, 17 August 2002. Subscribe by email to murray.hansen@rirdc.gov.au)

This report provides a summary of research issues raised in a workshop held with policy-makers on the impacts of changing farm business structures on rural communities. The findings of the workshop, together with a review of existing literature, indicate that growing levels of direct corporate involvement in Australian agriculture has a number of potential implications for rural communities.

Of particular significance are the implications for local economic development, demographic and social structure, service and infrastructure provision, and regional development and planning policy.

Report summary is at <http://www.rirdc.gov.au/reports/HCC/02-027sum.html> and the full report at <http://www.rirdc.gov.au/reports/HCC/02-027.pdf>.

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ABC HEALTH MATTERS SITE

(Extract from ABC Health-Updates, August 23, 2002. Subscribe at <http://abc.net.au/health/subscribe.htm>)

ABC Online is proud to present a newly expanded Health Matters site, with a comprehensive collection of facts, features and news about health. It hosts a wealth of original online material - consumer guides to help you get the most out of the medical system, a library of health topics and fact files, and personal stories of illness and recovery. And it's got the latest health news and transcripts from across ABC Radio, TV and Online. Health Matters provides information that has a solid scientific foundation but is also challenging - informing you of health issues and debates, and helping you make the decisions right for you. <http://abc.net.au/health/>

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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> and includes information and a booking form on the exhibition.

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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.

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.

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 1,148 recipients. Please forward a copy to any colleague you think may be interested.

To subscribe, send a message saying "subscribe NRHA eforum" to grovesc@winshop.com.au. To unsubscribe, send a message saying "unsubscribe NRHA eforum" to grovesc@winshop.com.au. The archive of the newsletter is available at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/newsletter.htm>