

National Rural Health Alliance E-forum – 28 February 2003

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7th NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

The 7th National Rural Health Conference starts tomorrow, Saturday 1 March, with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Symposium and a symposium on Procedural Rural Medicine: Clinical, Consumer and Community Issues. The Official Opening of the Conference is at 5 pm. There will a special open forum on drought on Sunday 2 March.

The Conference continues until Tuesday 4 March. The Conference is being held at the Grand Chancellor in Hobart Tasmania.

Online registration has now closed although registration can be faxed to 02 6285 4670. Call 02 6285 4660 if you need a registration form to be faxed to you.

Details on the conference program and events are at <http://www.nrha.net.au/nrhpublic/publicdocs/conferences/7thNRHC/introduction.htm>

There are special registration deals for friends of the Alliance, those wishing to join friends, all the 120 or so paper givers, students, and day registrations.

FINAL WRAP UP FOR 7TH CONFERENCE (Repeated from NRHA eforum of 14 February 2003)

All is in readiness for Hobart. It is clearly going to be an event with a different feel this time - a Tasmanian affair. There's already a strong sense of community around the Conference, partly because many of the team in Tasmania know each other and partly, I think, because the whole world is craving confidence and credibility in the present climate of international and domestic uncertainty. Despite the real challenges of the drought, water shortages, floods and bushfires, the Conference offers those involved with Australia's rural areas a strong dose of positive news and credibility from the health sector.

Over 700 have registered - and many still have not, so we are expecting around 800.

Raylene, Cheryl, Heather and others at the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre are working with Gwen Egg, Frank Meany and Sue George to welcome delegates on the Saturday. They will weave a bit of magic and we can keep it going at the Conference arts space where some immediate and tangible results of our collaboration will take shape.

The Keynote presenters have between them a strong sense of credibility, good news and positive thinking. Few Australian leaders have reinforced their credibility recently more than Phil Koperberg and Louise Sylvan, and Florence Manguyu and the Strassers are coming from overseas but have a passionate understanding of country areas in Australia.

New national leaders such as Mike Montgomery from the Australian Local Government Association, Larry Towney from Narromine and the leaders of the student health clubs will bring vitality and a new view of the way forward.

With Danielle Wood and Rachael Treasure we have not one but two new published voices of Australia - and both are based in Tasmania. Rachael's book 'Jillaroo' is selling well and Danielle's hopefully will when published in August - for it won the Vogel Award.

There are ten Symposiums, five on Sunday and five on Monday. Among the ten are features on health inequalities, "The Art of Healthy Community", the allied health workforce, and road safety in rural areas.

But the core of the Program is in the 120 concurrent session papers. Some of them have been formally refereed (the Infront Outback papers), while others are general papers and grassroots reports. Between them they paint a hopeful picture of the way forward in rural and remote health.

So a special thanks to all the paper presenters for what we are about to receive.

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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>

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RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH SERVICES TO RECEIVE \$2.1 M TRAINING BOOST

The Minister for Health and Ageing, Senator Kay Patterson, has approved a \$2.1 million training program for allied health professionals in rural and remote areas of Australia.

Robyn Adams, President of Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health (SARRAH), says the funding will assist allied health professionals in rural and remote areas and improve recruitment and retention rates across these professions.

"The scholarship scheme will enable recipients to enhance their professional skills and tailor their education to suit the needs of their local community," said Ms Adams. "This will promote and maintain health and well-being in rural and remote communities by increasing health assessment and treatment services," she added.

The program will be administered by Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health (SARRAH) in partnership with the Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health Taskforce (ARRAHT) of the Health Professions Council of Australia (HPCA).

The scholarship program will be implemented over three years with \$600,000 funding available each year.

Guidelines and application forms are available from <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/nrhpublic/publicdocs/sarrah/index.htm> Applications for the first round of scholarship funding under this scheme close on April 15, 2003.

For additional information contact Peter Brown, CAHRRS Scholarship Manager, cahrrs@ruralhealth.org.au, Tel 02 6285 4660

The full text of Senator Patterson's announcement is at <http://www.health.gov.au/mediarel/yr2003/kp/kp03020.htm>

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From: Rose <rose@aihwj.com.au>
Subject: 4th national Indigenous health workers' conference

'HEALTH WORKERS - MAKING THE DIFFERENCE'

June 15-18, 2003, Adelaide Convention Centre - Adelaide South Australia

- Conference themes are:
- * Professional Development
 - * Program Innovations
 - * Health and Community Development
 - * Partnerships and Policies

The conference will also feature a special interest group meeting for health workers on Sunday June 15 from 1 to 5 pm to discuss professional development issues.

The conference will offer a range of specialist speakers and interactive workshops. Come and share knowledge and skills and learn about innovations in health worker practice and community development from across the nation.

Abstract submissions close March 5, 2003. For more information or a registration brochure please contact the Project Officer on 1800 888 575 or 02 9311 2593

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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> or receive a hard copy by emailing michele@ruralhealth.org.au

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From: Linga Longa <lingalonga@midcoast.com.au>
Subject: Invitation to aboriginal philosophy week

Linga Longa Aboriginal Philosophy Farm presents Philosophy Week 2003, 21-26 April 2003
Healing Our Spirit

A unique opportunity to spend five fulfilling days with Australians indigenous Philosophers and Teachers, sharing their cultures, values and spiritual beliefs to heal ourselves, our spirit and our land. Philosophy Week gives you the opportunity to spend five days and nights Koori time, camping under the stars in the tranquil Rollands Plains. The week includes presentations from Indigenous Philosophers and Teachers and allows lots of time for sitting around a campfire and sharing your views on culture, spirituality and healing. Between 200-300 indigenous and non indigenous people of all ages,(including children) gather each year in this relaxing and friendly environment to learn, laugh and grow with the oldest living culture in the world.

For information on previous Philosophy Weeks please visit <http://www.philosophyfarm.org>

Each day there are 2 presentations given by prominent Indigenous Philosophers and Teachers. This year's theme Healing our Spirit will include presentations on: Belonging in the land, Stages through life, Ceremony, Time and timelessness, Death and dying, Country, Healing and Healers, and Spirit and spirituality.

Each day, between presentations there are cultural workshops allowing a hands on, fun and practical experience of various cultural activities including Bush Medicine, Bush Tucker, Dance, Language, Art, Music, Craft, Spiritual Growth and Spiritual Healing.

Registration for Philosophy Week will be open from 9.00am on Monday 21st April. The Opening Ceremony will begin approximately an hour and a half before sunset. The week will close at sunrise on Saturday 26th April. Please note that attendees arriving after the opening ceremony or departing before the closing ceremony must notify organisers to allow entering and leaving business according to cultural protocols.

Linga Longa provides non-powered camping facilities including showers and toilets. The registration fee includes all meals and drinks. Participants also receive a Philosophy Week 2003 T-shirt, carry bag and a choice of either a cap or drink bottle. Evening entertainment will also be provided. Please note there is often rain during the week so please come prepared with adequate camping and wet weather gear as the program will continue regardless of weather conditions. Please note that Philosophy Week is a Drug and Alcohol free event.

Full registration is \$660, Student/Pensioner registration, and Child registration: \$110 (under 12 years old). In recognition of their support of Philosophy Week, previous participants will be given a 10% discount per year that they have attended.

Linga Longa is situated at Rollands Plains, approximately 40 minutes north west of Port Macquarie on the Mid North Coast of NSW. Directions will be sign posted to Linga Longa from the Ampol Service Station, corner Pacific Highway and Pembroke Road, at Telegraph Point. (This turn off is north of both Port Macquarie turn offs from the Pacific Highway). Participants travelling by public transport can be picked up at either the Wauchope train station or Port Macquarie Bus Terminal or Airport by prior arrangement. For maps and further directions please visit www.philosophyfarm.org

For all inquiries, phone Richmond on (02) 6582 6441 or email philosophyfarm@midcoast.com.au. Philosophy Week 2003 can be contacted at PO Box 713 Telegraph Point NSW 2441

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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.crana.org.au/pandp_bcl.html

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From: Lucinda Freeman <lucindaf@nbcc.org.au>
Subject: Rural nurses scholarship

The National Breast Cancer Centre has received funding from Polo Ralph Lauren to support the further education and training of rural and remote nurses who provide care to women with breast cancer. The scholarships will be awarded to nurses working in rural areas of Australia who intend to undertake education and training activities specifically about breast cancer during 2003.

The aim of this program is to provide opportunities for currently employed nurses living in rural and remote Australia to improve their skills and knowledge in the clinical and supportive care of women with breast cancer.

The National Breast Cancer Centre invites applications from nurses for funding for a specific program in which they would like to participate. Eligible applicants will:

- * Currently be employed as a registered/Division 1 nurse in a rural area of Australia.
- * Demonstrate written evidence of support from their employer stating their willingness to support the application.
- * Demonstrate that the education or training course or program to be undertaken has a significant breast cancer focus.
- * Describe their learning objectives and how the proposed program will meet the stated objectives.
- * Express a commitment to providing care to women with breast cancer within their current employment.

Selection will be on a competitive basis using specified criteria.

For a copy of the application form please see the NBCC website <http://www.nbcc.org.au> or call 02-9036 3030 or e-mail director@nbcc.org.au. For enquiries, please contact Ms Lucinda Freeman tel: (02) 9036 3038, fax: (02) 9036 3077, e-mail lucindaf@nbcc.org.au. Applications should be submitted by 5.00pm, Monday March 31, 2003. Late applications will not be accepted.

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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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MODEST GROWTH IN DOCTOR NUMBERS

Australia's medical workforce increased by just over 6 per cent between 1995 and 1999, compared with a population increase of 4.7 per cent, according to the latest figures released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. This resulted in a slight rise in the supply of medical practitioners from 260 per 100,000 people to 264 per 100,000 in 1999. Most of this growth was for specialists, (rising from 85.8 to 89.7 per 100,000). In contrast, GPs remained steady at 110 per 100,000 population. The pattern for GPs was different across geographical regions: supply remained fairly steady in capital cities and small rural centres, fell in other metropolitan areas and rose in all other areas.

In 1995, the average age of medical practitioners was 45.8 years-this shifted to 47.7 years in 1999. The average hours worked by medical practitioners fell from 48.2 to 45.6 per week. There was a decrease in hours worked across all regions. Primary care practitioners in remote areas, however, worked longer hours on average than those in other areas - about 51 hours per week in both years. The workload of these doctors may have been higher but for a large increase in the number of locums in remote areas (from 7.4 to 13.7 per 100 GPs), contrary to a small national decrease from 9.2 to 8.9 per 100 GPs.

The full text of the AIHW press release is at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/media/2003/mr030221.html> and the full publication is at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm?type=detail&id=8391>

The Australian Medical Association pointed out that these figures are out of date and do not reflect the very real doctor shortage crisis affecting towns and suburbs across Australia. The AIHW doctor numbers are four year old and should only be used as benchmarking to quantify the magnitude of today's doctor shortages. The full text of the AMA statement is available at <http://www.ama.com.au/web.nsf/doc/WEEN-5JX8W9>

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PATIENTS BENEFIT FROM THE LATEST HEALTHCONNECT MILESTONE

The latest development in HealthConnect has enabled Tasmanian trial participants to access their personal health information.

"Tasmanian trial participants are now able to access their personal health information from a secure online site which will ultimately allow them to actively participate in their health care delivery," Senator Patterson said. "This is an important advance and I am pleased to report that it takes us a step closer to achieving Australia's vision for a national health information network."

The Tasmanian HealthConnect trial in the Clarence district in the South of the State was launched in October 2002 and is part of a joint Commonwealth, State and Territory project, currently undergoing research and development work, following an agreement by Health Ministers in July 2000. 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.

The full text of Senator Patterson's statement is available at <http://www.health.gov.au/mediarel/yr2003/kp/kp03021.htm>

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From: Kathy Bell - ARHEN <eo@arhen.org.au>
Subject: New contact details for ARHEN

The ARHEN office is moving to co-locate with the Australian Rural and Remote Workforce Agencies Group (ARRWAG). New contact details (postal address, phone and fax) are listed in my signature block below (my e-mail address remains the same).

Kathy Bell
Executive Officer
Australian Rural Health Education Network Ltd (ARHEN)
PO Box 242
DEAKIN WEST ACT 2600
Phone: 02 6282 2166
Fax: 02 6282 9166
Mobile: 0419 460 820

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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 or use the eforum contribution box at the NRHA website, <http://www.ruralhealth.org.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.

This issue is going to 1,484 email addresses. Please forward a copy to any colleague you think may be interested.

To subscribe or unsubscribe, use the “sign up” box at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>. The archive of the newsletter is available at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au> under “Publication & News”.

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**MEDIA RELEASE – 15 FEBRUARY 2003
DROUGHT AT THE 7TH CONFERENCE**

There will be a number of sessions on drought at the 7th National Rural Health Conference. The Conference runs in Hobart from 1-4 March.

On Sunday 2 March there will be an open forum on the social and environmental impacts of the current drought. Delegates have been asked to bring along their personal stories and images of the impact of the current drought on their own family or area. A paper from Lifeline Darling Downs and South West Queensland will examine one approach for dealing with the grief experienced by pastoralists.

The Keynote Address from Mike Montgomery on Sunday 2 March will describe some of the impact of the drought on rural regions. Mike is President of the Australian Local Government Association.

Symposium D on Monday is 'Agriculture and Rural Health' and will be led by Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry Australia. Symposium B the same day will deal with sustainable communities and health inequalities; the framework for sustainability is truly tested by adverse climatic conditions, and the current drought is considered by many to be a once-in-a-hundred-year event.

On Tuesday 4 March, officers from the Department of Family and Community Services will describe some of that agency's support for people affected by the drought.