

# Eforum Newsletter: NRHA eforum, 21 May 2004

National Rural Health Alliance E-forum – 21 May 2004

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## GOVERNMENT RE-COMMITS TO RURAL HEALTH STRATEGY AND RURAL GENERAL PRACTICE

People in rural and remote areas will be pleased that the Australian Government has today re-committed to the Rural Health Strategy. The Strategy's main purpose is to underpin national efforts to improve the distribution of GPs to rural areas.

The full text of the NRHA comment on the Federal budget is at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au> and is reprinted below.

The Budget announcements by Health Minister Tony Abbott, including statements on indigenous and rural health, are at <http://www.health.gov.au/budget2004/index.htm> and a fact sheet on rural health is at <http://www.health.gov.au/budget2004/hbudget/hfact4.htm>

A collection of media releases on the Budget from various organisations is at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/nrhpublic/Index.cfm?Category=MediaReleasesOther>

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## REAL ISSUES IN ABORIGINAL HEALTH FORGOTTEN

While welcoming the additional \$40 million to continue the vital Primary Health Care Access Program, the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) said the Federal Government's 2004-2005 budget failed to address the real health issues facing Aboriginal Australians. The NACCHO statement is at <http://www.naccho.org.au/2004budget.html>

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## ALP'S CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR DENTAL SERVICES IS WELCOME

The Alliance welcomes Mark Latham's continued commitment to "a national dental program - for aged pensioners and health card holders". The Alliance statement on the ALP Budget reply is at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au> and is reprinted below.

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## 8th NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

"Central to health: sustaining well-being in remote and rural Australia", 10-13 March 2005, Alice Springs, Northern Territory

The Conference website is at <http://www.nrha.net.au/nrhpublic/publicdocs/conferences/8thNRHC/home.htm>

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## LIFELINE'S JUST ASK - 1 300 13 11 14

Your Rural Mental Health Information Service

Lifeline's Just ask 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.justask.org.au>

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The National SARRAH Conference, "Walking together, side by side" - A Conference for Rural and Remote Allied Health Professionals 26 - 28 August 2004, Alice Springs Convention Centre  
Information available at <http://www.sarrah.org.au> (under "Conferences")

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From: Gina Best  
Subject: ACRRM Scientific Forum

ACRRM will be holding its Scientific Forum at the Alice Springs Convention Centre, NT on the 8, 9, 10 & 11 July, 2004. The theme of the convention is "Recognising Rural and Remote Medicine". Details are at <http://www.acrrm.org.au/main.asp?NodeID=19252>

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PARTYline Issue No.17 - OUT NOW. 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](mailto:michele@ruralhealth.org.au)

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SUPPORTING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH WORKERS THROUGH IMPROVED ACCESS TO INFORMATION RESOURCES

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) has announced a service to facilitate access to the RACGP library's Aboriginal And Torres Strait Islander health collection as part of the RACGP's contribution to the Indigenous health projects recently funded by the Department of Health and Ageing and coordinated by the RACGP National Rural Faculty. The electronic book collection can be accessed at <http://www.racgp.org.au/folder.asp?id=962> and the RACGP statement is at <http://www.racgp.org.au/document.asp?id=13001>

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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](http://www.crana.org.au/pandp_bcl.html)

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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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SCHOLARSHIPS OFFERED TO RURAL AND REGIONAL AGED CARE NURSES

Nurses in rural and regional aged care homes are being encouraged to apply for Australian Government Aged Care Nursing Continuing Professional Development Scholarships. The statement by Minister for Ageing Julie Bishop is at <http://www.health.gov.au/mediarel/yr2004/jb/bis074.htm>

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Extracts from ABC Health-Updates  
(Subscribe at <http://www.abc.net.au/health/maillinglist.htm>)

DOCTORING TERRITORY-STYLE

A young GP escapes city life for a stint in a Northern Territory Aboriginal health service. Here he learns a home visit can mean a four-wheel drive trip in 40-degree heat to a corrugated iron shed. And the patients can turn up in 'mobs' with health problems he'd only previously seen in textbooks. <http://www.abc.net.au/health/regions/features/territory/default.htm>

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GOVERNMENT CLAIMS ITS DOCTOR INITIATIVES PAYING OFF IN RURAL AUSTRALIA

The Government has claimed that its rural health programs are providing better health services and more doctors and nurses in country areas, according to a Monash University study. The statement by Health Minister Tony Abbott is at <http://www.health.gov.au/mediarel/yr2004/ta/abb062.htm>

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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. APRIL 2004 ISSUE NOW AVAILABLE. For more information see <http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/journals/ajr/>

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FINAL RESPONSE TO THE CHARITIES DEFINITION INQUIRY

The Government has announced its response to the charities definition inquiry. These measures build on the Government's response to the Report of the Inquiry into the Definition of Charities and Related Organisations that was announced on 29 August 2002. In July 2003 the Government released exposure draft legislation that provided a statutory definition of a charity. However, rather than introducing a legislative definition of a charity, the common law meaning will continue to apply. The statement by Treasurer Peter Costello is at <http://www.treasurer.gov.au/tsr/content/pressreleases/2004/031.asp>

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GUIDE TO TELECOMMUNICATIONS RIGHTS

Australian telecommunications users in regional, rural and remote areas will be able to learn more about their consumer rights and safeguards in a new Federal Government booklet, "Your Phone Service. Your Rights". The booklet is available at <http://www.dcita.gov.au/telinfo/yourphone.pdf>



Many people in rural and remote areas miss out on oral and dental treatment. Worst of all is the state of oral and dental health among Indigenous people, particularly in more remote areas. The National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) and the National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA) have recently written to Health Minister Tony Abbott seeking a commitment that the new dental initiative in MedicarePlus will give priority attention to Indigenous patients. Over 69,000 dental care plans will be covered and the Alliance believes that a substantial proportion of these should be for Indigenous patients.

Mark Latham's Budget reply speech, like the Treasurer's, was silent on Indigenous disadvantage.