Eforum Newsletter: NRHA eforum 17 March 2006

National Rural Health Alliance E-forum – 17 March 2006
In this issue:
* 60 per cent more adults in remote areas missing out on food than four years ago
* Causes of Death
* National Summary of the 2003 and 2004 Jurisdictional Reports Against the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Performance Indicators
* National Conference on 'Diversity in Ageing'
* Series of Diabetes programs on DVD & Video are available free through the Rural Health Education Foundation
* Public health programs focus spending on immunisation, health promotion and disease control
* New articles in "Rural and Remote Health"
* Grants to improve rural health access
* Extracts from Australian Doctor E-NEWS
* Suicide
* 2005 Medicare data by electorate
* NSW Reforms IPTAAS
* Contribution and subscription information and disclaimer
* Full text of "60 per cent more adults in remote areas missing out on food than four years ago"

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60 per cent more adults in remote areas missing out on food than four years ago

A national survey has revealed that 18,000 adults in remote and very remote Australia
reported running out of food some time because of a lack of money in the twelve months 2004-05. As a proportion of people in remote areas, this was sixty per cent more than in 2001. John Wakerman, Chairperson of the Alliance, described this as a gross inequity in a country as wealthy as Australia and said that it is of particular concern that the highest proportion of people affected in this way is in remote areas.

The full text of the statement is at http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/nrhapublic/Index.cfm?Category=MediaReleases&Year=2006 and is reprinted below.

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CAUSES OF DEATH

There were 132,508 deaths registered in 2004, a higher number of deaths than the 132,292 registered in 2003. However, the standardised death rate recorded in 2004 was 626 deaths per 100,000 population, lower than the standardised death rate of 642 deaths per 100,000 population for 2003 and 1994 (813 deaths per 100,000 population). These figures were in the Australian Bureau of Statistics publication, "Causes of Death, Australia, 2004".

The standardised death rate for males in 2004 was 770 deaths per 100,000, a decrease from 792 per 100,000 in 2003 and 1034 deaths per 100,000 in 1994. Over the same period, female standardised death rates have also decreased from 646 per 100,000 population in 1994 and 523 in 2003, to 511 per 100,000 in 2004.

The Northern Territory recorded the highest standardised death rate (822 deaths per 100,000 population) in 2004, while the ACT recorded the lowest rate (562 deaths per 100,000 population). While the Northern Territory had the highest death rate, it also experienced the largest declines of any state or territory from 892 deaths per 100,000 population in 2003 and from 1,227 deaths per 100,000 population in 1994.

Malignant neoplasms were the main underlying cause for 37,989 deaths, accounting for 28.7% of all deaths in 2004. This was a slight increase from the 37,558 (28.4%) deaths with Malignant neoplasms as the main underlying cause in 2003. Ischaemic heart disease was the underlying cause of 24,576 deaths in 2004, and 25,439 deaths in 2003. This represents 18.5% and 19.2% of all deaths in 2004 and 2003 respectively. As the graph below shows, the gap between the proportion of deaths due to Malignant neoplasms and Ischaemic heart disease continues to widen. Since 1994, the proportion of deaths due to Ischaemic heart disease has consistently decreased from 24.1% to 18.5%, while the proportion of deaths due to Malignant neoplasms has increased from 26.6% to 28.7%.

While data on deaths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are considered to be affected by underenumeration, a comparison of causes of Indigenous deaths with non-Indigenous deaths highlights some major differences. Indigenous and non-Indigenous persons have the same two leading causes of death, although they are proportionally different. In 2004, Ischaemic heart diseases were the main cause of 16.3% of all Indigenous deaths compared to 18.6% of non-Indigenous deaths. Malignant neoplasms were the cause of 16.6% of all indigenous deaths and 29.0% of all non-Indigenous deaths. Deaths due to Diabetes mellitus were higher among Indigenous persons (7.3%) than among non-Indigenous persons (2.6%). External causes accounted for 14.3% of Indigenous deaths compared with 5.8% of non-Indigenous deaths, with Intentional self-harm contributing 4.2% of all Indigenous deaths compared with 1.5% of all non-Indigenous deaths.

All ABS publications are available at http://www.abs.gov.au

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NATIONAL SUMMARY OF THE 2003 AND 2004 JURISDICTIONAL REPORTS AGAINST THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HEALTH PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

This is the second national summary report on the refined set of 56 health performance indicators for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The indicators are designed to provide an assessment of whether the health of Indigenous people is improving and to highlight problem areas that Australia's health system should address as high priorities. This report, like many previous reports, draws attention to the relatively poor quality of the data on the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This means that comprehensive comparisons between states and territories are not yet possible.

This AIHW publication is available at http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10234

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NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON "DIVERSITY IN AGEING" ANNOUNCED FOR SYDNEY

The Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG) has announced it will hold its 2006 National Conference in Sydney during November. To be held 22 – 24 November 2006 at the Wesley Centre the Conference will focus on the theme ‘Diversity in Ageing.’

The conference is the major annual activity of the Australian Association of Gerontology (AAG), which brings together professionals interested in promoting education and research into all aspects of ageing. The Association encourages cross disciplinary exchange of ideas amongst professionals including clinicians, therapists, social scientists, economists and demographers. The anticipated 350 delegates are expected to include medical practitioners, researchers, nurses, social workers, psychologists, social scientists, music therapists, economists, demographers, geographers and consumers interested in the field of ageing research, education, service provision and policy.

The AAG is now calling for abstracts for the Conference. If you are a professional working in ageing, whether you are developing policy, an active researcher, an educator, a service provider or a consumer and you have research, policy or practice information to share, then the Sydney AAG Conference will provide a wide, diverse, well informed and well connected audience. The AAG program committee will welcome papers that are informative, relevant and contribute to the ageing research and education agenda.

This year the theme of the conference is Diversity in Ageing covering a broad range of topics including cultural, gender, health and social diversity. According to Felicity Barr, Conference Convenor and NSW AAG President, “Older people are not all the same; the experience of ageing is different for everyone. This conference will showcase research evidence and encourage development of policy which takes this diversity into account. Where else but in Sydney should the focus be on Diversity in Ageing, diversity as it is experienced and diversity as it is managed.”

Further information on the Conference, including a ‘Call for Abstracts’ is available on http://www.aag.asn.au/conference2006.htm or by contacting the Conference Managers on 1300 368 783 or email aag@eastcoastconferences.com.au

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From: Don Perlgut
Subject: Series of Diabetes programs on DVD & Video are available free through the Rural Health Education Foundation

I am pleased to let you know that the Rural Health Education Foundation has been funded by the Australian Government Department of Health & Ageing to distribute free a series of three diabetes programs. Please see the notice below, and pass this on to anyone who might be interested.

Diabetes Series available free on DVD & Video
The complete series of three Rural Health Education Foundation programs on diabetes is now available for free on DVD and VHS video. This free offer is provided with generous support from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing as part of its aim to improve the prevention, detection, diagnosis and treatment of diabetes by delivering key educational materials to GPs and other health professionals.
The three diabetes programs are:
* Type 1 Diabetes (program 510, 13 September 2005)
* Taking Action to Prevent Diabetes (program 317, 18 November 2003)
* Diabetes: Identifying and Treating the Complications (program 304, 18 March 2003)
The are two format options:
* A two-disk DVD set, with two programs on one disk and the third program on a second disk.
* A three-tape VHS video set, with each program on a separate tape.
To order your free DVD or VHS video set (one set per person or organisation only within Australia), simply email us at rhef@rhef.com.au, ring us on (02) 6232 5480,or fax us on (02) 6232-5484 specifying your preferred format, your name, organisation, postal address, contact telephone number and/or email address.
For more information on this offer visit our News Item http://www.rhef.com.au/news/060307/060307.html

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From: Mary Lenihan
Subject: Rural Health Conference-'Going for Gold', Ballarat 19-21 April 2006

The second rural and regional health conference 'Rural Health - Going for Gold' will be held in Ballarat 19-21 April. The Rural and Regional Health Services Branch (DHS) is currently inviting keynote speakers (Victorian, national and international) to present at the conference.

The workshops at the conference will address three key directions for rural health in Victoria:
* Promote the health and wellbeing of rural Victorians
* Foster a contemporary health system and models of care for rural Victoria
* Strengthen and sustain rural health services.

You are advised to register early as this will be a very popular conference. Ballarat is at its best in autumn - looking forward to seeing you there. You can download the draft Rural Health Conference Program at http://www.health.vic.gov.au/ruralhealth/news/conf.htm

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The Australian Journal of Rural Health invites you to contribute to the ongoing development of rural health in Australia, and submit your

manuscripts for publication. Send your papers to ruralhealth@blackwellpublishing.com and be pleasantly surprised at how quickly you can be in print. Author guidelines and sample issues of the AJRH are available at http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/submit.asp?ref=1038-5282 or email ruralhealth@blackwellpublishing.com for further information. The February 2006 issue of the journal is available online now at http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/links/toc/ajr

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The National SARRAH Conference
Building bridges ….. Crossing borders
A Conference for Rural and Remote Allied Health Professionals
13 – 16 September 2006
Albury Convention Centre, ALBURY, NSW
http://www.sarrah.org.au under Conferences

The 2006 National SARRAH Conference
c/- National Rural Health Alliance
PO Box 280
DEAKIN WEST ACT 2600
Phone: 02 6285 4660
Fax: 02 6285 4670
Email: conference@ruralhealth.org.au or register@ruralhealth.org.au
Website: http://www.sarrah.org.au

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PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMS FOCUS SPENDING ON IMMUNISATION, HEALTH PROMOTION AND DISEASE CONTROL

Total expenditure on public health activities by health departments in Australia during 2003-04 was $1.3 billion or roughly $63 per person, according to a report released by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). More than half (54.3% or $687 million) of this money was spent on three major public health activity categories: Organised immunisation ($268.0 million), Selected Health Promotion ($214.6 million) and Communicable disease control ($203.9 million). Real growth in overall government expenditure on public health activities between 1999-00 and 2003-04 averaged 4.9% per year. Spending on immunisation activities had the highest average growth at 11.7% per year, followed by expenditure on Prevention of hazardous and harmful drug use, which averaged 6.3% growth per year. The size and pattern of spending in each state and territory varied considerably. For example, an estimated 5.8% of health spending in the Northern Territory Government was directed at public health activities, while in New South Wales and Victoria that share was 1.5%. The full text of the AIHW statement is at http://www.aihw.gov.au/mediacentre/2006/mr20060315.cfm and the full report is at http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10176

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NATIONAL HEALTH PROMOTION CONFERENCE 2006

The Australian Health Promotion Association are organising a national health promotion conference in Alice Springs 23 - 26 April 2006. Further information about this interesting event is available on http://www.healthpromotion.org.au or www.nt.gov.au/he and choose 'Health Promotion' from the list of topics and services. Alternatively you could email ahpa@confco.com.au

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NEW ARTICLES IN "RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH"

'A flying start to health promotion in remote north Queensland, Australia: the development of Royal Flying Doctor Service field days'
Want to provide health promotion services to people living accross an area of 600,000 square kilometres? This is the challenge adressed by this project report from Australia.
http://rrh.deakin.edu.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=485

'EN to RN: The transition experience pre- and post-graduation'
What happens when rural nurses gain further qualifications and take on higher responsibility locally? This Australian study looks at the transitions involved.
http://rrh.deakin.edu.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=363

An exploration of when urban background medical students become interested in rural practice
Why do urban origin students choose rural practice? This study from Australia provides some useful suggestions.
http://rrh.deakin.edu.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=452

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7th WONCA RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

Transforming Rural Practice Through Education
8-15 September 2006
Seattle, WA, USA
http://www.ruralwonca2006.com

Wonca is the World Organisation of Family Doctors, which has a specific Working Party on Rural Practice. This Working Party holds an annual conference on rural health and has produced a number of policy documents regarding rural health (for more information about Wonca, go to http://www.globalfamilydoctor.com).

The deadline for submitting abstracts is 17 February 2006.

WONCA Rural Conference
8-10 September 2006
University of Washington campus

Clinical Conference
11-13 September 2006
34th Annual Advances in Family Practice and Primary Care
University of Washington campus
Post Conference
13-15 September 2006
Talkeetna Alaskan Lodge - Anchorage, Alaska

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From: Alliedschol Scholarships
Subject: 2006 NSW Rural Allied Health Scholarship

Applications are now open for the 2006 NSW Rural Allied Health Scholarships and 2006 Semester 1 NSW Rural Allied Health Clinical Placement Grants.

The NSW Rural Allied Health Scholarships were created to provide financial assistance to allied health students with a rural background who demonstrate an interest in a rural career. Students must have resided in a rural or remote area in Australia for a minimum of three years since the age of five and whose immediate family currently resides in a rural or remote area of NSW. These Scholarships assist students to complete full time tertiary study in their chosen field and assist with expenses associated with undertaking clinical placements in rural areas.

Up to 40 NSW Rural Allied Health Scholarships of $5,750 each are available in 2006.

To provide opportunities to experience rural practice in NSW, grants of up to $650 are available to assist both rural and urban students with travel and accommodation costs for their rural clinical placements. Grants of up to $1000 are available for clinical placements in Broken Hill.

Application Forms and Guidelines can be obtained by:
* Downloading from http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policy/ssdb/rural/allied_health
* Emailing : alliedschol@doh.health.nsw.gov.au
* Calling 02 9391 9501

Applications must be received by NSW Health Department by Friday 7 April 2006

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From: Kremser, Thea
Subject: Breast cancer training workshop for Indigenous health workers

The National Breast Cancer Centre will be holding a training workshop for Indigenous Health Workers in Cairns on Friday 26 May 2006. The National Breast Cancer Centre undertakes numerous initiatives to improve care in breast and ovarian cancer, and we aim to encourage best practice, improve health worker skills and encourage equity of access to optimal care and information for Australian women with breast cancer.

The training workshop has been developed in consultation with Indigenous health workers from across Australia who work with other Indigenous health workers and with Indigenous women with breast cancer. The workshop aims to assist Indigenous health workers in improving their knowledge of breast cancer and how it affects women in their communities.

If there is any additional information I can give you, please do not hesitate to contact me directly on 02 9036 3068.

Thea Kremser
Project Officer
National Breast Cancer Centre
92 Parramatta Road Camperdown NSW 2050
Direct Telephone +61 2 9036 3068
Facsimile +61 2 9036 3077 www.nbcc.org.au

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From: Ann Larson
Subject: The Rural e-Health Forum, 18-19 May 2006, Geraldton WA

Will innovations in e-Health live up to their extraordinary promise? It has been touted as a mechanism to dissolve physical distance, bring the knowledge of the specialist into rural surgeries, remote health clinics and multipurpose services, and enable secure exchange of vital medical information. Robots in district hospitals, data vaults of important health information for transient populations, remote specialist consults through email and videoconferencing are all a reality. In many cases good care is reaching people who in the past had to do without.

But it is time to take stock. What works in rural and remote settings? What are the barriers to greater adoption? What technological advances are around the corner and what should we be doing now? What should be our priorities?

On 18 and 19 May there will be a Rural e-Health Forum in Geraldton. This is your chance to talk with clinicians who are using new technologies, with the inventors designing the next big thing, with the industry and with policy makers. The Forum is jointly organised by CUCRH, the Midwest Division of General Practice and the Centre of Excellence in e-Medicine.

See the forum website http://www.cucrh.uwa.edu.au/eHealth

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Join friends of the Alliance in 2006. By joining friends you will receive the updated CD 'Rural and Remote Health Papers 1991-2005', a 2006 friends certificate , regular issues of PARTYline newsletter, and be eligible for a discounted registration at the 9th National Rural Health

Conference to be held in Albury in March 2007. Membership of friends would also give you the opportunity to be involved more closely with the Alliance's information dissemination and policy work. You will become part of a group of people who contribute to and support the work of the National Rural Health Alliance.

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GRANTS TO IMPROVE RURAL HEALTH ACCESS

The Commonwealth Government has announced grants worth more than $10 million to improve private health services in rural areas across Australia. The Rural Private Access Program aims to increase the viability of rural private hospitals and improve the range of privately insurable health services in rural and remote areas. The full text of Health Minister Tony Abbott's statement is at http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/content/health-mediarel-yr2006-ta-abb026.htm

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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. The December edition (No. 24) of PARTYline is available online at http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/nrhapublic/Index.cfm?Category=PartyLine or receive a hard copy by emailing partyline@ruralhealth.org.au

Work has commenced on the next edition of PARTYline due out in April/May. It will be a joint edition with beyondblue: the national depression initiative with a special focus on recovery from depression and related disorders and we are inviting people to write on this theme for PARTYline. If you have a story about programs to address depression in your community, or a personal story from your own experience of recovery from depression or anxiety and related disorders, we would love to hear from you . Ideally articles should be 250-500 words. If you need any more information please contact phone 02 6285 4660. Contributions should be sent to partyline@ruralhealth.org.au by March 3rd, 2006.

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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 and further information is available at national@lifeline.org.au and http://www.lifeline.org.au

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Extracts from Australian Doctor E-NEWS

BUSH NEEDS OVERLOOKED (1-Mar-2006)
FROM THE RDAA: Rural Australia continues to seek solutions to the closure of maternity units and the shortage of GP proceduralists.
http://www.australiandoctor.com.au/articles/FF/0C03D1FF.asp

GP CARRIES GAMES BATON AND PRIDE OF RURAL DOCTORS (8-Mar-2006)
A rural GP got a taste of Commonwealth Games glory a week before the games begin in Melbourne, with rural GP Dr Phil Huguenin carrying the Queen's Baton on a leg of its journey across Australia.
http://www.australiandoctor.com.au/articles/68/0C03DA68.asp

PUTTING PLANNING INTO ACTION (14-Mar-2006)
A new report on the regionalisation of GP training spurs GPET on.
http://www.australiandoctor.com.au/articles/E4/0C03D9E4.asp

BITTER GP ROW ROCKS MINING TOWN (15-Mar-2006)
When GPs fall out with one another, its rare for the news to be splashed across the front page of the local paper and for there to be demands for the state health minister to intervene - but that's just what has happened in the remote mining town of Lightning Ridge.
http://www.australiandoctor.com.au/articles/1D/0C03DC1D.asp

GP-LED DREAM-TEAM A NIGHTMARE FOR NURSES (15-Mar-2006)
Claims that doctors are the only health professionals with the skills and qualifications to lead multidisciplinary care teams are "arrogant", according to the Australian Nurses Federation.
http://www.australiandoctor.com.au/articles/00/0C03DA00.asp

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From: Melissa Crowle
Subject: Inaugural Conference on Disease Mongering 2006

INAUGURAL CONFERENCE ON DISEASE MONGERING 2006, 11 – 13 APRIL 2006
DAVID MADDISON BUILDING, ROYAL NEWCASTLE HOSPITAL, NEWCASTLE, NSW, AUSTRALIA
http://www.diseasemongering.org

The conference will be held at the David Maddison Building Royal Newcastle Hospital from 11 – 13 April 2006. It will bring together academics, researchers, health professionals, health managers, journalists, writers and consumers who share an interest and concern over the trend of corporate definitions of diseases with a primary interest in making profits rather than a concern for the public health.

The conference program will be organised around a mixture of plenary, parallel and small group sessions. The aims of the conference are to review a range of examples of disease mongering, to develop a common view on the character and magnitude of the problems created by disease mongering, to develop some position statements and a research agenda that will lead to collaborative projects.

For further information or to register for the conference, please visit http://www.diseasemongering.org

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SUICIDE

Suicide continues to be a major public health issue, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Although death by suicide is a relatively uncommon event (1.6% of all deaths registered in 2004 were attributed to suicide), the human and economic costs are substantial.

There were 2,098 deaths from suicide registered in 2004. This number was a decrease from 2,213 registered in the previous year. Males comprised nearly 80% of these deaths. Numbers of suicides have decreased in recent years following peaks in 1997 and 1998. However, despite these decreases, suicide remains a major external cause of death. For example in each of the years from 1994 to 2004, the total number of deaths from suicide was greater than the number of deaths from transport accidents.

The highest age-specific suicide death rate for males in 2004 was observed in the 30-34 years age group (29.2 per 100,000) and the lowest was in the 15-19 years age group (7.5 per 100,000). For females the highest age-specific suicide death rate in 2004 was observed in the 45-49 years age group (7.1 per 100,000) and the lowest in the 70-74 years age group (3.7 per 100,000)(see Table 2).

In 2004 the most frequent method of suicide was hanging, which was used in almost half (48%) of all suicide deaths. The next most used methods were poisoning by 'other' (including motor vehicle exhaust) (19%), poisoning by drugs (11%), and methods using firearms (8%). The remaining group (Other) comprised 14% of suicide deaths and included deaths from drowning, jumping from a high place, and other methods. Over the decade a clear pattern was apparent in methods using firearms. Suicide deaths using firearms have more than halved over this period, from 420 deaths in 1994, to 169 deaths in 2004. See Table 4 for data on broad groupings of method of suicide.

Suicide rates in states and territories may fluctuate over time particularly in the smaller jurisdictions, because of the small number of suicides that may be registered annually. Other factors such as the higher rate of suicide in rural areas may contribute to differences across states and territories. In the Northern Territory, the high rate of suicide in the Indigenous population contributes to the high rate of suicide in that jurisdiction. Combining data for five years allows more reliable comparison of suicide rates across the states and territories.
For this period, high rates were evident in the Northern Territory (more than double the national rate), followed by Tasmania (26% above the national rate) and Queensland (16% above the national rate). New South Wales, Victoria and the ACT all had rates lower than the national rate.

All ABS publications are available at http://www.abs.gov.au

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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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From: Michelle Magro
Subject: WHA & CHA CONFERENCE

The joint conference of Women's Hospitals Australasia and Children's Hospitals Australasia will be held at The Country Club Resort, in the delightful city of Launceston, Tasmania, 13-17 November this year.

This year's conference theme is TEAM and will explore how effective teams can significantly improve quality of care and service delivery. Given the increasing trend toward health service redesign, and a move away from hierarchical structures, the health care 'team' is probably the most important consideration in advancing healthcare over the next decade. As technology advances, skill mix needs change, workforce shortages increase the need for flexibility within the health workforce, and as consumer expectations increase they become a fundamental member of the healthcare team.

This conference promises to be our best yet, with accomplished keynote speakers and a wealth of information on offer! Please note the following dates in your diary:

Monday 13 November: Clinical Forum 'CUBS' - (Care of Unwell Babies)
Tuesday 14 November: WHA Conference
Wednesday 15 November: Joint WHA & CHA Conference
Thursday 16 November: CHA Conference
Friday 17 November: Clinical Forum - Better Integration of Paediatric Acute & Community Care

A preliminary program will be circulated via email, and will be available on our website, shortly.

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2005 MEDICARE DATA BY ELECTORATE

Bulk billing rates increased in 96 per cent of Australia's federal electorates from 2004 to 2005 as a result of Howard Government initiatives to strengthen Medicare, according to Health Minister Tony Abbott.

Bulk billing rates for non-referred GP attendances were generally higher in electorates of lower socio-economic status. The national average bulk billing rate for non-referred GP attendances in 2005 was 74.7 per cent. The latest figures from the December quarter show the current rate is 75.1 per cent.

The full reports are available on the Department of Health and Ageing web site at http://www.health.gov.au/electoratereports. The full text of Mr Abbott's statement is at http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/health-mediarel-yr2006-ta-abb027.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2006&mth=3

The Minister for Health, Tony Abbott has today released Medicare Safety net data which reveals, once again, that the policy benefits people with high average incomes and consequently, blue ribbon Liberal seats including his own.

Opposition Health spokesperson Julia Gillard had a different take on the data. She pointed out that the data showed who is benefiting the most from the Medicare Safety net. "Nine of the top ten beneficiaries are blue ribbon Liberal seats which have high average income levels. The top ten seats received a whopping 20 per cent of the total spend in 2005. Just 4 percent of the $280 million spent went to electorates with the lowest incomes," Ms Gillard said. Her statement is at http://www.alp.org.au/media/0306/mshea090.php

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From: Partridge, Michael
Subject: 2006 Health Outcomes Conference

HEALTH OUTCOMES 2006: MANAGING HEALTH AND DISEASE IN TODAY'S SOCIETY

12th Annual Health outcomes Conference
9 - 10 August 2006
Rydges Lakeside, Canberra, ACT
Call for Papers closes 10 March 2006
http://www.uow.edu.au/commerce/ahoc/upcomingconference.html
michael.partridge@act.gov.au

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NSW REFORMS IPTAAS

The Premier, Morris Iemma, announced reforms to the NSW Government's assistance scheme for country patients requiring specialist treatments. Improvements to the Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme are expected to assist an extra 11,500 patients and their carers every year. The initiatives will, from 1 July 2006: cut eligibility distance for IPTAAS scheme from 200 kilometres to 100 kilometres; and increase the vehicle allowance from 12.7 cents per kilometre to 15 cents.

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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 (do not "reply" to this email - send contributions to 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.

This issue is going to 2,481 email addresses. Please forward a copy to any colleague you think may be interested.

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Media Release, 16 March 2006

60 per cent more adults in remote areas missing out on food than four years ago

A national survey has revealed that 18,000 adults in remote and very remote Australia
reported running out of food some time because of a lack of money in the twelve months 2004-05. As a proportion of people in remote areas, this was sixty per cent more than in 2001. John Wakerman, Chairperson of the Alliance, described this as a gross inequity in a country as wealthy as Australia and said that it is of particular concern that the highest proportion of people affected in this way is in remote areas.

“The National Health Survey shows that 759,000 people over 18 ran out of food and could not afford to buy more at some time in the last financial year. The majority are of course in the major cities but the proportion of city dwellers who were in this situation thankfully fell from 2001 to 2004-05, from 5.2 to 4.9 per cent. On the other hand the proportion affected in this way in remote areas rose from 5.5 to 8.8 per cent,” Dr Wakerman said.

“It is well known that a higher proportion of people in rural and remote areas have lower income than in the cities, but this food figure underlines the seriousness of the situation,” Dr Wakerman said. “The supply of healthy food, as well as its affordability, is undoubtedly an issue in remote areas, but the consequences for health and well-being of having no food are just the same whatever the cause.”

Remote areas (as defined) are home to 200,000 people and many of those affected will have been Indigenous people. The Mai Wiru project on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands in South Australia and the Remote Indigenous Stores and Takeaways project are important attempts to address issues that prevent the equitable access to food and nutrition, in ways that involve several governments, community councils and supporting agencies.

The Alliance has been preparing proposals for stronger national action to ensure food
security in remote areas. It has also recently called for update of the Remote Zone Tax Rebates scheme. This is designed to compensate for the disadvantages faced by families living in remote areas and it has not been reviewed since 1993-94.