Eforum Newsletter: NRHA eforum 12 May 2006

National Rural Health Alliance E-forum – 12 May 2006
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PROGRESSING ON SEVERAL FRONTS

The Federal budget that was rumoured to provide something for everybody has indeed seen some valuable initiatives announced for improved health in rural and remote Australia. Particularly welcome are new initiatives relating to health research, palliative care in country areas and a 'viability supplement' for community aged care. The full text of the Alliance statement on the Budget is at http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/nrhapublic/Index.cfm?Category=LatestNews and is reprinted below.

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BUDGET COMMITMENT TO REMOTE INDIGENOUS STORES

This week's Budget commitment of $48.1 million over three years to support remote Indigenous stores is important recognition of a very serious aspect of the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in remote Australia. The Alliance has recently produced a position paper on food security in remote areas and has drawn attention to the fact that 60 per cent more adults in remote areas are now missing out on food than four years ago. It is promoting national action on food security in remote areas and has also called for update of the Remote Zone Tax Rebates scheme to compensate for the disadvantages faced by families living in remote areas. The full text of the Alliance statement on the Budget is at http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/nrhapublic/Index.cfm?Category=LatestNews and is reprinted below.

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FAIR DINKUM MEASURES STILL NEEDED FOR RURAL HEALTH

The Federal Government has missed a significant opportunity to improve the health outcomes of those living in the bush and to entice more doctors to rural and remote Australia, by announcing no new major rural health measures in this year's budget, the Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) said. The full text of the RDAA statement is at http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/Fair%20Dinkum%20Measures%20Still%20Needed%20for%20Rural%20Health%20--%20May%202006.htm

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9th NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE - CALL FOR PAPERS NOW OPEN ONLINE

It only seems five minutes since we welcomed you all to Alice Springs. How time flies when we're having fun! Those of you who were there will remember the central commitment we made to achieving equal health for people in remote and rural areas by 2020. We aren't there yet, and the 9th Conference in Albury represents the next major opportunity for us to check progress and reflect on our successes and continuing challenges.

There is a lot happening in rural and remote health, even though we are not apparently central to the current political agenda. Those things that are on top of the agenda, however, are certainly related to health and well-being. At national and international levels we are exhorted to be alert but not alarmed. This surely weighs on our thoughts, words and deeds and cannot be divorced from the way we feel as individuals or the way we behave as communities. At the national level we are engaged in major reform of the health system. Questions are being asked about how the health system is funded, the shape of Medicare, how hospitals operate, the relationship between Commonwealth and State agencies, and the future of our health workforce. All of these have rural and remote dimensions, and from all of them will flow changes for people on the ground in non-metropolitan areas. We must stay close to these changes: inform them, guide them and evaluate them.

The Conference in Albury is a chance for us all to get together again to focus on the evidence about where we are up to and how we can improve our circumstances. The evidence we need comes not only from the work of researchers and academics, but also from the reports of consumers and managers about realities on the ground and in the corridors of power. It should surely be possible for us to bring together experiences from the past decade and from various parts of rural and remote Australia to agree on what works best, and why.

I therefore encourage you to attend the Conference and to have your say. You can be assured that the NRHA will provide you with a very warm welcome and a well-managed event. In addition to the evidence you will hear, there will be a range of activity to ensure that you are kept entertained and . There will be an arts-in-health stream, an exhibition, networking time, and the opportunity to meet new and old friends.

We pride ourselves on making sure that the Conference is not a talkfest but an opportunity to agree on action we can collaboratively pursue. We need your input, your ideas and your support to ensure that, as soon as possible, people in rural and remote areas have the same opportunities and the same health as people in our major cities.

I look forward to seeing you in Albury.

John Wakerman
Chairperson

Authors are invited and encouraged to submit an abstract for consideration by the Conference Committee. Abstracts for contributed papers will be accepted online until Friday 14 July 2006. Emailed abstracts must be received by the same date, but please contact speakers@ruralhealth.org.au for alternative abstract guidelines if you intend to email your abstract. The Infront/Outback stream will be comprised of refereed papers and there will also be a General stream. Speakers are encouraged to download and review the Guidelines for Submission of Abstracts document (178 kB pdf) at http://www.ruralhealth.org.au before submitting an abstract.

To submit your abstract for the 9th National Rural Health Conference you will be required to provide:
* the full contact details of a key contact (the Submitting Author);
* details of the abstract, including abstract title, names and affiliations of authors/co-authors;
* preferred presentation type (papers, poster or workshop);
* key words;
* audiovisual requirements; and,
* biographies of the presenting author(s).

For more detailed instructions, please see the Abstract Submission Requirements page at http://www.ruralhealth.org.au

Please go to the online conference page at http://www.ruralhealth.org.auto lodge your abstract online. If you have questions regarding the online abstract submission process, please contact speakers@ruralhealth.org.au. All abstracts will be read as part of the selection process by the Conference organisers. Submitting an abstract does not guarantee that your paper will be accepted. The selection process will be finalised and all authors will be notified in September 2006.

The Conference website is at http://www.ruralhealth.org.au

For further information, contact:
The 9th National Rural Health Conference
PO Box 280
DEAKIN WEST ACT 2600
Phone: 02 6285 4660
Fax: 02 6285 4670
Email: conference@ruralhealth.org.au

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From: Colin White
Subject: Report on GP trends

Health Workforce Queensland has recently released a new report that explores current and future trends in the Australian general practice workforce. Based on an information paper developed for the Australian Rural and Remote Workforce Agencies Group, the report draws on data from a variety of sources including; Medicare Australia, Australian Medical
Workforce Advisory Committee, ACIL Tasman, Australian General Practice Training, Committee of Deans Australian Medical Schools and Rural Workforce Agencies to provide a concise overview of general practice trends.

Data indicate that there are significant differences between estimated GP requirements as projected by AMWAC to 2013 and current supply (new GP workforce entrants) and that this discrepancy will not be resolved in the short to medium term. Others trends in the general practice workforce are also discussed.

A copy of the report can be obtained from http://www.healthworkforce.com.au/downloads/publications/1601_arrwag_hwq _gp_trends_draft%20_2_.pdf

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From: Robyn Metcalfe
Subject: The Jean Hailes Foundation Hormone Therapy Clear messages at Last

Global Telehealth meeting on Monday 15th May
6.30pm - 8.30pm (EST)
Register to attend at ANZCA Melbourne: ANZCA Building Auditorium, 630 St Kilda Road, Melbourne (near St Kilda jn, parking on St Kilda Road)
Register to attend on 03 8517 5397 or email events@telehealth.com.au or
online at www.telehealth.com.au.
No registration fee.
Can’t make it to ANZCA? Attend via videoconference! Individual and site registrations on 03 8517 5397 or email events@telehealth.com.au or online at http://www.telehealth.com.au
No registration fee but cost to add a Videoconference site: $250 excl. GST per
site ($60 off for sites that don’t require a bridge port). NB 15 regional centres will receive site funding

Prof Henry Burger, Board Director Jean Hailes Foundation for Women's Health Prince Henrys Institute of Medical Research
Prof Helena Teede, Director of Research Jean Hailes Foundation for Women's Health

Department of Medicine Monash University
In partnership with:
“Hormone Therapy – Why Women’s Health
Initiative (WHI) was wrongly interpreted!”
For further information on the content of this event, please contact:
The Jean Hailes Foundation for Women’s Health 1800 151 441 or email robyn.metcalfe@jeanhailes.org.au

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From: Sharon Ride
Subject: Position vacant at FECCA - Policy and Liaison Officer

FECCA has a vacant position for a Policy and Liaison Officer. The successful applicant will be responsible for policy development across a wide range of policy areas including providing secretariat support to FECCA’s policy committees; responding to policy discussion papers developed by government and other stakeholders; and providing support to the FECCA Director and Executive Committee. This position will suit a team player with sound communication, secretariat and advocacy skills.

FECCA is an equal opportunity employer. Closing date for applications: close of business Friday 19 th May. For more information and a copy of the selection criteria please contact
FECCA’s office on (02)6282 5755 during business hours, email admin@fecca.org.au or log on to the FECCA website:
http://www.fecca.org.au

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Manuscript submissions to The Australian Journal of Rural Health can now be made online through Manuscript Central. Easy and fast submission process; track the progress of your article at any time; safe and secure site. Simply log on to
http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ajrh to submit your manuscript today and share the wealth of your knowledge. Full author instructions and guidelines can be found at the AJRH homepage - http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/ajr

The April 2006 issue of the journal is available online now at http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/links/toc/ajr. Articles include:
* National health policy: What does this mean for rural mental health research?
* Factors influencing rural health care professionals' access to continuing professional education
* Caregivers' inability to identify childhood adiposity: A cross-sectional survey of rural children and their caregivers' attitudes
* Exploration of self-identified education needs of alcohol and other drug workers
* Tobacco smoking habits among a cross-section of rural physicians in China
* Utilisation and clinical efficacy of echocardiography in a regional hospital
* Mental health referral role of rural financial counsellors
* Alcohol problems and psychological health in a remote Indigenous Australian community: A preliminary quantitative study
* Australian medical students' intentions in relation to practice location: Their short- and long-term time frame
* Strength in difference
* AARN and CRANA: Peak rural and remote nursing bodies welcome Medicare item for maternity care.
* ACRRM supports next crop of rural proceduralists.

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NEW ARTICLES IN "RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH"

Dental self-care and dietary characteristics of remote-living Indigenous children
Remote-dwelling Indigenous children have frustratingly poor dental health. Why? This article provides some possible reasons for you to consider.
http://rrh.deakin.edu.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=503

Working with an Aboriginal Community Liaison Worker
Is an Aboriginal Community Liaison Worker an effective alternative to an Aboriginal Health Worker? What are the differences? This article presents the author's personal experience of working with an Aboriginal Community Liaison Worker in an Australian women's health project.
http://rrh.deakin.edu.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=381

Issues with prescribed medications in Aboriginal communities: Aboriginal Health Workers' perspectives
Aboriginal Health Workers have a place in rural pharmacies to improve the use of prescribed medications? See what this new research suggests.
http://rrh.deakin.edu.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=557

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DOING THE SUMS: STILL TOO FEW RURAL GPs
(Extract from Farmonline, 1 May 2005)

Another study just released tells us of the current and future GP shortage in Australia.

The chair of the Australian Rural and Remote Workforce Agencies Group, Professor Rob Stable, said that there are a number of disturbing facts about the continuing shortage of GPs in Australia and the disproportionate impact on rural Australians.

"We know that the numbers of GPs working in rural and remote communities won’t meet the needs of those communities over the next 5-10 years," he said.

The full article is at http://www.farmonline.com.au/news_daily.asp?ag_id=34071 (registration to farmonline is free)

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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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Rural mental health blueprint a national first
(Extract from Farmonline, 5 May 2006)

A Mental Health Blueprint for rural areas has been presented to the NSW and Federal Governments in a bid to curb a problem crippling bush communities. Deaths from suicide of male farmers and farm workers are now double that of any other group in the male population. But the blueprint from the newly formed Rural Mental Health Network outlines a number of key solutions to ease the crisis.

The Blueprint recommends 22 areas of action including mental health first aid training, farm support, and access to financial counsellors and drought support workers.

Network participants include: NSW Farmers' Association, beyondblue, Rural Doctors Association, St Vincent de Paul Society, Suicide Safety Network, The Salvation Army, Wesly Counselling, Lifeline, Anglicare, the Australian Centre for Agriculture Health and Safety, Australian Rotary Health Research Fund, Black Dog Institute, Centre for Mental Health Research, Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health, Centrelink, Centre for Rural Social Research, Country Women's Association, DPI Drought Support Workers, Rural Financial Counsellors and The Presentation Sisters Rural Outreach Service.

For a full copy of the Blueprint contact the Association or go to http://www.nswfarmers.org.au

The full article is at http://www.farmonline.com.au/news_daily.asp?ag_id=34109 (registration to farmonline is free)

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Due to an overwhelming number of contributions this quarter, the National Rural Health Alliance produced three editions of PARTYline on the theme of recovery from depression.
One edition was produced jontly with beyondblue: the national depression initiative.

Hardcopy subscribers may have already received the two print editions n the mail.

Electronic subscribers can now access all three on our website at http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/nrhapublic/Index.cfm?Category=PartyLine If you have trouble with this link go to www.ruralhealth.org.au, then to the Publications and News link, then the PARTYline link. Please note: the electronic supplement contains additional material and is only available on our website.

Please let us know if your contact details change or if you no longer wish to receive PARTYline.

Contents of April 2006 editions

Issue 25 - joint NRHA/beyondblue edition (print copy)
* triathlete fights depression
* beyondblue initiatives in rural and remote areas
* personal stories of recovery from depression
* Indigenous mental health services
* support for people affected by depression
* managing depression in men, women and children

Issue 26 (print copy)
* Independent Living Centre goes bush
* the joys of Port Augusta
* personal stories of recovery from depression
* support services for people with depression
* support on incontinence, cancer counselling and road trauma

Issue 26 (electronic supplement)
* the value of local services
* General Practice mental health care
* depression in the alcohol and drug sector
* services for women and youth in rural areas
* Mental Health Script Program
* personal stories of recovery from depression

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THE CONGRESS of ABORIGINAL and TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER NURSES (CATSIN)
8th NATIONAL CONFERENCE and ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Conference Theme: BACK TO THE FUTURE - The future is Ours!
WHERE: Tasmania
WHEN: 27th- 29th September 2006
VENUE: The Old Woolstore Apartment Hotel.
REGISTRATION COST: $400.00

Students who have attended and been financially assisted at previous conferences ARE encouraged to apply again.

Student Nurse members of CATSIN are encouraged to attend and can apply to be financially assisted. Applications for financial assistance close 30th June 2006

Call For Abstracts

* Professional Issues
* Clinical Presentations
No more than 200 words please.

Roslyn Lockhart
CATSIN Project Officer
PO Box 124
Jerilderie
Ph/Fax: 03 58860505 Abstracts close 30th June 2006
Email: lockharr@bigpond.net.au
Conference Organisers:

WYETH Pharmaceuticals
Susan Day, Conference Manager
Locked Bag 5002 Baulkham Hills BC NW 2153
Ph: (02) 8850 8317 Fax: (02) 9023 0030 Email: days@wyeth.com

For Registration Forms and accommodation information, please contact the conference organisers. You can also find registration forms on the website at http://www.indiginet.com.au/catsin

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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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Extract from Australian Doctor E-NEWS

GP HEADS FOR BUSH TO SECURE RETIREMENT (3-May-2006)
A GP who estimates he has sacrificed $500,000 in lost income after becoming a conscientious objector to the vocational register more than 17 years ago has decided to move to a tiny outback town in order to access VR-level rebates.
http://www.australiandoctor.com.au/articles/FA/0C03F6FA.asp

RURAL TRAINING PROGRAM WILL OFFER VR ACCESS (10-May-2006)
Doctors are set to be offered a rural-only training program to access the vocational register instead of having to acquire the RACGP fellowship, the Federal Government has confirmed.
http://www.australiandoctor.com.au/articles/BC/0C03F4BC.asp

RADICAL ACTION NEEDED TO ATTRACT GPS TO REMOTE AREAS (10-May-2006)
GUEST EDITORIAL: Last week I had the good fortune to sit next to a wonderful, perhaps heroic, young doctor who was heading farther out than me to a remote Australian hospital.
http://www.australiandoctor.com.au/articles/2D/0C03F62D.asp

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FORMATION OF AHPA

Allied Health Professions Australia (AHPA) was formed when the Health Professions Council of Australia adopted a new Constitution which allows for a much broader membership base. This changed HPCA to the new organisation - AHPA.

A very warm welcome is extended to organisations which share the vision of AHPA providing a single strong voice for allied health professions in Australia. AHPA anticipates being a major force in the health sector, particularly in working with government at all levels on health policy and services. Groups representing allied health professionals are invited to apply for membership now to support AHPA as it establishes itself as the “One voice for the future of Allied Health”.

Organisations which are interested in joining AHPA should contact the Secretariat at ahpa@psychology.org.au if they require any additional information or to obtain a membership application form.

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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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The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples: Summary Booklet, 2005
(ABS Cat 4704.0.55.002)

This provides a summarised statistical overview, largely at the national level, of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and welfare. Among the topics included are: maternal and child health; risk factors; ill health; disability and ageing; mortality; and access to, and use of, services. It is available online at

http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4704.0.55.002Main+Features12005?OpenDocument

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RURAL HEALTH ON THE ABC

Blueprint Targets Strategies to Combat Rural Suicides
The federal government has been presented with a blueprint outlining 23 ways to ease the mental health crisis in regional Australia. The release of the blueprint marks the launch of Rural Mental Health Network.
http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/2006/s1628625.htm

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REGULAR SCREENING, EARLY DETECTION, BETTER OUTCOMES

In its seventh national monitoring report for the BreastScreen Australia Program, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) says more women are undergoing early detection screening, and the cancers being found are smaller and more treatable.

For the target group of women 50 to 69 years, the mortality rate dropped from 66.7 per 100,000 women in 1989, to 54.1 in 2003. Some groups of women, including those who do not speak English in the home as their first language, and Indigenous women, have participation rates that are currently below the national rate of 56.1%. However, the rate of participation for Indigenous women has improved significantly since 1997 and 1998. Further improvements to participation rates could help maintain or improve this downward trend in mortality rates.

Breast cancer remains both the most common cancer in women in Australia, with 12,027 new cases in 2002, and the leading cause of cancer deaths in women - 2,713 deaths in 2003. However, a combination of early detection and improved treatments has seen mortality rates drop substantially.

The full text of the AIHW statement is at http://www.aihw.gov.au/mediacentre/2006/mr20060503.cfm and the full publication is available at http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10273

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PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION ROGS 2006 INDIGENOUS COMPENDIUM

The Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision's publication Report on Government Services 2006 : Indigenous Compendium is available from the Productivity Commission's website. The publication gathers together data drawn entirely from the previously released 'Report on Government Services 2006'.

This report is available on the website only
http://www.pc.gov.au/gsp/reports/rogs/compendium2006/index.html

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TELSTRA AND CSIRO LINK EMERGENCY SPECIALISTS WITH REGIONAL AUSTRALIANS

Telstra and CSIRO announced an agreement to provide hospitals with a tele-health solution that could help ease emergency specialist shortages in regional Australia. The licensing agreement enables Telstra to bring CSIRO's Virtual Critical Care Unit to market using its Government IP broadband network - connecting clinical specialists in major hospitals with staff and patients in country hospitals.

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HEALTH RESEARCH WORKSHOP FOR QLD NURSES

The Centre for Rural and Remote Area Health (CRRAH) is undertaking a study to identify and prioritise the health research needs of Southern Queensland communities. The workshop will be held in Toowomba on 18th May 2006. For more information please contact:
Rob Eley
Centre for Rural and Remote Area Health
Faculty of Sciences
University of Southern Queensland
Toowoomba Qld 4350
Telephone: 07 4631 5477
Fax: 07 4631 5452
Email: eleyr@usq.edu.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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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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AUSTRALIA'S HEALTH 2006 CONFERENCE
21 June 2006, Hyatt Hotel Canberra, Commonwealth Avenue, Yarralumla

This one day conference, held in Canberra, provides insights into key issues facing Australia's health services and resources, chronic diseases, and highlights trends and concerns in population health. The conference will assess current health statistics and demonstrate the relevance of these figures to existing and future health practices and reforms.

The one-day program commences with the launch of Australia's health 2006 by the Hon. Tony Abbott MP, Minister for Health and Ageing. This publication is the nation's most comprehensive and authoritative source of health statistics and related information. All delegates receive a complimentary copy of this important statistical resource.

The conference program, available at http://www.aihw.gov.au/eventsdiary/ah06/program.cfm includes keynote addresses by eminent speakers, with sessions being held in a broad spectrum of health arenas including:
* Socioeconomic inequalities
* Workforce planning
* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health
* Changing face of primary healthcare
* Chronic diseases
* Health as an economic growth sector
* Rural health

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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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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).

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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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

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN
PROGRAM AVAILABLE
Information available on the website – http://www.sarrah.org.au

The 2006 National SARRAH Conference
PO Box 74
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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AARN NATIONAL CONFERENCE
'Moving with the Times'
Contemporary issues in rural nursing practice
25 - 27 October 2006, Brisbane

Call for abstracts soon to be announced - see http://www.aarn.asn.au/ for details

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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.

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

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From: Michael Gleeson
Subject: ACRRM Call for Abstracts for the ACRRM 4th Scientific Forum

Medical practitioners, specialists, allied health professionals, academics and students are invited to submit abstracts for Australia's leading medical conference in health care in rural and remote settings.

The Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) will conduct its 4th Scientific Forum at the University of Adelaide on 16-19 November 2006 and will present research, forum discussions, plenary sessions and clinical workshops specifically on the practical implementation of Rural and Remote Medicine.

ACRRM Academic Director Assoc. Prof. Elizabeth Chalmers said the conference content would examine the latest thinking and modern clinical practices for caring for Australians in regional and rural Australia.

She said the theme "Practising Rural and Remote Medicine – Moving Forward" captured the positive future for the discipline.

Assoc. Prof. Chalmers also said that speakers from a variety of professional groups would be invited to this year's conference, including indigenous health experts, nurses, medical specialists, and allied health practitioners, as each had an important role to play in the collaborative provision of medical care in the bush.

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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.

Further information on the Conference 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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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 2,513 email addresses. Please forward a copy to any colleague you think may be interested.

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Budget Media Release 9 May 2006
Progressing on several fronts

The Federal budget that was rumoured to provide something for everybody has indeed seen some valuable initiatives announced for improved health in rural and remote Australia.

Particularly welcome are new initiatives relating to health research, palliative care in country areas and a ‘viability supplement’ for community aged care.

The Alliance has been negotiating with relevant parties to secure a fair proportion of total health research funds for rural and remote activity and to ensure that rural and remote interests are appropriately reflected in the new health research structures. Tonight’s announcement of a total additional $905m for health and medical research, which includes an extra $500m over four years to the NH&MRC, will receive strong support from rural people in anticipation of their success in obtaining an appropriate benefit.

An existing program for palliative services in rural areas, particularly for children, the elderly and Indigenous people has received continued funding for the next four years.

The Alliance warmly welcomes the introduction of a viability supplement for community care services in rural areas, similar to that received by residential services, in recognition of the higher costs faced by country providers. This is something that the Alliance and Aged and Community Services Australia have advocated in their joint submissions.

The rural and remote centrepieces of this budget are two special programs for communities of less than 7000 people. The Alliance welcomes the so-called alignment of a range of programs provided by both the Commonwealth and the States and Territories so that they can be used flexibly at the local level. Although it remains to be seen exactly how this will work on the ground, it has been clear for some time that innovative ways to make more effective local use of health and related funds are well overdue.

The second program will see changes to Medicare in small towns with a shortage of doctors making it possible for Medicare benefits to be claimed for primary care services delivered by state-funded GPs. The Alliance has not been privy to the detail of how this scheme will operate or the sites selected and looks forward to working with the Commonwealth and States/Territories to help ensure that the proposal succeeds in improving access to primary care.

Country people will also welcome the major new investment in a number of rural roads and in further protecting the resources of the Murray-Darling Basin. Such key infrastructure investments underpin the health of Australia’s country towns and regions and thus the health of their people.

The Alliance also notes confirmation in the Budget of significant new investment by the Commonwealth in mental health, foreshadowed by COAG in January. Assuming the States and Territories match the Commonwealth’s commitment, it should be possible to make progress on this critical issue. The Alliance supports the call for increased spending on mental health to 12% of national health expenditure; moves to recruit more mental health workers to rural and remote areas; and better support for the carers of people with mental health illness and hopes these will be progressed with the additional resources.

In the context of these new mental health initiatives, the Alliance also strongly supports the recommendations from the recent Forum hosted by Suicide Prevention Australia and Mensline Australia for reducing men’s suicide. The Forum drew up a blueprint for change and set out a clear long-term goal that by 2030 all Australians will know what actions to take individually and collectively to prevent suicide. This will require an assertive, well-resourced, long-term and evaluated strategy that can begin now that the Budget has confirmed the new allocations.

The additional places for medical students confirmed in the Budget are welcome, but the Alliance would like to see the increase largely in HECS-funded rather than full fee-paying places. There are also major concerns about the infrastructural support for these additional places, including the capacity of the universities, of rural mentors and of the training hospitals to deal with greater numbers. The goal must be to ensure that a major proportion of medical undergraduates end up as doctors in rural and remote areas and areas of need in the cities.

Tonight’s budget has allocated an additional $137 million over four years to improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The focus on reducing substance abuse and on supporting the role of Indigenous health workers is welcomed. However the extent of the extra effort, in the context of a surplus of $11 billion, is still disappointing. Rural and remote people would like to see further major

national investment in primary health care and infrastructure for Indigenous communities, as well as cross-cultural training and support for hospital staff.

The National Rural Health Alliance will continue its work to try to ensure that people in rural and remote areas share fairly in the benefits of the nation's growth and development.

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Media Release 14 May 2006
Budget commitment to remote Indigenous stores

This week's Budget commitment of $48.1 million over three years to support remote Indigenous stores is important recognition of a very serious aspect of the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in remote Australia. The Alliance has recently produced a position paper on food security in remote areas and has drawn attention to the fact that 60 per cent more adults in remote areas are now missing out on food than four years ago. It is promoting national action on food security in remote areas and has also called for update of the Remote Zone Tax Rebates scheme to compensate for the disadvantages faced by families living in remote areas.

The National Health Survey revealed that 18,000 adults in remote and very remote Australia reported running out of food because of a lack of money at some time in the twelve months 2004-05. The proportion of city dwellers in this situation thankfully fell from 2001 to 2004-05, but in remote areas it rose from 5.5 to 8.8 per cent.

The Budget allocation will enable Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) to establish a company called Outback Stores to provide better governance, financial and stock management, supply chain, hygiene, nutrition and staff employment conditions for participating community stores.

Community stores are crucial to the health of Indigenous people and to the fabric of their communities. The IBA has committed itself to working closely with local Indigenous people and industry leaders.

This initiative is part of a growing recognition of the extreme seriousness of food issues. It has led to an encouraging increase in activity around the country, led by interested individuals and agencies that in many cases have been involved for years

One of the manifestations of this is the work of the Remote and Indigenous Stores and Takeaway Project (RIST). RIST, funded for three years by five jurisdictions, is working on one of the priority areas of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutrition Strategy and Action Plan 2000-2010.

The FoodNorth report, published in 2003, provides a summary of key issues involved in food supply to remote communities, and includes examples of interventions and strategies from different locations aimed at improving access to healthy food.

The RIST project is helping store managers to act on ideas in the FoodNorth report. A national audit of remote retail outlets is also underway, commissioned by the Department of Family and Community Services.

The NRHA is working with the RIST project on a Forum to be held in Adelaide in June on freight logistics and transportation of food to remote communities.

For al of these reasons the Budget announcement is most welcome and comes at a time when there is a high level of collaboration between transport, production, wholesale and community interests to improve food and health outcomes in remote communities. The Alliance will continue to provide its support to these collaborative efforts.

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Beer with no Pub(1)

In an interview on Radio National Breakfast today, Sean O'Brien told Fran Kelly how a number of pub licences in remote areas of NSW were sold into Sydney in the lead-up to the Olympic Games.

The licensees were under financial pressure and received lucrative offers from people wanting one of the limited number of licences for a big pub in the city.

Often the pub is the only thing left in a very small town – and it can service an area up to 100 kms around. The pub is the meeting place, a place where families can socialise and the place where deals are brokered. Some towns have a new kind of licence – community liquor licence – under which the locals meet together in a public place and bring their own beer.

Sean described the warm welcome he received in remote areas and the openness of the locals.

The loss of the pub can destroy a community.

Sean O'Brien's documentary, "Where Can I Get a Drink Around Here?", will be broadcast on Radio National on Saturday 13 May at five past two and repeated on Wednesday 17 May at 1pm.

1 "There's nothin' so lonesome, so dull or so drub, Than to stand in the street of a town with no pub."