

# Eforum Newsletter: NRHA eforum 13 October 2006

National Rural Health Alliance E-forum – 13 October 2006

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## KEY TO REGAINING GPs: KEEP THEM HAPPY

Providing adequate support to enhance the physical and mental health of our rural doctors is essential - particularly if we want to retain their services in the long run. A report on the programs that can do this has been published in the October 2006 issue of the Australian Journal of Rural Health. It describes the impact of the Dr. DOC Program - which consists of social and psychological support and practical interventions - on the well-being and retention of rural GPs.

The full text of the NRHA statement is at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/nrhpublic/Index.cfm?Category=LatestNews> and is reprinted below.

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## STRONG PROGRAM FOR 9th NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

The program for the 9th National Rural Health Conference will provide insights into many of the key issues affecting the health of people in rural and remote Australia. With over 300 abstracts having been offered for concurrent sessions, the Conference Committee has been able to select a range of research reports and descriptive papers on such things as the impacts of rurality and poor food supply in remote areas, women's health, and education for rural and remote health workers.

Other concurrent sessions will deal with rural communities in action, rural aspects of planning for a pandemic, information and communications technology support for health professionals, recruiting health professionals, rural maternity services and perinatal care, the mental health of farm families, rural emergency care, and community pharmacy.

There will be a focus on programs supporting healthy communities in south-west Queensland – with stories from Charleville, Cunnamulla, Augathella and Quilpie.

Keynote speakers will include Robert Tickner, Secretary General and CEO of the Australian Red Cross, Rhonda Galbally, CEO of Our Community, Philip Davies, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Health and Ageing and Andrew Podger. Andrew Podger will describe the likely impacts on rural health and services from restructuring of the national health system.

There will be a special stream on cancer and palliative care in the bush, organised by the Clinical Oncological Society of Australia, with a Keynote Address and a number of concurrent session papers.

Special workshops will be offered on managing chronic kidney disease in regional and remote Australia; managing people with dementia; and moving from the failure discourse to better Indigenous health workforce solutions.

Murray Arts is working with the Alliance to guarantee a fine program of arts in health, dealing with both its educational and therapeutic aspects.

Conference MC will be Julie McCrossin.

When all of this is added to some eight significant pre-conference workshops or seminars, Albury will be abuzz with opportunities to learn about rural and remote health from 7-10 March next year.

- Registration open
- Full program published
- Exhibition booths available
- Sponsorship opportunities
- Travel & accommodation bookings
- All information on website

Further information: [conference@ruralhealth.org.au](mailto:conference@ruralhealth.org.au)  
The Conference website is at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>  
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](mailto:conference@ruralhealth.org.au)

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## 'STAND UP' AND REGISTER!

Just letting you know online registrations are now open for the 9th National Rural Health Conference to be held in Albury in March 2007 at



- \* an Indigenous Outstations policy
- \* US recruitment and retention initiatives
- \* friends photographic festival
- \* 9th Conference update
- \* a photographic tribute to rural pets

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### \$51m BOOST TO MENTAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES IN THE BUSH (Extract from Farmonline, [http://www.farmonline.com.au/news\\_daily.asp?ag\\_id=37838](http://www.farmonline.com.au/news_daily.asp?ag_id=37838))

The Federal Government will spend an additional \$51.7 million over five years to improve mental health services in the bush.

In Australia's major capitals, there are nearly six psychologists delivering services per 10,000 people, compared to between one and three psychologists per 10,000 people in rural, remote and regional areas.

The plan includes easier access to new Medicare items, with rebates available to general practitioners to provide early intervention, assessment and management of patients with mental disorders.

Australian Medical Association president, Dr Mukesh Haikerwal, is generally pleased with the package's outcomes for patient access to psychiatrists and psychologists in team-based care, but the Government has failed to understand that GPs are the first and main source of expert care for patients with mental illness.

And the Rural Doctors' Association of Australia says the extreme shortage of psychologists and mental health workers in the bush will make it very difficult for rural Australians to access the new Medicare mental health items.

"It's no use funding additional mental health services in rural Australia unless more psychologists and other mental health workers can be enticed to the bush to deliver them," RDAA president, Dr Ross Maxwell, said.

The full statement by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health, Christopher Pyne, is at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/health-mediarel-yr2006-cp-pyn066.htm>  
The AMA statement is at <http://www.ama.com.au/web.nsf/doc/WEEN-6UE54G> and the RDAA statement is at [http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded\\_documents/New%20mental%20health%20items%20out%20of%20reach%20for%20rural%20patients%20-%20October%202006.htm](http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/New%20mental%20health%20items%20out%20of%20reach%20for%20rural%20patients%20-%20October%202006.htm)

ALP spokesperson Julia Gillard described the package as "pathetic". Her statement is available at <http://www.alp.org.au/media/1006/mshea030.php>

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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](mailto:national@lifeline.org.au) and <http://www.lifeline.org.au>

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### FULL FEE DEGREES "A MAJOR BARRIER" TO RURAL PRACTICE

A growing reliance on expensive, full fee medical school places will see many young Australian doctors seeking higher paying medical work in the cities rather than considering rural general practice when they graduate, the Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) has warned.

The RDAA statement is at [http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded\\_documents/Full%20fee%20degrees%20a%20major%20barrier%20to%20rural%20practice%20-%20October%202006.htm](http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/Full%20fee%20degrees%20a%20major%20barrier%20to%20rural%20practice%20-%20October%202006.htm)

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### BUSH CRISIS LINE - 1800 805 391

Bush Crisis Line is a twenty-four hour confidential telephone support and debriefing service for multi-disciplinary remote 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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### NEW ARTICLES IN "RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH"

'A descriptive study comparing health attitudes of urban and rural oncology patients'  
Do rural people with cancer have different attitudes from those who live in cities? Are they more fatalistic and independent? This research note points to how we may learn more about this important area.  
<http://rrh.deakin.edu.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=563>

'Results of an Aboriginal community-based renal disease management program incorporating point of care testing for urine albumin:creatinine ratio'  
In the last decade and a half there has been a significant increase in the burden of renal disease among Aboriginal Australians. Read how the Umoona Kidney Project stabilised renal function and improved blood pressure among Aboriginal community members identified to be at greatest risk.  
<http://rrh.deakin.edu.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=591>



and reduce the risk of suicide?

- \* Nothing about us without us
- \* Narratives of suicidality and suicide prevention
- \* Creating or reviving partnerships that work
- \* Commonalities and differences between those with lived experience and those bereaved by suicide
- \* Meeting the needs of those bereaved by suicide – what are the challenges and how are they best addressed?

There are some traditional barriers between those engaged in service delivery and those involved in research. What recent initiatives are crossing these boundaries to generate better partnerships and outcomes? And how can institutions, the private sector and community be better engaged and involved in meeting this challenge?

- \* Research and Practice- When the Marriage Works
- \* Breaking down sector boundaries: Engaging the Unengaged
- \* Roles, development and reform in the community and private sector in an era of scarce resources
- \* Partnerships with Mental Health Services – Making It Work to Prevent Suicide
- \* Standards for services
- \* Training and skills building

Much is said about best practice and evidence based knowledge. What are the criteria by which such labels can be applied and how much evidence is enough?

- \* What is evidence?: the politics of evidence
- \* Practice-based evidence
- \* The challenge of evaluation, e.g. when is evaluation research?
- \* Evaluation in an era of scarce resources

Contact Details

Suicide Prevention Australia  
 PO Box 729  
 Leichhardt NSW 2040  
 Phone +(612) 9568 3111  
 Faxes +(612) 9568 3511  
 Email: spainfo@bigpond.com  
 Website: <http://www.suicidepreventionaust.org>  
 On-line Registration Form is at [http://www.suicidepreventionaust.org/corp\\_conference\\_2006\\_form.php](http://www.suicidepreventionaust.org/corp_conference_2006_form.php)

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Strengthening the Primary Health Care Approach

The National Primary and Community Health Network\* invites you to attend a one-day forum that will highlight issues and major initiatives nationally in primary health care around chronic disease management.

Wednesday 8 November 2006  
 Brisbane  
 Program and registration form attached and at  
<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/aipc/cdih/pchnetwork/>

Sponsored by Queensland Health, the Australian Institute for Primary Care and the Primary and Community Health Network, Victoria

A forum for those interested in the current and future role of primary health care in chronic disease management in Australia

\*The National Primary and Community Health Network is a coalition of government representatives, peak bodies and others interested in sharing information on primary health care and the important role it plays in the Australian health system.

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From: Michael Gleeson  
 Subject: ACRRM 4th Scientific Forum

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.

Details are at <http://www.acrrm.org.au/main.asp?NodeID=19252>

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Pacific Region Indigenous Doctors Congress 2006  
 Roroua Convention Centre, New Zealand, 6-10 December 2006

Information at <http://www.conference.co.nz/pridoc2006>

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From: Mcalpin, Susan  
 Subject: International Rural Network World Rural Forum

The International Rural Network World Rural Forum, India, Late Jan-Early Feb 2008: Innovation for Sustainable Local Development.

The main focus of the Forum will be on innovation in education, health, resource management, governance, and sustainable development to improve the quality of life of rural people and reduce rural poverty and social exclusion.

The forum will be based in the beautiful rural town of Udaipur, Rajasthan, which is also the home of IRN Board Member Lakshmi Murthy.

The Forum will involve five days, with at least one day (or equivalent) in local field visits to see the relevant work of NGOs etc. There are likely

