

## National Rural Health Alliance eforum - 6 August 2010

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### JULY 2010 E-NEWS FROM THE ALLIANCE

#### Call for Abstracts for 11th National Rural Health Conference

It's time you got busy with your abstract for the 11th National Rural Health Conference in Perth, 13-16 March 2011. They are due at the Alliance by close of business 23 August 2010 so if you haven't got your abstract in when you vote, you'll have to work on the Sunday! Submit an abstract at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au> - that's how you get on the program, whether with a refereed or general paper, a workshop, or multi-media or arts and health activities. First time presenters are encouraged and can get some assistance if they need it through [conference@ruralhealth.org.au](mailto:conference@ruralhealth.org.au)

We encourage you not just to attend but to get involved. Tell others in the sector what's working well in your area; come clean with your concerns about the reformed system or workforce retention; stake your claim as a rural/remote health leader of the future!

And whether or not you're presenting a paper, remember that Very Early Bird registration closes on 31 July 2010 - save money and register now.

Note: The 11th Conference has been endorsed by Royal College of Nursing, Australia, according to approved criteria. Attendance attracts up to 17 RCNA Continuing Nurse Education (CNE) points as part of RCNA's Life Long Learning Program (3LP).

### Policy work

Immediately before the election was called, the NRHA's Election Charter went live on the website; see <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/election2010>.

The major political parties have been asked to respond to our top 10 bids for action to improve health and overcome health service inequities in the bush. Their responses will be the basis of our weekly election scorecard.

There is an online survey for people in rural and remote areas to tell us what access they have locally to health services - information we will integrate with our advocacy during the election campaign and after it. The survey is available at <http://www.ultrafeedback.com/survey/994>.

Andrew Phillips gave a well-received talk at the NURHC Conference in Alice Springs on climate change and health - and what health professionals of the future might do about it.

Our policy staff attended the AIHW's Australia's Health 2010 conference, and a demonstration relating to the proposed MyHospital website.

The legislation to establish the Healthcare Identifiers Service was passed by the Senate before it rose. Unique healthcare identifiers will be allocated to individuals, health care professionals and health services through Medicare under the Healthcare Identifiers Act. This is a key building block in the Government's e-health reform agenda, to improve the management and communication of health information for healthcare delivery. For further links and information, see the Alliance's e-health records page at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/e-health>.

Following the successful 2nd Rural and Remote Health Scientific Symposium, the communiqué, a number of the presentations and the evaluation report are available at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/scientific>.

Brief submissions have been made on the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum's draft statement on the consumer and carer identified workforce; and to the Heart Foundation's work on overcoming cost barriers to using ambulance services in an emergency. A major submission on ageing and aged care in rural and remote areas is being prepared for the Productivity Commission.

### **AJRH**

The NRHA is seeking an Editor for the Australian Journal of Rural Health (AJRH) to take over from James Dunbar, who completes his term at the end of 2010. Recruitment documents are available at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/ajrh>.

The August 2010 issue will contain a report of proceedings of the recent Rural and Remote Health Scientific symposium and articles on pandemic influenza vaccination, the effectiveness of short stay dental health placements in promoting rural and remote workforce recruitment, and the impact of sustainable primary care on rural health.

### **Arts and Health - CALL FOR STORIES**

The Alliance is pleased to be working with Regional Arts Australia to produce a book that highlights success stories in arts and health from rural, regional and remote Australia. So if you think that your area has had the best projects in this field, we'd love to hear from you and promote the important work you have been doing. We are looking for your stories. We are looking for photographs. We want this book to be visually beautiful with strong lively stories backed up by a sound evidence-base and stunning images.

We are looking for stories that show how the arts and health can work together to achieve positive health and wellbeing for people in rural and remote Australia. We want to include a broad range of stories in terms of art form, health issue, location and beneficiaries.

To get your story included, visit the Regional Arts Australia website at <http://www.regionalarts.com.au/raa1/arts-and-health--book-of-stories.asp>

**Partyline**

Copies of the current edition (No 39) and previous editions are available on the Alliance website and hard copies are available on request. Subscription is free.

The next issue will be out in November 2010 and we are already accepting articles for publication. To contribute an article, photo, letter or poem, contact [partyline@ruralhealth.org.au](mailto:partyline@ruralhealth.org.au)

**Rural Health Continuing Education Program (RHCE) Stream 2**

Applications for RHCE stream 2 close on 20 August 2010.

Would you like to access or provide continuing professional development, multi-disciplinary training, Inter-Professional Learning (IPL) or orientation activities for health professionals in rural and remote areas? Grants are available for individuals, groups or organisations to access professional development and for organisations to develop and provide professional development.

Eligible applicants are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers, allied health professionals, general practitioners, nurses and midwives living and practising in rural and remote areas of Australia (please note GPs and nurses are eligible for IPL and orientation activities only).

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**NRHA PUBLIC SEMINAR: INFRASTRUCTURE, RURAL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES AND GOOD HEALTH**

**The Peninsula Room at the National Museum of Australia  
Monday 30 August 2010 9.00am-12:30pm**

This year's free NRHA public seminar will focus on some of the questions surrounding the provision of physical infrastructure in rural and remote communities. There will be case studies relating to health and telecommunications, and a State perspective on the way housing and related services are being provided to selected Indigenous communities. It will also be a chance to hear updates from two of the lead agencies: Regional Development Australia and Infrastructure Australia. We encourage you and your colleagues to attend. Please forward this email to anyone you think may be interested in attending. Further information and RSVP details are below.

Regards  
Gordon Gregory

Please RSVP to: [nrha@ruralhealth.org.au](mailto:nrha@ruralhealth.org.au)

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**NRHA MEDIA RESOURCES - OVERVIEW**

Audio and video files relating to NRHA activities at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/media/?IntCatId=26>

7PM Project  
28/07/2010

"Rural doctors and the Aussie communities in desperate need of medical attention".  
[http://7pmpoint.com.au/video.htm?vxSiteId=7a6ab1fe-cd90-4143-bf79-ba376a096b2e&vxChannel=7PM%20Catch%20Up&vxClipId=2689\\_spm-280710-seg3-web&vxBitrate=300&vxTemplate=7PM\\_Index.swf](http://7pmpoint.com.au/video.htm?vxSiteId=7a6ab1fe-cd90-4143-bf79-ba376a096b2e&vxChannel=7PM%20Catch%20Up&vxClipId=2689_spm-280710-seg3-web&vxBitrate=300&vxTemplate=7PM_Index.swf)

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**SCORECARD: GREENS STRIKE THE SOLITARY BLOW WITH A NATIONAL DENTAL CARE PLAN**

The recent 29-second cruiserweight title boxing bout in Perth was satisfaction itself compared with the responses so far from the major Parties on policies for rural and remote health.

The full text of the Alliance statement is at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/mr3%20final%205%20aug.pdf> and is reproduced below.

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**COALITION'S INNOVATIVE DOWN PAYMENT FOR RURAL HEALTH WORKFORCE**

Dr Jenny May, Chairperson of the Alliance, said today's Coalition announcement to boost the rural and remote health workforce is particularly welcome, with its focus on nurse practitioners and dentists.

The full text of the Alliance statement is at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/mr-2010-07-30.pdf> and is reproduced below.

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**ELECTION SCORECARD: HOLDING OUR BREATH - TURNING A LITTLE BLUE**

Not surprisingly, given the dearth of attention so far on rural and remote issues and on health, the first of the Alliance's weekly Election scorecards is a mewling and puking infant - scarce half made up.

The full text of the Alliance statement is at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/mr-29-07-10.pdf> and is reproduced below.

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## **PM, ABBOTT URGED TO DEBATE RURAL ISSUES IN A RURAL SETTING**

The National Rural Health Alliance has issued a challenge to Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Opposition Leader Tony Abbott to debate pressing rural issues in a country forum. "There has been a noticeable lack of focus on rural issues so far in this election campaign, said Gordon Gregory, Executive Director of the 29-member peak body. "The word 'rural' did not even rate a mention in the recent Leaders' Debate.

The full text of the Alliance statement is at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/mr-28-07-10.pdf> and is reproduced below.

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## **11TH NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE**

**Countdown: 8 months to go!**

**Perth, 13-16 March 2011**

Everything you need to know about the 11th Conference is on the Conference Website at <http://11nrhc.ruralhealth.org.au>. Further information will be added as it becomes available, so make sure you check the site regularly for the latest news and updated program. You can also follow the Conference on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/nrhalliance>

### **REGISTER AT THE VERY EARLY BIRD RATE AND SAVE**

For those wanting to get in early and save, Very Early Bird registration is available at \$759 (GST inc) from now until 31 July 2010. Get in quick to ensure you receive this discount. Early Bird fee of \$880 will apply from 1 August 2010 to 18 December 2010 and the Full Fee from 19 December 2010 to 11 March 2011. For a full list of registration fees or to register online visit the Conference website at <http://11nrhc.ruralhealth.org.au>

### **SUBMIT YOUR ABSTRACT**

The Call for Abstracts is now open and will close on 23 August 2010. We seek abstracts for refereed and general papers, workshops, multi-media and arts and health activities. The themes include:

- \* social and economic determinants
- \* health reform in rural and remote regions
- \* a new generation of health professionals
- \* community and consumer engagement
- \* the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- \* economics and equity
- \* capturing the benefits of new technologies
- \* creative aged care in the community
- \* multidisciplinary health care teams
- \* adapting research results
- \* chronic conditions in the bush.

For a full list of themes, abstract guidelines and details about the submission process visit the Conference website at <http://11nrhc.ruralhealth.org.au>

### **SEE YOU THERE**

We encourage you not just to attend but to get involved. Write an abstract for a spot in a

concurrent session: tell others in the sector what's working well in your area; come clean with your concerns about the reformed system or workforce retention; stake your claim as a rural/remote health leader of the future.

For organisations' exhibition space and sponsorship opportunities are also now available.

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**ACRRM COUNTRY WATCH NEWSLETTER**

(Subscribe at <http://www.acrrm.org.au/country-watch-newsletter>)

Newsletter of 5 August 2010:

- RMA 2010: early demand for limited workshop places
- Influence the direction of rural medicine: ACRRM Board nominations close 20 August
- Flu vaccination for under-5s: Chief Medical Officer
- An eye for rural emergency medicine: special conference workshop
- Type 1 diabetes incidence in children is worrying but stable: AIHW report
- National rural medicine awards: begin closing 13 August 2010
- RMA 2010 early bird registration ends 11 September: Save up to \$100
- ACRRM Board nominations: closing 20 August 2010
- Rural health infrastructure grants close 30 September 2010
- WA Population Health courses start 20 August 2010

Newsletter of 30 July 2010:

- RMA 2010: register now online; reserve your workshops
- Nominations for ACRRM Board: closing 20 August 2010
- Professional Opportunity: FACRRM locums
- Flu vaccination for under-5s: update from CMO
- Rheumatic heart disease national workshop: 23 and 24 August, Darwin
- Rural doctors welcome mental health commitment
- Mental Health Core Skills course starts September
- In other words . six new ways to recognise a heart attack
- Is AHPRA saying the right things about you?
- Dates for your diary

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**NRHA on TWITTER**

From <http://twitter.com/NRHAAlliance>

conference advisory committee met on phone; many good suggestions for keynote speakers, themes <http://11nrhc.ruralhealth.org.au/>

Is Australia lagging behind with interprofessional learning in health sector? And why?

<http://11nrhc.ruralhealth.org.au/>

Twitter as archaeological record of NRHA's views, moods? <http://nyti.ms/dpAcKM>

PM, Abbott urged to debate rural issues in a rural setting <http://bit.ly/cuykBg>

Conference abstracts: you've got to be in it to win it - or even to get on a program!!

<http://11nrhc.ruralhealth.org.au/>

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## THE LOWITJA INSTITUTE e-BULLETIN - 02 AUGUST 2010

Subscribe at <http://www.lowitja.org.au/node/add/profile>

### Contents

- \* New Office for The Lowitja Institute's Northern Australian Health Research Unit
- \* Call for Papers
- \* Conferences
- \* Jobs
- \* Media
- \* Publications
- \* Resources and Websites
- \* Scholarships, Awards, Funding, Grants and Tenders
- \* Seminars, Courses and Symposia
- \* and Reminders

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Highlights of the new section on the Alliance's website where you can keep in touch and provide your comments on e-health developments in rural and remote areas at (<http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/e-health/?IntCatId=45>)

The Alliance's position paper on the rural and remote implications of a national e-health strategy - <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/publications/final%20e-health%20position%20paper.pdf>

- \* Contribute information and views - <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/e-health/?IntContId=14852&IntCatId=45>
- \* Follow the development of broadband and electronic communications in rural and remote communities - <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/e-health/?IntContId=14851&IntCatId=45>
- \* Help improve our understanding of progress towards shared individual electronic health records - <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/e-health/?IntContId=14853&IntCatId=45>

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## RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH PAPERS 1991 - 2009 DVD

Where can you easily access 3,189 references to the words 'rural health'?

All 3,189 documents can be found on the updated 'Rural and Remote Health Papers 1991-2009' DVD available when you join friends of the Alliance (see <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/friends/?IntCatId=4>)

You will also find 2,510 references to 'remote health', 526 references to 'health reform', 1,359 references to 'aboriginal health', and 315 references to 'oral health'.

What will you search for when you get your copy? The DVD contains the proceedings of all ten National Rural Health Conferences, all Alliance policy documents, annual reports, media releases and newsletters.

Don't forget friends of the Alliance also receive a discounted registration for the 11th National Rural Health Conference to be held in Perth, 13-16 March 2011.

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## **JOIN FRIENDS**

We would like to encourage you to join friends of the Alliance. The cost of membership is unchanged: \$44 (including GST) for an individual, \$165 for an organisation of less than 50 people, and \$330 for a large organisation.

On joining you will receive a friends membership pack including a certificate, the Rural and Remote Health Papers CD, lapel pin, fact sheets and the latest annual report. A membership form can also be found on the friends page of the Alliance website at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/friends/?IntCatId=4>

The NRHA values the input of friends and finds its advice and contributions invaluable to the work of the Alliance.

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## **BROADBAND NETWORK OFFERS NEW AND IMPROVED OPPORTUNITIES IN HEALTH CARE: AMA**

AMA President, Dr Andrew Pesce, said that the National Broadband Network offers exciting new and improved opportunities in the provision of health care, especially in rural, regional, and remote areas of the country. Dr Pesce said that the availability of high speed, broadband internet access would allow rural and remote Australians to have access to medical services that they would otherwise have to travel hours to access.

The full text of the AMA statement is at <http://www.ama.com.au/node/5913>

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## **PARTYLINE**

Current and past copies of Partyline are available on the Partyline page of the Alliance website <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>

Subscription is free: [partyline@ruralhealth.org.au](mailto:partyline@ruralhealth.org.au)

To contribute to future editions (article, photo, letter to the editor, poem), send your article to [partyline@ruralhealth.org.au](mailto:partyline@ruralhealth.org.au)

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## **'SECRET' MEDICAL VETO ANGERS MIDWIVES**

Midwives are furious that the government has quietly signed off on legislation that effectively gives doctors a veto over midwives' practice, and which they say will deny private midwives access to Medicare rebates.

<http://enews.6minutes.com.au/cgi-bin19/DM/y/hC1i0BN8pP0M0Oso0E5>

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## **AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL OF RURAL HEALTH**

The Australian Journal of Rural Health is a multidisciplinary journal, which aims to facilitate the formation of interdisciplinary networks to build and advance rural practice for all health professionals. Get published in the Australian Journal of Rural Health! The Journal welcomes short reports and letters to the editor as well as review articles, original research articles and clinical perspectives. For useful tips on submitting your manuscript, read the FREE editorial, How to get published in the Australian Journal of Rural Health.

Manuscripts can be submitted online at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ajrh> Manuscript Central or posted to AJRH. The Australian Journal of Rural Health is published on behalf of the National Rural Health Alliance by Blackwell Publishing Asia Pty Ltd 155 Cremorne Street Richmond Vic. 3121 Tel: +61 (0)3 9274 3100 Fax: +61 (0)3 9274 3101 E-mail: [melbourne@johnwiley.com.au](mailto:melbourne@johnwiley.com.au)

June 2010 issue now available. Contents include:  
Australian health reforms: Opportunity or threat?  
Policy Review - Hospital beds and the quality of a national health system  
Is a global rural and remote health research agenda desirable or is context supreme?  
Systematic review of effective retention incentives for health workers in rural and remote areas: Towards evidence-based policy  
Review of rural and regional alcohol research in Australia  
Healthy minds for country youth: Help-seeking for depression among rural adolescents  
Women living in a remote Australian mining community: Exploring their psychological well-being  
From the Journal Associates  
Rural and remote health sector takes heart and heads to Perth

Further information at <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/loi/ajr>

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## **SNAPSHOT OF AUSTRALIAN PRIMARY HEALTH CARE RESEARCH 2010**

A snapshot of recent Australian research projects demonstrates the potential for primary health care research to improve the health of Australians. Snapshot of Australian primary health care research 2010 is a collaborative venture involving representatives from PHC RIS, the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute, Australian Association for Academic General Practice, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners.

View Snapshot on-line at  
[http://www.phcris.org.au/phplib/filedownload.php?file=/elib/lib/downloaded\\_files/publications/pdfs/phcris\\_pub\\_8332.pdf](http://www.phcris.org.au/phplib/filedownload.php?file=/elib/lib/downloaded_files/publications/pdfs/phcris_pub_8332.pdf)

Contents:

- Foreword
- Introduction
- Understanding barriers to hypertension treatment
- Tapping into social workers' skills for primary mental health care
- Measuring the right things - indicators for remote Aboriginal mothers and infants in the Northern Territory
- Health literacy for change in behavioural risk factors
- The roles of Australian General Practice Nurses
- Work intentions of Australian general practitioners
- Quality outcomes in general practice - how do we compare?
- Rural community perceptions of the determinants of health
- Primary care management of chronic heart failure in rural communities
- Effective alternatives to treat chronic achilles tendon pain
- Sexuality, sexual abuse and protection skills in women with intellectual disability

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**LIFELINE INFORMATION SERVICE**

The Lifeline Information Service provides access to a variety of self-help tool kits with information about issues such as mental illness, depression, suicide prevention, and more. These resources focus on practical steps to help promote mental health and are available online at <http://www.lifeline.org.au/info-service>

A limited number of printed tool kits are available on request by emailing [infoservice@lifeline.org.au](mailto:infoservice@lifeline.org.au). For more information please visit <http://www.lifeline.org.au>

If you are in need of 24 hour crisis support, call Lifeline on 13 11 14

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**FEDERAL ELECTION NEWS**

The Coalition's plan for real action to boost the Regional Health Workforce  
The Coalition is committed to addressing the disparity in health services between metropolitan and regional areas.

1. Double the number of Medical Rural Bonded Scholarships
2. Create 100 scholarships for regional Nurse Practitioners
3. Pay a \$10,000 annual bonus to Nurse Practitioners who practice in regional towns with no resident medical practitioner
4. Pilot a bonded scholarship scheme for rural and regional dentists

<http://www.liberal.org.au/~media/Files/Policies%20and%20Media/Health/Regional%20Health%20Policy.ashx>

Coalition Regional issues page at <http://www.liberal.org.au/Issues/Regional.aspx>

ALP Better Health and Better Hospitals  
<http://www.alp.org.au/Agenda/Health-Reform/>

ALP Building Better Regional Cities  
<http://www.alp.org.au/agenda/Regional-Cities/>

Greens Better Health for Australia  
<http://greens.org.au/content/better-health-australia>

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**AUSTRALIAN ORGAN DONOR REGISTER ONLINE**

The Australian Organ Donor Register is Australia's only national organ and tissue donor register and serves as a lifeline to the people on the organ transplant waiting lists. Register online at <http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/public/services/aodr/register.jsp> to be an Australian Organ Donor now!

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**BUSH SUPPORT SERVICES (formerly Bush Crisis Line) - 1800 805 391**

The Bush Support Services Line is a 24 hour confidential telephone support service for workers, and their families, who work in health related services in remote and isolated situations. 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.bss.crana.org.au>

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**RURAL HEALTH ON THE ABC**

(See <http://www.abc.net.au/health/healthyliving/yourhealth/ruralregionalhealth/>)

Indigenous doctor ranks get a boost (The World Today - 03/08/2010)  
<http://abcmail.net.au/t/1087408/614869/19587/0/>

The Health Report: E-health  
Special election issue where Daniel Keogh investigates the future of Australia's pursuit of electronic health records; a venture that has already taken a considerable amount of time and money with little to show.  
<http://abcmail.net.au/t/1087408/614869/920/0/>

New study into Aboriginal health  
Researchers in WA are trying to determine why most health and social services have failed to significantly improve the health and well being of Aboriginal people.  
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/07/30/2968549.htm>

Rural doctors criticise Coalition health policy  
The Rural Doctors Association says the Federal Coalition's rural health policy does not do enough to attract medical staff to the bush.  
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/08/01/2970024.htm>

Coalition offers rural health incentives

The Coalition is promising \$27 million in rural health initiatives to attract and retain medical professionals in rural and remote Australia. The Coalition says its Regional Medical Workforce Plan would double the number of medical rural bonded scholarships and pilot a new dentist scholarship scheme.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/201007/s2968820.htm>

Ockham's Razor: A new approach to Aboriginal health

Dr Anthony Hillin, from the School-link training program at the NSW Institute of Psychiatry, makes a case for scientists, and others who want to improve the wellbeing of Aboriginal people, to undertake meaningful consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders.

<http://abcmail.net.au/t/1077994/614869/910/0/>

Labor mental health boost welcomed

Labor's pledge to spent \$277 million to help Australians at risk of suicide has been welcomed by rural health groups.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/201007/s2965387.htm>

Healthy Farmers Week aims to address high incidences of disease amongst farmers

Many people see farming as an active and healthy outdoor profession. The statistics, however, tell a different story.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/wa/content/2010/07/s2965744.htm>

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**RDAА NEWS**

Coalition abandon rural Australians in health policy

5 August 2010

[http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded\\_documents/Federal%20election%20release%20--%20Coalition%20health%20policy%20--%20Aug%202010.pdf](http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/Federal%20election%20release%20--%20Coalition%20health%20policy%20--%20Aug%202010.pdf)

12,500 rural Australians needlessly dead

3 August 2010

[http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded\\_documents/Federal%20election%20release%20--%20Rural%20deaths%20--%20August%202010.pdf](http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/Federal%20election%20release%20--%20Rural%20deaths%20--%20August%202010.pdf)

Broadband superhighway to where?

31 July 2010

[http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded\\_documents/Federal%20election%20release%20--%20Broadband%20for%20Health%20--%20July%202010.pdf](http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/Federal%20election%20release%20--%20Broadband%20for%20Health%20--%20July%202010.pdf)

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**GET REGIONAL**

Get Regional is the new information and referral service for people living and working throughout country Australia. Engaging and interacting rural, regional and remote communities, via dynamic interactive technologies, to ensure a more sustainable future for the bush. The most up-to-date and independent information service with a wide range of

broadcast distribution services.

<http://getregional.com.au>

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## **ABS STATISTICS**

4839.0.55.001 - Health Services: Patient Experiences in Australia, 2009, 2009

- Use of health services
- Barriers to health services
- General practitioners and medical specialists
- Hospital and Emergency
- Communication with health providers
- Harm and harmful side-effects
- Children's use of health services

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4839.0.55.001?OpenDocument>

4840.0.55.001 - Mental Health of Young People, 2007

- Introduction
- Data sources and definitions
- Prevalence of mental disorders
- Health risks and social characteristics
- Socio-economic characteristics. Young people living in major cities were about as likely as those living in other areas of the State or Territory to have a mental disorder (around 26%). Anxiety disorders were the most common type of mental disorder in both major cities and other areas of the States and Territories
- Comorbidity and severity
- Mental health service use
- List of references

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4840.0.55.001?OpenDocument>

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## **CURRENT ISSUE OF eMJA**

(Available at <http://www.mja.com.au/>)

Rapid Online Publications - How much is too much? Alcohol consumption and related harm in the Northern Territory - 30 July 2010

Current issue: 2 August 2010

From the Editor's Desk: "Realistic about obesity? Fat chance!"

Editorials

Recognising and responding to the obvious: the source of lead pollution at Mount Isa and the likely health impacts

Guidelines for youth depression: time to incorporate new perspectives

Rosiglitazone and cardiovascular disease revisited

Ross Ingram Memorial Essay Competition - Cultural safety in health for Aboriginal people: will it work in Australia?

Research

The burden of alcohol drinking on co-workers in the Australian workplace

The use of cross-jurisdictional population data to investigate health indicators of child maltreatment  
Health service attendance patterns in an urban Aboriginal health service  
A multimodal intervention to improve fragility fracture management in patients presenting to emergency departments  
Impact of adverse news media on prescriptions for osteoporosis: effect on fractures and mortality  
Review - Ethical considerations in choosing a model for population-based cystic fibrosis carrier screening  
Medical Profession - Factors associated with psychiatric morbidity and hazardous alcohol use in Australian doctors  
Health Care - Lost opportunities with Australia's health workforce?  
Position Statement - Treatment for osteoporosis in Australian residential aged care facilities: consensus recommendations for fracture prevention  
Notable Cases - Frightening visual hallucinations: atypical presentation of Charles Bonnet syndrome triggered by the Black Saturday bushfires  
Letters  
Subconjunctival dog heartworm  
Suicide and mental disorder: the legal perspective  
Invisible people?  
Current concepts in the management of Parkinson disease  
Expiry of patent protection on statins: effects on pharmaceutical expenditure in Australia  
Urban-rural comparison of weight status among women and children living in socioeconomically disadvantaged neighbourhoods  
Does access to compensation have an impact on recovery outcomes after injury?  
Achieving standardised reporting of suicide in Australia: rationale and program for change  
Homeopathy: what does the "best" evidence tell us?  
Junk food packaging - a challenge to the Prime Minister  
Snapshot - Cutaneous marker of an upper gastrointestinal bleed  
Book Review  
Functional histology  
Clinical examination. A systematic guide to physical diagnosis  
Correction  
MMR, Wakefield and The Lancet: what can we learn?

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## **ARTICLES IN 'RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH'**

'Analysis of enhanced pharmacy services in rural community pharmacies in Western Australia'

Pharmacists are a potentially underutilised source of expertise in rural and remote areas. This article from Western Australia describes the additional activities undertaken by pharmacists, asks if these have increased and identifies on-going barriers to expanding services.

<http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=1400>

'Remote primary health care practitioners' views about priorities in Indigenous dementia research'

The rate of dementia among older rural and remote Indigenous Australians is much higher than for other Australians, and it is predicted to double in the next 12 years. This Letter

reports the research themes and priorities that emerged from the recent workshop 'Recognising and responding to dementia in Indigenous communities', making it a must-read for interested clinicians, researchers and policy-makers.

<http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=1538>

'Making the best of the early years: the Tambellup way'

What does one small rural community have that others do not? This was the question that sparked research into why the West Australian town of Tambellup outperformed others in an early child development index. The important findings of this small study tell the success story of the Tambellup community, whose strengths so effectively promote the wellbeing and healthy development of its children in their crucial early years.

<http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=1407>

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**Assistive Technology: The tip of the iceberg  
Australian Rehabilitation & Assistive Technology Association National Conference  
Tuesday 10 - Friday 13 August 2010, Hobart, TAS**

On behalf of the conference organising committee, it is our pleasure to invite you to the 2010 ARATA National Conference, AT: The tip of the iceberg, to be held in Hobart, Tasmania, from Tuesday 10- Friday 13 August 2010. With the conference being held in Hobart, Tasmania, the home of the ice breakers heading to the Antarctic, papers will similarly crack through the surface to look more deeply at what lies beneath, explore new frontiers and meet the challenges of the pitfalls and crevasses. There will be an emphasis on thinking beyond the prescription of equipment to look more deeply at the issues of funding, training and support for users and their support personnel, and helping consumers to have the endurance to persevere with their equipment, despite the obstacles. Like the Antarctic explorers, there will be a focus on research and discovery - showcasing new products and ensuring ease in the use of equipment by capitalising on universal design and mainstream products. 'ARATAS 2010' will be full of new territory to explore, with the promise of many adventures to come in the field of Assistive Technology.

Karen Frost & Christopher Bryg  
Convenors, ARATAS 2010

For information about ARATA, and the 2010 conference, visit the website at <http://www.ability.com/arata/conf.php>

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**Emerging Health Policy Research Conference 2010  
Sydney, 11 August**

This conference, convened by the Menzies Centre for Health Policy at the University of Sydney, will showcase the work in progress of current doctoral and early career research workers, as well as those new to the field of health policy research in several areas, including Indigenous health. For more information

[http://www.menzieshealthpolicy.edu.au/events\\_upcoming.php#ehpr2010](http://www.menzieshealthpolicy.edu.au/events_upcoming.php#ehpr2010)

email [mchp@sydney.edu.au](mailto:mchp@sydney.edu.au)

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**ACRRM Obstetrics Ultrasound Workshop: 14 August 2010**

Some places are still available for the first ACRRM/SonoSite Obstetric Ultrasound Workshop for 2010. It will be presented at the Queanbeyan Hospital, NSW, by Dr Meiri Robertson, Director, Fetal Medicine Unit at Canberra Hospital, with assistance from other experienced sonographers. Gain an understanding of the techniques and equipment relevant to obstetric ultrasound and learn to diagnose and assess early pregnancy, including ectopic and miscarriage, along with various other relevant skills. These 'hands-on' workshops are accredited for PDP points and eligible participants can claim against the Procedural Grant for attendance. For the program and registration details, go to the Ultrasound Program 2010 page on the College website at <http://www.acrrm.org.au/ultrasound-program-2010>

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**11th International Mental Health Conference**

**The Australian & New Zealand Mental Health Association is pleased to present the 11th International Mental Health Conference.**

WHEN: 18 August - Friday 20 August 2010.

WHERE: Holiday Inn Surfers Paradise Wednesday

Depression & Anxiety: Who, What, Where, When and How? The ANZMH Association last visited Anxiety and Depression as a major conference theme in 2000. In the past ten years diagnoses and treatments of both conditions have evolved considerably supported by improved funding and support from State and Federal Governments.

To view more information go to <http://anzmh.asn.au/conference10/>

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**9th World Indigenous Women and Wellness Conference**

**Hosted by the Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation**

**22-25 August 2010**

**Darwin**

The corporation welcomes all people who are interested in, or concerned with, Indigenous women and wellness to get involved in the conference and particularly encourages the participation of Indigenous women. More information from Jodie Farrow, Community Health Engagement/Health Promotions Officer, Danila Dilba Health Service, email

[jodie.farrow@daniladilba.org.au](mailto:jodie.farrow@daniladilba.org.au) T: 08 89435100, F: 08 89435101, W:

<http://www.daniladilba.org.au>

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**Rheumatic Heart Disease National Workshop: 23 and 24 August, Darwin**

The inaugural 2010 Rheumatic Heart Disease National Advisory Workshop aims to provide an opportunity to share knowledge and recommend future strategies to help reduce RHD in Australia. To read the draft program and register, please visit the workshop website at

<http://register.rhdaustralia.org.au>

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**The Pacific Region Indigenous Doctors Congress 2010 'Sharing Our Stories: Building Strength through the Circle of Knowledge Translation', in Whistler, British Columbia,**

Canada, 26-29 August, 2010, hosted by the Indigenous Physicians Association of Canada:  
<<http://www.pridoc.org/>>.

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### **Healing Our Spirit 2010**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers and researchers are advised to start planning now for Healing Our Spirit Worldwide The Sixth Gathering, which is due to take place on the island of Honolulu in Hawaii from 3 to 10 September 2010. The goal of Healing Our Spirit Worldwide (HOSW) is to celebrate the diverse and unique cultural strengths, knowledge and talents of Indigenous peoples around the world, with a particular focus on successes, best practices and common issues in health, healing and addictions.

The Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health is a proud supporter of and committed participant in the gathering, which will be hosted by native Hawaiian healthcare organisation Papa Ola Lōkahi (<http://www.papaolalokahi.org>).

For more information:

Maria Halkitis - Contract Manager, 08 8943 5020

Mick Gooda - CEO, 0409 688 403

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### **AAQHC 2010 Registration Now Open!**

The Organising Committee is pleased to announce that registration is now open for the 8th Australasian Conference on Safety and Quality in Health Care to be held in Perth from 6 - 8 September 2010.

The Conference is the premier event on the Australasian Safety and Quality in Health Care calendar and will appeal to all clinicians and managers from acute hospitals, aged care and primary care who are interested in providing safe, quality care to patients and their families. Register now to secure your attendance and take advantage of the early bird rate!

For further information and to view the provisional program please visit the Conference website at <http://aaqhc2010.cmail2.com/t/y/l/oudjrk/udityupl/d>

Contact Details:

8th Australasian Conference on Safety and Quality in Health Care

Managed by arinex Pty Limited

GPO Box 128, (Level 10, 51 Druitt Street)

Sydney NSW 2001, Australia

Phone: +61 2 9265 0700

Email: [aaqhc2010@arinex.com.au](mailto:aaqhc2010@arinex.com.au)

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### **GPET Convention: Alice Springs, 8 and 9 September**

Under the theme Clinical and Cultural Competence: Everybody's Business, this year's GPET conference aims to share the challenges faced and innovations implemented in the areas of Indigenous health training, and to recognise the important role of the 'GP' within their

community and the ever evolving patient-doctor relationship. Early bird closes 27 July 2010. Register Online through the 2010 GPET Convention website at <http://www.onqconferences.com.au/gpet2010/registration.php>

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**14th Chronic Diseases Network (CDN) Conference - 'Health Literacy: Opening doors to health and wellbeing'  
Darwin, 9-10 September**

The 2010 CDN conference will focus on the role and impact of health literacy on the prevention and management of chronic conditions and its importance in achieving positive health outcomes. More information from CDN, T: (08) 8922 8280, E: [chronicdiseasesnetwork@nt.gov.au](mailto:chronicdiseasesnetwork@nt.gov.au)

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**Victorian Nurses Health Program inaugural 'Nursing & Midwifery Wellness Conference 2010'**

The VNHP was established in August 2006 to provide advice, support and case management to nurses, midwives and students of nursing facing the challenges presented by their substance use. We expanded our scope in June 2007 due to a demand to support the needs of those with mental health concerns.

We work with individual nurses and midwives to provide confidential assessment, treatment and referral to a variety of services including counselling and financial support, case management, peer support groups and general support regarding industry issues.

We offer advice and guidance to managers and employers who suspect one of their employees is facing these challenges and needs advice regarding how best to support them.

The health impacts that alcohol and drug issues and mental health concerns have on our colleagues in the industry is of real concern to us. We work closely with nurses and midwives whose health is being adversely affected as a direct result of their substance use and or the stress and anxiety they are experiencing at the time.

The conference theme of Wellness was chosen to signify a state of being which we believe is something we should all allow ourselves time to reach, maintain and enjoy!

Nurses and midwives make up the majority of the health workforce. We are a valuable and vital resource in the healthcare system and we must do what we can to support and care for those who support and care for so many in our society.

The inaugural VNHP Nursing & Midwifery Wellness Conference is an opportunity for nurses, midwives and students to take time out of their busy schedule to participate in an event which has been designed to promote a healthy mind, body and soul.

This conference will feature an exciting and engaging program which will include identification of unhealthy workplace behaviours, exposure to strategies to best deal with these and an introduction to a range of innovative ideas and thinking. In addition it will be an

opportunity to take some time out to simply recognise the importance of caring for you and you having some fun!

You'll hear from some of Australia's most engaging and informative speakers as well as having access to a range of activities and products which I'm sure you'll find engaging and beneficial.

With that said, September means Spring and there is no better place to be than Melbourne! So, why not take some time out of your busy schedule to join us on 10 September 2010. You could even make a long weekend of it, shopping and sightseeing in this beautiful city!

For more details on the conference and to register go to <http://www.vnhp.org.au>

Glenn Taylor  
Chief Executive Officer  
Victorian Nurses Health Program

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**ACSA Twenty 10**

ACSA's annual National Conference. "Explore the possibilities" will be held at the Grand Chancellor Hotel on Hobart's waterfront from Sunday September 19 to Wednesday September 22. The Twenty 10 National Conference is the most important aged and community care event this year and we want you to be part of the action.

In addition to traditional presentations, this year's conference will also include a new concept - an Ideas Market Place. Projects, ideas and innovations suited to PowerPoint presentations displayed on designated screens, will run throughout the Conference. The Ideas Market Place will allow delegates to gather for informal discussions on the presentations displayed. More details, including how to make a submission for the Ideas Market Place, will be provided in the coming weeks.

For any queries contact Conference Design at (03) 6231 2999

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**EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT IN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES**

**Integrating Services for a Healthy Start to Life**

**21-22 September 2010**

**Holiday Inn Esplanade, Darwin**

Improving the wellbeing of Indigenous children is a national priority and the key to 'Closing The Gap' in a generation.

Play your part at this year's Early Childhood Development in Indigenous Communities Conference which will showcase existing successful initiatives, sharing best practice for integrated services which help 'Close The Gap' on child disadvantage. It will also assess progress made under the National Partnership for Early Childhood Development and identify key priority areas to improve service delivery and community wellbeing.

Download brochure at  
<http://www.thewebconsole.com/process/link.php?lId=831096&cId=1156791>  
Register by 16 July 2010 and SAVE up to \$600  
Call 1300 316 882 for more information  
Email [registration@criterionconferences.com](mailto:registration@criterionconferences.com)

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**Creating Futures 2010 - Harnessing creativity and social enterprise for mental health and wellbeing**  
**Cairns, Far North Queensland**  
**20~24 September, 2010**

Creating Futures 2010, auspiced by the Centre for Rural & Remote Mental Health Queensland, is the fourth conference in a series in which the populations of interest are indigenous peoples from Australia, New Zealand, North America and the Pacific Islands and people living and working in rural and remote areas.

As with the previous Creating Futures conferences, there will be a focus on the social determinants of health. Creating Futures 2010 will also highlight creativity and social entrepreneurial approaches, posing the question: How is it possible to harness the creativity and energy of the social enterprise sector to address the underpinning social determinants of mental health and wellbeing in the populations of interest?

A National Workshop about Me and My Community, a Centre for Rural & Remote Mental Health Queensland project aimed at developing leadership capacity and mental health and wellbeing knowledge among young people and women working in the farming sector in rural and remote Australia, will be held on Friday, 24 September. This will follow a dedicated stream of presentations addressing the impact of environmental and other challenges impacting on rural and remote communities on 23 September.

For more information visit the website at <http://www.crrmhq.com.au>

Invitation to attend

Creating Futures convenor, Professor Ernest Hunter, and the Centre for Rural & Remote Mental Health Queensland cordially invite you to attend this exciting, inspiring event that will develop your professional practice and challenge your thinking about mental health and wellbeing in the 21st century. If you wish to be included in the mailing list to receive the advance program and registration brochure, please email your postal address with "Creating Futures" in the subject line to [info@conorg.com.au](mailto:info@conorg.com.au)

For further details regarding the meeting, please contact:

The Conference Organiser Pty Ltd  
146 Leicester Street  
Carlton, Victoria, AUSTRALIA 3053  
Phone: Australia: (03) 9349 2220  
Email: [info@conorg.com.au](mailto:info@conorg.com.au)  
Fax: Australia: (03) 9349 2230  
<http://www.conorg.com.au>

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**Public Health Association Australia (PHAA) 40th Annual Conference  
Adelaide, 27-29 September 2010**

The PHAA VicBranch is offering a total of five \$750 scholarships for students, Aboriginal workers, and consumers to attend the 40th PHAA Conference. For details on how Victorian Aboriginal people can apply  
<http://www.phaa.net.au/documents/email/100621ScholarshipsforAboriginalPeopletattendPHAAConf2010.doc>  
Conference website is at <http://www.phaa.net.au/40thPHAAAnnualConference.php>

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**The 2nd Rural & Remote Mental Health Symposium 'Winds of Change: New Perspectives on Rural and Remote Mental Health', in Sydney, 29-30 September.**

The conference will explore new perspectives within the P4 parameters, policy initiatives, primary interventions, promoting recovery, preventing relapse. Call for abstracts is now open. Please see conference website: <http://www.ausot.com.au/newsArticle.asp?id=208>

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**Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives (CATSINM),  
12th Annual Conference and Annual General Meeting, in Sydney, 29 September-1  
October 2010.**

The conference theme, Moving On, encompasses several streams including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health. Abstracts are invited by 16 July for more information contact CATSINM at E: [catsin@bigpond.net.au](mailto:catsin@bigpond.net.au).

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**National Centre for Farmer Health Inaugural Conference  
'Opening the Gates on Farmer Health'  
When: 11-13 October 2010  
Where: Hamilton, Victoria**

<http://www.farmerhealth.org.au>

The conference aims to develop relationships across agriculture, health sciences, medicine, public health, occupational health, veterinary science and health promotion to provide a better - and broader - understanding of agricultural health issues.

Contact:  
Sally Stevenson  
P: (03) 5551 8587  
E: [sally.stevenson@wdhs.net](mailto:sally.stevenson@wdhs.net)

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**Rural Medicine Australia 2010  
Scientific forum and conference**

Rural Medicine Australia 2010, the national conference of ACRRM and the Rural Doctors Association of Australia, will this year include a scientific forum. The theme for this important gathering of doctors and others passionate about rural and remote medicine is 'Bringing it all together'. The venue is Hotel Grand Chancellor, Hobart. RMA 2010 will run from 22 to 24 October. Almost 300 people attended Rural Medicine Australia 2009 in Melbourne. We will shortly be calling for abstracts and launching the RMA 2010 website with registration and accommodation information.

<http://www.acrrm.org.au/news/rural-medicine-australia-2010-0>

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**Evidence Based Healthcare Conference 'Show the Impact'  
Adelaide, 27-29 October 2010**

The Conference will provide an opportunity for industry professionals across a wide range of healthcare disciplines to meet and discuss the latest issues and developments in evidence-based healthcare and expand their working knowledge in order to provide the best outcomes of patient care and medical treatment. Early bird registration closes on 30 July. For more information <http://www.alloccasionsgroup.com/EBHC2010>

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**Medical Imaging Conference: Sydney, 11 and 12 November**

The Australasian Conference on Error in Medical Imaging, titled Making Imaging Safer, aims to raise awareness of preventable harm to patients due to error in Medical Imaging. For more information, including abstract criteria or registration, please visit the conference website at <http://www.conferenceworks.net.au/apsf/>

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**Australasian Professional Society on Alcohol and other Drugs (APSAD)  
2010 Conference, in Canberra, on 28 November-1 December.**

Under the theme, Building on the Capital, the conference will feature international and national speakers with a focus on new treatment, prevention and policy in the areas of drug and alcohol research. Symposia and abstracts that address all aspects of licit and illicit drug use/misuse are invited. For more information, <http://www.apsadconference.com.au/> or [apsad@wsm.com.au](mailto:apsad@wsm.com.au)

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**11TH NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE  
Perth Convention Centre  
13-16 March 2011**

The Call for Abstracts is now open for the 11th National Rural Health Conference. Go to <http://11nrhc.ruralhealth.org.au/>

This is the entry point for presentations to the Conference - be it a refereed paper, a paper in the general stream, a poster, a multimedia or arts and health session. Make sure your views are heard by the leaders of the rural and remote health sector.

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**2011 Primary Health Care Research Conference  
Brisbane  
13-15 July 2011**

<http://www.phcris.org.au/conference>

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### **CONTRIBUTION AND SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION AND DISCLAIMER**

The NRHA e-forum is published fortnightly. Contributions are sought on any topic relevant to rural health concerns. Please send contributions to the moderator at [grovesc@winshop.com.au](mailto:grovesc@winshop.com.au) (do not "reply" to this email - send contributions to [grovesc@winshop.com.au](mailto:grovesc@winshop.com.au)). Contributions received by the Friday of publication will be included in the e-forum.

The NRHA e-forum is edited by a third party moderator, Jim Groves. 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 views of Jim Groves or any organisation he is associated with. Jim Groves can be contacted at [grovesc@winshop.com.au](mailto:grovesc@winshop.com.au)

Please forward a copy to any colleague you think may be interested.

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### **Media Release**

**5 August 2010**

### **Scorecard: Greens strike the solitary blow with a national dental care plan**

The recent 29-second cruiserweight title boxing bout in Perth was satisfaction itself compared with the responses so far from the major Parties on policies for rural and remote health.

"Even if neither of the major parties can deliver a knockout punch, we desperately hope there are some announcements to come from both of them relating to rural and remote wellbeing," said Gordon Gregory, Executive Director of the National Rural Health Alliance.

A week ago the ALP indicated an intention to reply to the 10 key points on health contained in the Alliance's 2010 Election Charter - but so far no direct response has been received.

The Labor Government has doubled its score from one to two, thanks to a point on the sustainable communities criterion. It has promised to invest in up to 15,000 affordable homes in regional cities - including all cities with populations of more than 30,000. Also very

welcome (and related to sustainability) is its commitment to deliver on the National Broadband Network.

This week a two-page letter was received from the Coalition. The best bits included a reference to proposals relating to mental health policy and the promise it will be "progressively announcing policies" that will cover a number of issues in the Alliance's survey. On national initiatives for Indigenous health it simply makes reference to the Northern Territory intervention.

"The document doesn't refer to the good news on dental scholarships and nurse practitioners which the Coalition announced late last week and was welcomed by the Alliance," said Mr Gregory.

Nevertheless those earlier announcements have resulted in the Coalition doubling its total score: like the Labor Government, from one last week to two.

Today's Coalition health promises amount to traditional "hospital beds and city doctors" measures, with no mention of rural or remote areas - but confirmation that it would abandon efforts to reform the health sector and get the funding and policy fundamentals right. The Labor Government has already committed to major new investment in beds, emergency departments and elective surgery.

The only telling blow this week was landed by Bob Brown's Greens, which has confirmed its commitment to a national dental care scheme. The Greens also propose a scheme to reimburse one-fifth of a dental graduate's HECS fees for each year of service in rural or remote dental practice.

The NRHA is a member of the National Oral Health Alliance which is promoting an affordable set of proposals to improve oral health, particularly for those in greatest need.

The next NRHA election scorecard is due for release on 12 August. The people of rural and remote areas will be hoping for a more exciting and relevant contest than they have seen so far.

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**Media Release**

**30 July 2010**

**Coalition's innovative down payment for rural health workforce**

Dr Jenny May, Chairperson of the Alliance, said today's Coalition announcement to boost the rural and remote health workforce is particularly welcome, with its focus on nurse practitioners and dentists.

"These are the sorts of commitments which, when extended, will substantially improve the rural and remote health workforce - especially in communities without a resident medical practitioner," Dr May said.

The Alliance is pleased to see the Coalition expressing confidence in the capacity of nurse practitioners to provide primary care within their scope of practice, and to see provision for bonded rural scholarships for dental students - a new area for Commonwealth involvement.

"The initiatives announced today by the Coalition also include an extra 100 bonded medical scholarships which will increase the supply of doctors to areas in which they are required to practise," Dr May said. "But more also needs to be done by other means to overcome the mal-distribution of medical professionals."

The Alliance supports greater equivalence of support across all health professions. "We must be innovative, use all of our resources better - including nurse practitioners - and retain the health workers already in the bush," Dr May said.

"In terms of new money, this is a very modest start," Dr May said. "The total additional allocation over four years is just \$27.1 million. But we know from past experience that once these programs are set in place they soon prove their worth and can then be built up to a much more meaningful size."

Nurse practitioner numbers are low because of the barriers faced by experienced nurses in making the transition from registered nurse to nurse practitioner. The additional scholarships for RNs in regional and remote areas to upgrade to nurse practitioners therefore make good sense. That initiative also meshes well with the annual bonuses for nurse practitioners to work in regional towns. Currently there are only 370 nurse practitioners in total in the whole of Australia and most of them are in specialist positions in regional centres and capital cities.

"These proposals are welcome steps in building and supporting all members of the health workforce team needed in rural, regional and remote areas," Dr May said.

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## **Media Release**

**29 July 2010**

### **Election scorecard: Holding our breath - turning a little blue**

Not surprisingly, given the dearth of attention so far on rural and remote issues and on health, the first of the Alliance's weekly Election scorecards is a mewling and puking infant - scarce half made up.

Both the ALP and Coalition have yet to respond formally to the Alliance's top 10 priorities, leaving the seven million people who live in rural and remote Australia in the dark about any special understanding the contestants for government have of their special circumstances.

Dr Jenny May, Chair of the National Rural Health Alliance, recently challenged the Leaders to show the way on rural and remote health.

"Rural people want to know that their voice is heard and their position understood. This must start with a commitment to economic and social policies that will underpin sustainable communities in rural areas and provide people with greater equity," Dr May said.

"There must also be a guarantee that smaller hospitals will get sufficient of the committed resources to ensure they continue to provide health and health-related services, such as being centres for workforce training and supports for aged and palliative care.

"Other essential elements will be significant and lasting commitments to health workforce development, especially for primary and preventive health care, tailored health service models for rural and remote areas, and a fair rural share of the structural and funding reform already in train."

The Alliance believes there are a number of specific commitments that both major parties can make, such as bipartisan support for the improved health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and support for better-funded patients' assisted travel schemes.

The last is one of the elements to which the Greens have already committed. When it comes to patients' travel, rural and remote area communities want to see the work underway between the Commonwealth and States converted into real action.

The next NRHA election scorecard will be issued on 5 August - by which time it should be possible for voters in rural and remote areas to better judge the major parties.

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## **Media Release**

**28 July 2010**

### **PM, Abbott urged to debate rural issues in a rural setting**

The National Rural Health Alliance has issued a challenge to Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Opposition Leader Tony Abbott to debate pressing rural issues in a country forum.

"There has been a noticeable lack of focus on rural issues so far in this election campaign, said Gordon Gregory, Executive Director of the 29-member peak body. "The word 'rural' did not even rate a mention in the recent Leaders' Debate.

"We understand that the Prime Minister has ruled out the possibility of a second televised debate with Mr Abbott, but people in rural areas would like to hear them both express their views on a range of topics affecting community and business prospects in the bush."

Mr Gregory said the key health issues not yet properly canvassed include dental health, Aboriginal health and wellbeing, workforce reform and localisation of the management and control of public hospitals and primary care.

Apart from matters directly related to health, he said country people want to hear about the Parties' approaches to rural and remote aspects of education, infrastructure (housing and public transport), employment, tourism, 'the two speed economy' and the environment.

If both Leaders are too busy to arrange the event, the Alliance offers its services as an honest broker to ensure they have a platform on which to debate when their paths cross on the rural campaign trail.

"Anywhere, any time!" Mr Gregory said. "Political leaders have an obligation to country people to invest in rural sustainability and to make public their views on the particular challenges that rural people face.

"Rural and remote communities may not be marginal - but they are certainly central to a viable and sustainable Australia."

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