

National Rural Health Alliance eforum 6 April 2010

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Prime Minister's welcome confirmation on rural hospitals

People in rural and remote areas will be pleased and relieved to hear confirmation from the Prime Minister that there will be flexibility in the way the "efficient price" for the work of smaller hospitals will be set in the Government's proposed plan for hospital networks.

The full text of the Alliance statement is at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/mr-23-3-09.pdf> and is reproduced below.

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March 2010 E-news from the Alliance

Policy Work

Like so many others, the Alliance has been closely following political and policy developments in health reform, with the purpose - in our case - of keeping rural and remote issues to the fore. This has involved ongoing contact with our Member Bodies, meetings with Ministers and officials, and media releases on some of the major developments.

The Alliance's Budget Submission describes some of the characteristics of a new regionalised health service and reiterates the key priorities relating to maternity services, oral health and workforce issues.

The Alliance continues to be involved with the Rural Health Standing Committee of AHMAC on the new national strategic framework for rural and remote health.

We have also been tracking legislative developments relating to midwives and nurse practitioners accessing the MBS and PBS, and healthcare identifiers.

There is a 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>

RAMUS 2010

All applicants for 2010 have now been notified about the outcome of their application. Information about the RAMUS Scheme is at

<http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/scholarships/?IntCatId=7>

Partyline No 38 Out Now

Issue number 38 has been posted to subscribers and is also available on our website. This issue was published with valuable support from the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute at the ANU. Hard copies are available on request; electronic copies are always accessible on the Alliance website.

The next issue will be out in June 2010. To contribute an article, photo, letter or poem, contact partyline@ruralhealth.org.au

NSW Regional Dentistry Scholarship

Congratulations to Olivia Jom from Albury, who is studying dentistry at La Trobe University Bendigo campus and who has been awarded the 2010 NSW Regional Dentistry Scholarship. The scholarship is sponsored by Senator John Williams, The Nationals Senator from NSW, and is administered by the Alliance.

'Rural and Remote Health Papers 1991-2009' DVD Now Available

Get your copy by joining friends of the Alliance for 2010. A membership form is available on the friends page of the Alliance's website.

2nd Rural and Remote Health Scientific Symposium

The Alliance is one of four organisations auspicing the 2nd Rural and Remote Health Scientific Symposium to be held in Brisbane, 9-11 June 2010. Further information:

<http://rrhss.ruralhealth.org.au/>

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Indigenous Doctors assess the NT Emergency Response

The National Rural Health Alliance has urged governments to work more closely with community leaders to create effective measures for improving the health of Aboriginal people. It comes after the release of a Health Impact Assessment of the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) launched this month by the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association. The document predicts that while new investments in education, housing and health care will contribute to improved physical health for some people, any benefits will be outweighed by the negative impacts arising from the way the initiative was devised and implemented.

The full text of the Alliance statement is at

<http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/mr%20aida%20inter%20impact%20assessment.pdf> and is reproduced below.

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Subject: Introducing AIPA's website
From: Kerrie Kelly kerrieakelly@bigpond.com

The Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association is proud to announce it now has a website <http://www.indigenoupsychology.com.au/>

The Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association (AIPA) is the national peak body representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander psychologists in Australia. AIPA aims to increase the number of Indigenous psychologists and to lead the change required to deliver equitable, accessible, sustainable, timely and culturally safe psychological care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in urban, regional and remote Australia.

For more about AIPA, see <http://www.indigenoupsychology.com.au/page/2970/about-aipa>

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Subject: National Drugs Campaign
From: Amanda Wright Amanda.Wright@health.gov.au

I am writing to you about the new stage of the Australian Government's National Drugs Campaign (NDC) which aims to help young people and parents understand the harmful effects and consequences of drug use.

The NDC launched on 25 February 2010 and features advertisements depicting real-life situations which were developed with the advice of clinicians, law enforcement officers and young people. The advertisements, along with youth marketing and public relations activities, will run until the end of June 2010 across print, outdoor, radio and in-venue media.

Parents are also being provided information on how to talk to their children about illicit drug use, with strategies and information about how they can discuss and discourage illicit drug use with their children. Parents are provided with clear strategies and resources such as fact sheets, print and digital advertisements and contact information for help and support.

An important aspect of the NDC is communicating with health professionals to notify them about current campaign activity, and inform them about the resources available to assist them as members of the public approach them for help or information regarding illicit drug use.

A vital component of the *National Drug Strategy 2004-2009*, the NDC is a primary prevention and targeted intervention campaign to help reduce the uptake of ecstasy, marijuana, methamphetamine and other illicit drugs among young Australians.

This stage of the NDC aims to build upon the success of the four earlier phases in 2001, 2005, 2007 and 2009 by raising awareness of the physical and psychological impacts of illicit drug use. It urges young people to decide against drug use and directs users to support, counselling and treatment services.

Campaign resources, including fact sheets, advice and links to relevant organisations, are available from the campaign website at <http://www.australia.gov.au/drugs> or by phoning the campaign information and help line on 1800 250 015.

Amanda Wright
Social Marketing Unit
Communications Branch
Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing

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NRHA on TWITTER

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

Tony Abbott's sensible decision on health reform shouldn't be trivialised as being driven by a single poll

2008 to 09: WA fastest growing State. Fastest, Perth. Outside: SW region + 4.0%, Pilbara + 3.1% - ABS <http://bit.ly/aTzTap>

Aust. Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance: all parties should put health first-implement the preventive health strategy <http://bit.ly/bH3UiW>

Nicola Roxon on ABC TV's Insiders: <http://bit.ly/dyZJ1d>

Tony Harris, Australian Financial Review, 23 March p62: 99.99 pc of Commonwealth subsidised insulations have been incident free

PM's restated commitment on rural hospitals is good news: <http://bit.ly/d6LQXK> "Doctors back PM's rural hospital pledge" - listen here: <http://bit.ly/d4IPFX>

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NRHA on YouTube

(<http://www.youtube.com/user/RuralHealthAlliance>)

Nurse TV: The Country's Voice
Public Seminar 2009

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NRHA E-HEALTH

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 in 2010

2010 is shaping up to be another interesting and important year for health in rural and remote areas. We would like to encourage you to join or renew your membership of friends of the Alliance for another year. 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. We look forward to working with you again in 2010.

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CRCAH NEWS

(From <http://www.crcah.org.au/>)

Congress Lowitja

The inaugural Congress Lowitja was held on 23-24 March 2010 at the Aboriginal Health College in Sydney this week. The following media releases were issued:

First "Congress Lowitja" hailed a success -

http://www.crcah.org.au/communication/downloads/Media-release-Conclusion-of-Congress-Lowitja-240310_FINAL.pdf

National Indigenous health research institute opens inaugural Congress -

http://www.crcah.org.au/communication/downloads/Media-release-Opening-of-Congress-Lowitja-230310_FINAL.pdf

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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

April 2010 issue now available. Contents include:

Editorial - Health reform and the immediate needs of rural and remote communities

Policy Review - A brief history of 'Health reform' in Australia, 2007-2009

Viewpoint - Charting the future course of rural health and remote health in Australia: Why we need theory

Original Articles

From rural beginnings to statewide roll-out: Evaluation of facilitator training for a group-based diabetes prevention program

Urban-rural differences in psychiatric rehabilitation outcomes

Evaluation of a mobile screening service for abdominal aortic aneurysm in Broken Hill, a remote regional centre in far western NSW

Availability of antidotes for the treatment of acute poisoning in Queensland public hospitals

Short Reports

Rural Birth Index for Australia?

Medical students out of town but not out of touch: Use of personal digital assistants to improve access to clinical information and enhance learning at the point of care in rural and remote Australia

Factors to consider when starting up a videoconference medical oncology outreach clinic

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

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RURAL HEALTH ON THE WEB

National Rural Health Works - Resources

Rural people say that health services are one of the most important factors to their quality-of-life. Rural residents can revitalize their local health care system.

<http://rd.okstate.edu/health/index.html>

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LIFELINE INFORMATION SERVICE - 1300 13 11 14

Your Rural Mental Health Information Service Lifeline's Information Service 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.lifeline.org.au/infoservice> and further information is available at infoservice@lifeline.org.au and <http://www.lifeline.org.au>

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FEDERAL GOVERNMENT NEWS

Health Students the Winners with More Money for Rural Education Infrastructure
The Rudd Government will boost the training opportunities for more than 1,000 medical, dental and allied health students in rural communities with \$33 million more for essential infrastructure. The projects funded under the Government's Rural Education Infrastructure Development Pool, covers communities as diverse as Thursday Island in far north Queensland, where student accommodation will be purchased at a cost of up to \$2.1 million, to Armidale in the NSW Tablelands, where \$5.5 million will be spent to construct an education facility for the clinical school and \$1.3 million for the University of Western Australia to construct a teaching and administration facility in Broome.
<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr10-ws-ws021.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2010&mth=3>

Transcript of doorstep - Broken Hill

PRIME MINISTER: Well it's great to be out in Broken Hill today, and great to be out here with the Royal Flying Doctor Service, and great to have had a chance to visit the Broken Hill Base Hospital. We're here to talk about the future of the health and hospital system of Australia. And the Government has put forward a new, National Health and Hospital network funded nationally, run locally, with the Australian Government for the first time being the dominant funders of the entire scheme.
<http://www.pm.gov.au/node/6605>

Investing in Rural Health Training Infrastructure

Training for medical, nursing, dental and allied health students in Broken Hill will receive a major boost through a \$1.9 million investment in student accommodation and education facilities. The Rudd Government's investment will provide support for student accommodation units and a new wing to the University of Sydney Department of Rural Health at Broken Hill.
<http://www.pm.gov.au/node/6604>

\$4m for Tri-Nation Research to Help Close the Gap in Indigenous Health

In the spirit of Oxfam's National Closing The Gap Day, the Rudd Government has announced three Australian research teams will receive a share of nearly \$4 million to improve outcomes in Indigenous health. Parliamentary Secretary for Health Mark Butler said the projects are funded through the International Collaborative Indigenous Health Research Partnerships (ICIHRP) scheme. The ICIHRP is a joint initiative of the National Health and Medical

Research Council, the New Zealand Health Research Council and the Canadian Institutes for Health Research.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr10-mb-mb023.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2010&mth=3>

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr10-ws-ws018.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2010&mth=3>

Health Students the Winners with More Money for Rural Education Infrastructure

The Australian Government will boost the training opportunities for more than 1,000 medical, dental and allied health students in rural communities with \$33 million more for essential infrastructure.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr10-nr-nr056.htm>

\$2.1 Million Clinical Teaching Facility for Mildura

The Minister for Rural and Regional Health, Warren Snowdon, has officially opened the Monash University School of Rural Health's new \$2.1 million clinical training centre at Mildura in Victoria.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr10-ws-ws022.htm>

\$436 Million To Take Pressure Off Our Hospitals By Delivering Personalised Care For Diabetics

As part of delivering a National Health and Hospitals Network, the Australian Government will invest \$436 million to transform the way Australians with long term illness are treated.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr10-nr-nr057.htm>

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Diabetes money welcomed but must reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

The Close the Gap Campaign for Indigenous Health Equality has congratulated the federal government for the \$436 million diabetes package but called for measures to ensure the funds reach Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Campaign Co-Chair, Tom Calma, said the money was a welcome boost to a health problem that significantly impacted on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples but said measures should also be introduced to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to enrol in the program.

http://www.hreoc.gov.au/about/media/media_releases/2010/28_10.html

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Hospitals are the heart of rural communities - RACGP

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) welcomes the federal government's acknowledgment last week that the proposed National Health and Hospitals Network reform would take into account all local costs in rural areas and look at a form of national block funding able to underpin the continuation of smaller rural hospitals in the future if activity-based funding does not work. Dr Kathryn Kirkpatrick, Chair of the RACGP's National Rural Faculty, said that rural and remote hospitals are often seen as the hub of their communities.

<http://www.racgp.org.au/media2010/36626>

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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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ABS RELEASES

Cat 3303.0 - Causes of Death, Australia, 2008

Contents:

National Health Priority Areas (NHPAs)

Includes: Overview, Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Diseases, Asthma, Cancer, **Cardiovascular Disease, Diabetes, Injuries, Mental Health Disorders, Obesity**

Leading Causes of Death

Includes: Overview, Leading causes of death by gender

Underlying Cause of Death by ICD-10 Chapter

Includes: Overview, Infectious Diseases, Cancer, Blood and Immunity Disorders, Endocrine, Nutritional and Metabolic Diseases, Mental and Behavioural Disorders, Diseases of the Nervous System, Diseases of the Eye and Ear, Diseases of the Heart and Blood Vessels, Diseases of the Respiratory System, Diseases of the Digestive System, Diseases of the Skin and Subcutaneous Tissue, Diseases of the Muscles, Bones and Tendons, Diseases of the Kidney and Genitourinary system, Pregnancy and Childbirth, Certain Conditions Originating in the Perinatal Period, Congenital and Chromosomal Abnormalities, Ill Defined Causes, External Causes, Transport Accidents, Falls, Accidental Poisoning, Assault, Intentional Self-Harm [Suicide]

Multiple causes of death

Includes: Overview, Data cubes

Suicides

Includes: Overview, Key Characteristics, Method of Suicide, Mechanism By Intent - Selected Causes

Deaths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians

Includes: Overview, Data cubes, Cancer, Diseases of the Heart and Blood Vessels, Diabetes, External Causes, Infant Mortality

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3303.0?OpenDocument>

Cat 3218.0 - Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2008-09

Contents:

Includes: Population change, State/territory highlights, City growth, Outer suburban growth, Urban infill, Coastal and inland growth, Population declines, Remoteness Areas, Population density, Centre of population

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3218.0?OpenDocument>

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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/>)

NEW INDIGENOUS HEALTH CHAIR (Life Matters: 30/03/2010)

Dr Brad Murphy has many stories to tell. A popular central Queensland GP, he's the chair of the new Faculty of Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal Health at the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. Brad is an unofficial medical adviser to touring country music performers; a former Navy medic and ambulance paramedic; and a descendant of the Kamilaroi people of north-western NSW.

<http://abcmail.net.au/t/940841/614869/16681/0/>

Indigenous health workers wanted in NT

The Batchelor Institute is under pressure to train and deliver more Indigenous health workers, who doctors say are vital to the health system in the Northern Territory.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/video/2010/03/06/2838588.htm>

Drug trial

The Menzies School of Health Research is hoping the drug Ivermectin will rid the Echo Island community, east of Darwin, of scabies and the strongyloides worm.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/video/2010/03/26/2857705.htm>

Rural doctors worried about diabetes plan

Rural doctors say they are worried that a Federal Government plan to treat diabetes patients could widen the gap between city and country health services.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/04/01/2861926.htm>

Hope for health funding to lure more doctors

The federal Member for Capricornia, Kirsten Livermore, is hoping that funding for medical training in central Queensland will attract health professionals to the region.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/03/31/2860910.htm>

More rural medical students on their way to rural areas

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd was in Broken Hill over the weekend, paying a whirlwind visit to the Silver City. In the first visit for a Prime Minister in 25 years or so, Kevin Rudd toured the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the local hospital.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/sa/content/2010/03/s2859130.htm>

Remote medical trainees get housing boost

The Federal Government is allocating more than \$2 million to student accommodation on Thursday Island, off far north Queensland.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/03/30/2860310.htm>

Silver City spending: Kevin Rudd boosts Rural Health in Broken Hill

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd announced yesterday nearly two million dollars in funding for student accommodation and education facilities in Broken Hill.

<http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2010/03/29/2858720.htm>

Remote health services back shake-up assurance

Remote health services in western New South Wales are feeling relieved, after hearing that the Government will strive to ensure smaller health facilities can survive under its new health reform agenda.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/03/25/2855560.htm>

Day focuses on closing Indigenous health gap

One of the leaders of the campaign to 'Close the Gap' on Indigenous disadvantage says progress has been made over the past few years. More than 30,000 people are expected to take part in the fourth annual national Close the Gap Day, focusing on improving health outcomes for Indigenous people.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/03/25/2856058.htm>

Rural doctors welcome Rudd's funding pledge

Rural doctors say the Prime Minister has finally shown he's prepared to properly fund country hospitals.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/201003/s2854724.htm>

Life and death in dialysis dispute

Imagine you come from a remote Aboriginal community. You are old and sick and have been told you need kidney dialysis or you will die. If you're from one of the many communities just outside the Northern Territory border in South Australia, you might have expected to get treatment at the hospital in Alice Springs, 1000 kilometres closer to home. Instead you have to get that dialysis in Adelaide.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/03/23/2853673.htm>

Ian Anderson speaks to ABC Radio Bush Telegraph

Professor Ian Anderson, the Research Director of the Lowitja Institute, spoke to the Bush Telegraph on ABC Radio National on Monday 22 March on the eve of the inaugural Congress Lowitja in Sydney. He gave an overview of the newly established Lowitja Institute and issues in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/telegraph/content/2010/s2852558.htm>

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RDAA NEWS

Rural doctors urge Minister: prove that capitation leads to healthier outcomes for diabetic patients

1 April 2010

http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/Capitation%20plan%20--%20April%202010.pdf

Government's new diabetes plan "of significant concern" to rural doctors

31 March 2010

http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/Diabetes%20plan%20--

[%20March%202010.pdf](#)

Doctors welcome Government's block grant funding commitment for small rural hospitals

24 March 2010

http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/Hospital%20and%20health%20reform%20--%20block%20grant%20funding%20--%20March%202010.pdf

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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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ARTICLES IN 'RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH'

'The Northland Regional-Rural program (Pukawakawa): broadening medical undergraduate learning in New Zealand'

These authors from New Zealand have reported on selected features and the evaluation of the University of Auckland's first regional-rural medical education program, Pukawakawa, a 27 week curriculum for year 5 students.

<http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=1254>

'The experience of final year medical students undertaking a general practice run with a distance education component'

In response to the difficulties posed by distance for New Zealand medical students on rural general practice attachments, a novel system of distance teaching was devised by the Waikato Clinical School.

<http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=1268>

'Emergency department demographics at a small Australian rural hospital'

Providing acute, 24 hour healthcare services for those in small rural communities is a real challenge. This study offers important data about the type of patients who use such small health units.

<http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=1318>

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CURRENT ISSUE OF eMJA

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

The Rudd hospital plan - many pitfalls to avoid on the way to a better health system - 24 March 2010

The Rudd reforms: a poisoned chalice in the long run - 24 March 2010

The Health Insurance Amendment (Pathology Requests) Bill 2010: the risks to patients when

the Department of Finance and Deregulation makes health policy - 23 March 2010

Current issue: 15 March 2010

From the Editor's Desk: Rationing versus increased taxes

Editorials

Congenital anomalies - why bother?

Vertebroplasty, evidence and professional protest

Conference Report - Precincts, people and places: forging new partnerships in health innovation

Research

The effect of evidence-based medication use on long-term survival in patients hospitalised for heart failure in Western Australia

The prevalence and causes of vision loss in Indigenous Australians: the National Indigenous Eye Health Survey

A cluster randomised controlled trial to prevent injury due to falls in a residential aged care population

Use of chemotherapy and radiotherapy in patients with pancreatic cancer in Victoria (2002-2003): a retrospective cohort study

Medicine and the Community - Does access to compensation have an impact on recovery outcomes after injury?

For Debate

Vertebroplasty for painful acute osteoporotic vertebral fractures: recent Medical Journal of Australia editorial is not relevant to the patient group that we treat with vertebroplasty

Invited editorial presents an accurate summary of the results of two randomised placebo-controlled trials of vertebroplasty

Viewpoint - Driving to distraction - certification of fitness to drive with epilepsy

Lessons from Practice - Blindness from suprachoroidal haemorrhage in two patients with age-related macular degeneration on systemic anticoagulation therapy or an antiplatelet agent

Notable Cases - Chronic cutaneous ulcers secondary to *Haemophilus ducreyi* infection

Letters

The new "Indigenous health" incentive payment: issues and challenges

Whole-of-hospital response to admission access block: the need for a clinical revolution

Comparison of adult patients hospitalised with pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza and seasonal influenza during the "PROTECT" phase of the pandemic response

A pandemic response to a disease of predominantly seasonal intensity

Smoking history is clinically determinative and should be recorded

An open letter to politicians on climate change and obesity

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Subject: International *Healthy Parks Healthy People* Congress

From: Elisia Dowling edowling@parks.vic.gov.au

With the increasing recognition of the value of nature to human health and wellbeing worldwide, Parks Victoria will host the inaugural International *Healthy Parks Healthy People* Congress at the new Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, Australia from 11-16 April 2010.

This will be a unique opportunity to bring together delegates from all relevant sectors (i.e. planning, community development, physical and mental health, tourism, climate change,

education, recreation, ecology and park management) to explore how we can take better advantage of the way nature significantly contributes to our wellbeing and broader societal benefits.

We are seeking proposals under the following themes: Healthy Communities, Healthy Parks, Healthy Participation, Healthy People and subthemes.

In addition to the partners displayed on the website, the support of the World Health Organisation, United Nations World Tourism Organisation, US Federal Centers for Disease Control & Prevention and the Australian Federal Government Department of Health & Ageing is being sought.

<http://www.healthyparkshealthypeoplecongress.org>

Elisia Dowling
Project Officer
International Healthy Parks Healthy People Congress April 11-16, 2010
Parks Victoria
Level 10/535 Bourke Street, Melbourne, Vic 3000, Australia
Ph: (03) 8680 2138 Fax: (03) 9613 4722 M: 0428 598 322

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Sustaining Rural Communities

Social research for rural communities and all its industries. Lets plan and act for our future.

Date: April 19 - 21st, 2010
Venue: The Crossing Theatre, Narrabri (800 delegates)
Format: Morning sessions - presentations. Afternoon sessions - engagement, workshops, planning and networks
Registration: Essential. Details available on request
Cost: No entry cost

Conference Streams

1. 19th April - The Research (social research concerning rural communities and economies, impacts of climate change, drought, water reforms, resources boom and global food / fibre security)
2. 20th April - The Workforces (responses to creating and sustaining regionally flexible workforces with resilient communities)
3. 21st April - The Capacity (the Culture of Learning, building the capacity of rural people and their communities)

For more information: Please contact Kate Schwager on 02 6799 2477

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

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Effective Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Service Delivery 2010

Beyond Consultation to Shared Responsibility
20-21 April 2010

Crowne Plaze, Alice Springs, NT

Despite the best of intentions, for centuries governments have struggled to deliver services that are in-line with traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lifestyles. Facilitating Indigenous mobility practices and the rich cultural traditions of diverse clans has emphasised the need to move away from a one-size fits all model, to empowerment of individual communities in driving their own service delivery. When you attend this conference you will take away:

- * Increased awareness on cultural norms and protocols for effective service delivery
- * Tools on negotiating with government, the private sector and communities
- * Methods on how to have ongoing input during implementation of services
- * Case studies on service delivery initiatives that break through common barriers

Criterion is delighted to offer a select number of scholarships for indigenous community representatives to attend.

The conference brochure is now available to download at
<http://www.thewebconsole.com/process/link.php?lId=698932&cId=1156791>

For more information regarding this conference, please call 1300 316 882 or visit
<http://www.indigservicedelivery.com>

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TOWARDS SOCIAL INCLUSION

A practitioner's guide to building a more inclusive Australia
20-21 April 2010
National Convention Centre
Canberra

In launching the statement, A Stronger, Fairer Australia, the Minister for Social Inclusion, Julia Gillard, said the provision of opportunities, resources, capabilities and responsibilities would ensure that no Australian is left behind. The social inclusion statement set out a new approach to break down the barriers preventing disadvantaged Australians from getting a 'fair go'. Ms Gillard said the principle of social inclusion had underpinned a number of recent reforms, including early childhood education and schools, social housing, the pension system and Indigenous affairs.

Ongoing conversations about social inclusion are critical to ensuring we achieve it. Don't miss out on the opportunity to become involved in this important conversation!

Attend and you will take away:

- * A greater understanding of Australia's social inclusion agenda
- * Strategies for weaving a social inclusion focus into policies and programs going forward
- * A greater understanding of other sectors with whom it is important to collaborate
- * Practical advice on how to focus your organisations work to build a more socially inclusive Australia

Towards Social Inclusion speakers include:

- * Dr John Falzon, St Vincent de Paul Society, National Council of Australia

- * Kerry Graham, Chief Executive Officer, The Inspire Foundation
- * Damian Ferrie, Executive Director, Community Programs, Department of Planning and Community Development, VIC
- * Desley Hargreaves, National Manager, Social Work Services, Centrelink

How to register:

Don't forget to register before 12 February and you can save up to \$600

Online: go to <http://www.thewebconsole.com/process/link.php?Id=718824&cId=1156791>

Tel: 1300 316 882 | Fax: 1300 918 334

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A Realist Approach to Evaluating Health Promotion Interventions:

2 day workshop

The South Australian Community Health Research Unit is delighted to host a 2 day workshop by Professor Louise Potvin.

WHEN: Thursday, 22 April 2010 and Friday, 23 April 2010

WHERE: Thursday, 9:30am - 5:00pm & Friday, 9:00am - 4:00pm

<http://www.aboriginalhealth.flinders.edu.au/Newsletters/2010/Downloads/SACHRU%20Workshop%2022-23%20April%202010.pdf>

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**Beyond Evidence on Reducing Health Inequities Symposium:
What works, why and how**

27 - 28 April 2010

Adelaide

This will be the final policy event for the NHMRC-funded Australian Health Inequities Program. The aims of the Symposium are to present research-based examples of policies and programs that were designed to intervene on the social determinants of health inequities; to contribute to debates about the ways in which policy makers can build social determinants of health inequities perspectives into programs inside and outside of government; to compare progress in the uptake of social determinants of health inequities perspectives in Australia and other countries; and to consider how social determinants of health can contribute to the goal of Closing the Gap. Confirmed international speakers include Professor Sir Michael G. Marmot.

Symposium website: <http://som.flinders.edu.au/FUSA/PublicHealth/AHIP/2010/>

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**Healthy Development Adelaide:
Indigenous Women's & Children's Health what are we doing to close the gap?**

WHEN: Thursday 29 April 2010. 4.30pm - 7.00pm.

WHERE: State Library of South Australia Institute Building Lecture Theatre (corner of Kintore Ave and North Tce, Adelaide)

http://www.aboriginalhealth.flinders.edu.au/Newsletters/2010/Downloads/HDA%20Event_Indigenous%20Womens%20&%20Childrens%20Health.pdf

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Building the Agenda: The First National Forum on Safety and Quality in Primary and Community Health

May 2010 will see an important national Forum on Safety and Quality in Primary and Community Health. The Forum, to be held in Sydney, will bring together practitioners, consumers, administrators, researchers and academics across the spectrum of community based health care.

It will be the first gathering in Australia concerning health service safety and quality, targeted to multi-disciplinary primary care including indigenous health, general medical practitioners, mental health, drug and alcohol, health promotion, aged care, as well as rural and remote health services.

Auspiced by the National Primary and Community Health Network, the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, NSW Health and the Quality Improvement Council, the forum will be held on 10 May 2010.

The Forum will be an opportunity to exchange information and to explore the quality implications of the federal government's health reforms. Well known media personality and facilitator Julie McCrossin has been booked to ensure the event is interactive.

Find out more about the Forum, including program and registration details at <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/aipc/pchnetwork/national.htm>

For further information please contact Jenny Macmillan, Australian Primary and Community Health Network (03) 9479 1772 j.macmillan@latrobe.edu.au

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Lunch Time Talk: 'Indigenous Minds': A paradigm for Primary Health Care Research
by John Binda Reid

WHEN: Monday 10 May 2010

WHERE: Flinders University

Talk commences 12.30pm by John Binda Reid Indigenous: Research Fellow (Centre for Remote Health - PHCRED).

John is a member of the Kokatha nation (located in Northern SA). He presented at last year's Tri State Conference in Alice Springs and was very well received, he is an RDP fellow with the PHCRED program in Alice Springs. <http://www.crh.org.au/content/view/195/35/>

His paper examines a philosophical approach to theory of knowledge approaches to Indigenous health. John will be visiting Flinders from 10 - 13 May, 2010 I hope that you can attend.

Please RSVP to raelene.burnley@flinders.edu.au to assist with catering for lunch

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2nd Rural and Remote Health Scientific Symposium

The Alliance is one of four organisations auspicing the 2nd Rural and Remote Health

Scientific Symposium to be held in Brisbane, 9-11 June 2010. Further information:
<http://rrhss.ruralhealth.org.au/>

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Inaugural National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Conference (NIDAC 2010): Listening, Learning and Leading.

16 - 18 June 2010

Adelaide Convention Centre, Adelaide, South Australia

The National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Conference aims to assist and contribute to further develop the capacity of those working to address the harms associated with the use of alcohol and other drugs in meaningful and practical ways. The Conference will also showcase and celebrate the quiet efforts and achievements of those striving to improve the health and well being of our communities. It is a time for listening, learning and leading the way on what can be accomplished on this important health and social issue within Australia.

To view flyer and details go to <http://www.nidaconference.com.au/>

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Primary health care research and health reform: Improving care Conference

Wednesday 30 June 2010 - Friday 2 July 2010

Darwin, Northern Territory

Come to Darwin for the 2010 PHC Research Conference - *Primary health care research and health reform: Improving care*, and participate in one of the premier primary health care networking events.

This conference is a must for anyone with an interest in primary health care research, evaluation and development. It will provide essential opportunities for researchers, decision makers, practitioners and consumers to share ideas, debate critical PHC matters, form collaborations and network with speakers and other delegates.

The program is an exciting blend of plenary sessions, workshops, symposia, poster and paper sessions, and influential presenters from both Australia and overseas. Funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, it is supported by both the Australian Association of Academic Primary Care (AAAPC) and the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute (APHCRI, based at ANU).

Earlybird registration is available until Friday 14 May

Call for abstracts closes Friday 19 March

Presented by PHCRIS

Event website: <http://www.phcris.org.au/conference/2010>

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NAIDOC WEEK

4-11 July 2010

<http://www.naidoc.org.au/index.aspx>

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2010 Secretariat for National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) Conference

Alice Springs, 27-29 July
<http://www.snaicc.asn.au/policy/conference>

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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.e-bility.com/arata/conf.php>

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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, T: 08 89435100, F: 08 89435101, W: <http://www.daniladilba.org.au>

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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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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

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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

Announcement and Call For Abstracts

Closing date for receipt of abstracts: Thursday 1 April, 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

Please email abstracts to: info@conorg.com.au
Or post on a CD to: Creating Futures Conference
c/- The Conference Organiser
146 Leicester Street
Carlton, Victoria 3053, Australia

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
Fax: Australia: (03) 9349 2230

<http://www.conorg.com.au>

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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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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

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The 11th National Rural Health Conference will be held in Perth on 13-16 March 2011.

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

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

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**NRHA Media Release
19 March 2010**

Indigenous Doctors assess the NT Emergency Response

The National Rural Health Alliance has urged governments to work more closely with community leaders to create effective measures for improving the health of Aboriginal people.

It comes after the release of a Health Impact Assessment of the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) launched this month by the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association. The document predicts that while new investments in education, housing and health care will contribute to improved physical health for some people, any benefits will be outweighed by the negative impacts arising from the way the initiative was devised and implemented.

The Health Impact Assessment examines seven of the measures: external leadership and control, income management, alcohol restriction, prohibited materials, housing, education and child health checks. It ranks these measures in a scorecard, provides recommendations to make them more effective, and suggests one-year, five-year and ten-year targets for monitoring progress.

Details of the NTER were announced in June 2007 following release of the *Little Children*

are Sacred report. At that time, the Alliance welcomed the commitment of significant resources to Aboriginal health and reminded governments of the critical need to work on roll-out of the proposals with the people and organisations in the communities concerned.

Dr Jenny May, Chair of the Alliance, said the Alliance is still advocating the importance of significant investment and consultation for improved Indigenous health.

"The findings of the Health Impact Assessment, together with the recommendations and targets, provide a basis for productive consultation and a guide for governments to make a more effective contribution to improving the health of Aboriginal people," Dr May said.

"The challenge continues to be to ensure there is sustained action in this area of great need, including addressing the social and economic determinants of health that underpin good health for all Indigenous people and others currently disadvantaged."

The Health Impact Assessment was undertaken by the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association in partnership with the Centre for Health Equity Training, Research and Evaluation and the Fred Hollows Foundation.

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NRHA Media Release

23 March 2010

Prime Minister's welcome confirmation on rural hospitals

People in rural and remote areas will be pleased and relieved to hear confirmation from the Prime Minister that there will be flexibility in the way the "efficient price" for the work of smaller hospitals will be set in the Government's proposed plan for hospital networks.

When he first announced the plan for the Health and Hospitals Networks three weeks ago, the Prime Minister was asked how much flexibility there would be to allow for the greater costs of delivering health outcomes in places like a rural WA. His response was:

"In terms of the formula itself, round activity-based funding, it can and will be tailored to all those factors of isolation, of population growth, and on the local concentration of diseases, which does differ from one part of the country to the other."

Today that has been further clarified. The PM has said that there will be a specific option for the independent umpire to block fund smaller hospitals.

"It's good to know that the special characteristics of smaller hospitals, which include their "community service obligations" and the need for them to have the capacity to provide services when required, will (as specified in the National Healthcare Agreement) be recognised in the funding to be provided," Dr Jenny May, Chairperson of the Alliance, said.

"This guarantee of flexible funding is very important and recognises the strategic and important roles of rural hospitals to their local communities. Some 209 of Australia's hospitals, or 27 per cent, have fewer than ten beds, and another 334 have ten to fifty beds."

"Rural consumers are telling us it's important for them to have access to a hospital in the case

of an emergency, to birth and to die in - and as an important base for primary care and preventive services," Dr May said.

The Alliance looks forward to further announcements about how the primary care sector will be able to create the much needed integration with hospitals and their services and the key sectors like mental and dental health which urgently need Federal government assistance.

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