

National Rural Health Alliance eforum - 26 July 2010

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RURAL COMMUNITIES MONITOR ELECTION CAMPAIGN

The people of rural and remote Australia are very eager to hear what commitments the major Parties will make to help overcome health and health service inequities in the bush. The NRHA has asked the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Greens for indications of their intentions in relation to the top 10 priority issues for improving health status and equity of access to health services.

The full text of the Alliance statement is at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/mr-23-07-10.pdf> and is reproduced below.

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RURAL AUSTRALIANS URGED TO PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL SURVEY ON HEALTHCARE ACCESS

Apple iPad up for grabs

The Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) and National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA) are urging all people who live in rural and remote Australia to fill out a five-minute online survey about access to health services in their communities. Those completing the survey by midnight on Sunday 15 August 2010 will enter the draw to win an Apple iPad.

The full text of the statement is at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/mr%20rdaa%20nrha%20--%20july%202010.pdf> and is reproduced below.

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THE LEADERS KNOW THE IMPORTANCE OF RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH

In Julia Gillard and Tony Abbott, the Election campaign has two people with close and long-term understanding of the importance of rural health and health policy.

The full text of the Alliance statement is at [http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/mr%20election%20charter%20published%2017%20july%20\(2\).pdf](http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/mr%20election%20charter%20published%2017%20july%20(2).pdf) and is reproduced below.

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RURAL HEALTH EDUCATION FOUNDATION WEBCAST

DCIS: Is it cancer doctor?
Tuesday 27th July 8.00pm (AEST) and repeated on Friday 30th July 12.30pm

Funded by the NBOCC, this program looks at information to assist in clarifying a new diagnosis of ductal carcinoma in situ. It includes how DCIS is diagnosed, the implications and impact for the woman diagnosed and the treatment options and follow-up care. A recent NBOCC study quantified this risk, finding that women diagnosed with DCIS were about four times more likely to develop invasive breast cancer compared with women of similar age in Australia. The aim of treating DCIS is to reduce the risk of invasive breast cancer. This program also highlights a new NBOCC resource entitled "Understanding ductal carcinoma in situ and deciding about treatment", developed for health professionals to assist women who have been diagnosed with DCIS in considering their treatment options.

LIVE Simultaneous Webcast and satellite broadcast
NSW, ACT, VIC, TAS & QLD - 8.00pm
SA & NT - 7.30pm
WA - 6pm

Click here to register for the webcast and for more information
http://www.rhef.com.au/programs/program-1/?program_id=428

Rural Health Education Foundation <http://www.rhef.com.au>

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Contenance Foundation of Australia - 2010 National Contenance Scholarship Program

Applications for the 2010 National Contenance Scholarship Program are now open, with this year's program focusing on nurses and physiotherapists working in continence care in rural and remote areas of Australia.

This year's focus will ensure that health professionals in rural and remote areas are up-skilled in their continence role, by supporting them to attend the 19th National Conference on Incontinence, Alice Springs, Northern Territory, 27-30 October 2010.

For further details about Guidelines for Applications, to apply or for more information on the 19th National Conference on Incontinence visit <http://www.continence.org.au> or call 03 9347 2522.

Samantha Scoble
Health Promotion Officer
Continence Foundation of Australia
Please note that our new offices are located at:
Level 1, 30-32 Sydney Road
Brunswick VIC 3056
Telephone +61 3 9347 2522
Fax +61 3 9347 2533
Website: <http://www.continence.org.au>
Email: S.Scoble@continence.org.au

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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.

Exhibition and Sponsorship

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

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FLINDERS ABORIGINAL HEALTH RESEARCH E-NEWSLETTER 20 JULY 2010

- * Coming Events
- * Funding Opportunities
- * Real people affected by racist taunts
- * Are you interested in health of Aboriginal children and young people?
- * Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Health (CRCATSIH)
- * Dog Ear Café
- * Latest ALRM newsletter
- * Latest SACOSS Bulletin
- * Latest NHMRC Tracker
- * News from the Australian Centre for Child Protection

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NRHA on TWITTER

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

RT @croakeyblog: Shannon Nott on rural health students conference in Alice Springs. Interesting to see physician assistants on agenda
 James Fitzpatrick will be MC for Conference. He's training in paed, researching foetal alcohol syndrome. <http://11nrhc.ruralhealth.org.au/>
 "Rural doctors just as satisfied: study" <http://bit.ly/a41Gwf>
 The wheel has turned full round again. Our past is reproduced. The air is full of sound again. That's media-induced
 It's been estimated that rural people pay 5 times as much to access essential services as metropolitan residents: <http://bit.ly/9DJrxX>
 How can we do better palliative and end of life care in the Bush?
<http://11nrhc.ruralhealth.org.au/>
 Organisers for Perth 13-16 March 2011 keen to have more truly interactive workshops
<http://11nrhc.ruralhealth.org.au/>
 This is good: Cwlth and Vic State Health Ministers agree local clinicians will be eligible for Boards of Local LHNs: <http://bit.ly/bjIzeu>
 How can organisers guarantee more completed evaluation forms at

<http://11nrhc.ruralhealth.org.au/> ? Email: conference@ruralhealth.org.au

NRHA producing 10-point Election Charter and seeking views of the Parties - watch this space

11th conference will again have an E-satchel for virtual flyers: promote your company greenly <http://11nrhc.ruralhealth.org.au/>

Health policy can't be lined up, agreed and signed off in a week's devotion - it's complex, takes time and ongoing commitment

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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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ACRRM COUNTRY WATCH NEWSLETTER

Subscribe to weekly editions of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine's e-newsletter by completing the online request form at <http://www.acrrm.org.au/country-watch-newsletter>

Contents of 23 July edition:

- * Nominations for ACRRM Board positions now open
- * Is your membership current?
- * Registrars from four states take StAMPS exam
- * Country GPs earn 11.5% more than urban colleagues: MABEL report
- * One in four young Australians has a mental disorder: ABS
- * Mental health online modules (with Medicare access)
- * ACRRM Obstetrics Ultrasound Workshop: 14 August 2010
- * Mentor a medical student: promote rural medicine
- * Tasmania 'snubs' locally trained doctors: AMSA
- * Election 2010: NRHA links improved rural health to national productivity
- * Nine out of ten patients value relationship with their doctor: AMA
- * Rural health infrastructure grants close 30 September 2010

Country GPs earn 11.5% more than urban colleagues: MABEL report

Based on the responses of 2,619 GPs and 3,018 specialists, the average annual pre-tax personal earnings were \$177,883 for GPs and \$316,570 for specialists. Wave 1 of the national longitudinal survey called Medicine in Australia: Balancing Employment and Life (MABEL) also found that females comprised 44.4 per cent of GPs and 27.5 per cent of specialists. The average weekly hours worked were 39.4 for GPs and 45.1 for specialists, and both worked on average 51.6 weeks each year. The majority of GPs (69.9%) and specialists (83.9%) were located in major cities. GPs who practice in outer regional, rural and remote Australia earn 11.5% more than GPs working in major cities. You'll find the full report on the MABEL website at <http://www.melbourneinstitute.com/publications/working/wp2010.cfm>

Contents of 16 July edition:

- * ACRRM registrar awarded prestigious USA visiting fellowship
- * Pioneer of WA rural clinical school recognised for excellence
- * VT policies expanded. Teaching Standards revised
- * Standards for Supervisors and Teaching Posts
- * Mental Health courses with Medicare access: a few August places left
- * New! Accredited population health module on RRMEO
- * Paid, short-term research traineeships
- * Research Week: technology and people push the boundaries
- * Dates for your diary

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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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THE LOWITJA INSTITUTE

Australia's National Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research
e-BULLETIN - 19 JULY 2010

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

CONTENTS

- * Nationwide Consultations on Social Inclusion
- * Research Workforce Strategy Consultation
- * Conferences
- * Jobs
- * Media
- * Publications
- * Resources and Websites
- * Scholarships, Awards, Funding, Grants and Tenders
- * Seminars, Courses and Symposia
- * and Reminders

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PARTYLINE

The June edition of Partyline (No 39) is now out. It is the second edition to be sponsored by the Australian Primary Health Care Research Institute and carries two feature articles on rural and remote health research. It also reports on the recent Health Impact Assessment of the Northern Territory Emergency Response. Other stories focus on oral and dental health, the 2010 Budget, regional development, the Indigenous health challenge and steps towards a sustainable rural health workforce - and you can read about a "blokes' anthem" for health! Available on the Alliance website <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au> Subscription is free: partyline@ruralhealth.org.au

To contribute to future editions (article, photo, letter to the editor, poem), send your article to partyline@ruralhealth.org.au Back copies are available on the Partyline page of the website at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>

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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

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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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/infoservice>

A limited number of printed tool kits are available on request by emailing 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

(Incorporating Federal Government News)

Coalition will axe GP grants and e-health

The Coalition says it will axe funding for e-health and GP infrastructure grants as part of its pledge to 'stop Labor's reckless spending' and thus help cut interest rates.
<http://enews.6minutes.com.au/cgi-bin19/DM/y/hCt70BN8pP0M00Oh0Ee>

Rural Health Minister holds health forums in Casino and Kyogle and announces more funding for health infrastructure

<http://www.alp.org.au/federal-government/news/Minister-for-Rural-and-Regional-Health-Rural-Healt/>

Leading Organisations to Run Nursing and Allied Health Scholarship Scheme

Two expert organisations with proven track records have been appointed by the Gillard Government to administer the Nursing and Allied Health Scholarship and Support Scheme (NAHSSS). Allied health scholarships under the NAHSSS will be administered by the peak rural allied health organisation, Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health Inc (SARRAH), which is also experienced and possesses expertise in managing allied health scholarships for the Australian Government. Nursing scholarships will continue to support the nursing profession including nurse practitioners, practice nurses and mental health nurses.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr10-nr-nr145.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2010&mth=7>

New Technology to Boost Mental Health Services in Regional Victoria

The Minister for Rural and Regional Health, Warren Snowdon, said today the Australian Government is tackling significant mental health workforce shortages in regional Victoria through an innovative new project to train medical students online. 'There are mental health workforce shortages in regional and rural areas and this project will enable medical students to receive teaching in rural and regional areas and to provide high quality clinical experiences which will encourage them to return to work in these sites after graduation,' Mr Cheeseman said. Mr Marles said Deakin University will lead the project with Barwon Health providing in-kind and continuing on-site support for information technology.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr10-ws-ws065.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2010&mth=7>

Federal Rural Health Minister Holds Health Roundtable in Colac

Minister for Rural and Regional Health, Warren Snowdon has held a health roundtable in Colac and toured a number of the region's health facilities to talk about health reform and health issues of importance to the area. This combined with the national health reform agenda, will strengthen health services provided in the region,' Mr Cheeseman said. In addition, since the start of July, city doctors who move to Colac may now be eligible for \$15,000 in rural relocation grant under the Australian Government's General Practice Rural Incentives Program.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr10-ws-ws066.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2010&mth=7>

New Peak Body to Support More Indigenous Physiotherapists, Dieticians, Occupational Therapists and Optometrists

The health of Indigenous Australians took another step forward with the launch of a new peak national body to represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allied health professionals and students, the Minister for Indigenous Health, Warren Snowdon, said today. Mr Snowdon said the Australian Government is funding the Indigenous Allied Health Australia Incorporated (IAHA) , as part of its \$19-million National Indigenous Health Workforce Training Package. The IAHA will complement funding already provided by the Australian Government to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peak health bodies, such as the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association, the Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Indigenous Nurses and the new National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers Association.

URL: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr10-ws-ws067.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2010&mth=7>

Wake up Call on Men's Health

Minister for Rural and Regional Health, Warren Snowdon said Australian men have to confront the reality of the health risks that can see them die earlier than their female counterparts. 'Some Australian men are in denial about the health risks they face. The policy is based on the latest available evidence it tackles issues men face in accessing health care engages men about their health raises awareness of the relevant health issues and targets men at risk of poor health.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr10-ws-ws068.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2010&mth=7>

Rural Health Minister Addresses Rural Health Students at National Conference

Delegates at the 12th National University Rural Health conference in Alice Springs have been told the Australian Government was committed to delivering an ambitious health reform agenda, which will support more health professionals to work and live in rural and regional Australia.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr10-ws-ws069.htm>

Agreed Terms of Reference For Central Australia Renal Study

The Australian, Northern Territory, South Australian and Western Australian Governments have agreed to the Terms of Reference for a Central Australian renal study.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr10-ws-ws070.htm>

Family Violence Outreach Program Funded

Indigenous women and children in Alice Springs who are experiencing domestic and family violence will receive improved services and support through the Alice Springs Women's Shelter.

http://jennymacklin.fahcsia.gov.au/mediareleases/2010/Pages/js_m_famviolence_13july2010.aspx

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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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MEDICAL ASSISTANTS WILL RELIEVE WORKFORCE GAPS

GP practices will benefit from a new stream of 'medical assistants' now graduating from training programs in Queensland and South Australia, course organisers say.

<http://enews.6minutes.com.au/cgi-bin19/DM/y/hCsv0BN8pP0M00Ix0Eq>

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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/>)

Climate change will make rural Australia sick

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/nt/content/201007/s2957949.htm>

Alliance says climate change is a health issue

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/201007/s2957550.htm>

Minister defends regional tour

The Federal Government's Minister for Rural and Regional Health denies his visit to the Far North Coast this week is an exercise in pork barrelling.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/07/19/2958158.htm>

Black market fears over alcohol restrictions

The Intervention Rollback Action Group says the Government is in danger of creating a black market for alcohol in Alice Springs.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/07/16/2955586.htm>

Call for Coalition to back local hospital networks

A rural health lobby group says the Federal Coalition must commit to the roll-out of local hospital networks.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/201007/s2954319.htm>

Get election ready, get election set...

Rural lobby groups are stepping up their campaigning ahead of an imminent Federal Election.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/content/2010/s2954692.htm>

Health students encouraged to 'go bush'

Organisers at a rural health conference in Alice Springs are hoping medical students will want to 'go bush' after hearing from some of the Territory's most influential health professionals today.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/nt/content/201007/s2954866.htm>

Doctors meet to discuss regional health strategies

Doctors and nurses from across Australia and New Zealand are meeting in north Queensland to consider ways to improve medical care in regional areas.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/07/14/2952928.htm>

Aboriginal smokers use fewer cigarettes: study

A new report has found Aboriginal smokers in remote communities consume fewer cigarettes per day than the wider population.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/07/14/2953567.htm>

Indigenous life expectancy better, diabetes worse

New research has confirmed substance abuse, chronic disease and youth suicide remain key areas of concern among Australia's Indigenous population.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2010/07/14/2953724.htm>

Keeping bush mums at home

It's a widely held belief mothers in rural and regional centres need to travel to larger more equipped city hospitals to have their babies. But three professional medical colleges seem to disagree. The Australian College of Midwives, Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the College of Rural and Remote Medicine have each pledged their support to a proposed program that would allow mothers in remote areas to stay in their home communities for child birth.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/nt/content/201007/s2952436.htm>

Support for plan to assist home births in remote areas

Three peak bodies for childbirth are pledging their support for a program to allow mothers in remote areas to have babies in their communities, rather than travel to cities.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/201007/s2951955.htm>

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RDAA NEWS

RDAA Election Platform 2010

23 July 2010

http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/ACFD78.pdf

Media Release - - RDAA Election Platform

23 July 2010

http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/Federal%20election%20release%20--%20Fair%20shake%20of%20the%20sauce%20bottle%20--%20July%202010.pdf

Rural Australians urged to participate in national survey on healthcare access

21 July 2010

http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/ACF95E.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

4714.0.55.003 - National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, Australia: Summary Booklet, 2008

The 2008 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey summary booklets are intended for use by Indigenous Engagement Managers while visiting Indigenous Communities. They present a shorter summary of the results from the 2008 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, on a wide range of topics including population, culture and language, health, education, labour force, housing, family and support networks, children and young adults.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4714.0.55.003?OpenDocument>

4840.0.55.001 - Mental Health of Young People, 2007

Contents:

Introduction - Includes: Overview of mental health in young people

Data sources and definitions - Includes: Data sources and disorder classes

Prevalence of mental disorders - Includes: Prevalence across age groups, by sex and disorder classes

Health risks and social characteristics - Includes: Alcohol, drug and tobacco use and social contact

Socio-economic characteristics - Includes: Index of disadvantage, area of residence, education and employment

Comorbidity and severity - Includes: Comorbidity of conditions, level of impairment, suicidal behaviour and Cause of Death

Mental health service use - Includes: Mental health service use across age groups, by level of impairment and self-management strategies

List of references

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CURRENT ISSUE OF eMJA

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

MJA media release - Evidence shows no difference in professional satisfaction between metropolitan and rural GPs, according to a study published in the Medical Journal of Australia. Dr Matthew McGrail from the Gippsland Medical School and the School of Rural Health at Monash University, VIC, and his co-authors conducted a study investigating whether the level of professional satisfaction of Australian general practitioners varied according to community size and location. The authors used data from 3906 GPs who participated in the first wave of the Medicine in Australia: Balancing Employment and Life (MABEL) study conducted between June and November 2008.

<http://www.ama.com.au/node/5832>

Current Issue 19 July 2010

Editorials

Has the investment in general practice research been worthwhile?
For love or money? Changing the way GPs are paid to provide diabetes care
General practice and e-health reform
Postcard from the UK - Pressures on UK general practice
Health Reform
General practice and the Australian Government's National Health Reform Plan
Divisions of General Practice: will they transform, or die? - For Debate
Health reform and the Medical Journal of Australia - Research
Decline with a capital D: long-term changes in general practice consultation patterns across Australia
Ascendancy with a capital A: the practice nurse and short general practice consultations - Commentary
Are general practitioners becoming coordinators and managers, not clinicians? - Letter
Meeting local complex health needs by building the capacity of general practice: the University of Queensland GP super clinic model - Viewpoint
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Good medical practice: professionalism, ethics and law - Book Review
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Improving implementation of evidence-based prevention in primary care - Editorial
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Diagnostic tests: how do you walk the line? - Letter
Do spirometry and regular follow-up improve health outcomes in general practice patients with asthma or COPD? A cluster randomised controlled trial - Research
Evidence of increasing frequency of herpes zoster management in Australian general practice since the introduction of a varicella vaccine - Research
Are rates of pathology test ordering higher in general practices co-located with pathology collection centres? - Research
Potential implications of genomic medicine in general practice - Review
Palliative care beyond that for cancer in Australia - Viewpoint
Cardiovascular risk perception and evidence-practice gaps in Australian general practice - Letters
How my uncle broke his back - Poem
Obituary - Charles Bridges-Webb

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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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National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day 4 August 2010

http://www.snaicc.asn.au/news/view_article.cfm?loadref=8&id=269

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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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**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

email 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 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' 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 Druiitt Street)
Sydney NSW 2001, Australia
Phone: +61 2 9265 0700
Email: 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

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From: Glenn Taylor <ceo@vnhp.org.au>
Subject: **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

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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

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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**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'
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
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.

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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

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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**

Canberra, 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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**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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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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Media Release
23 July 2010
Rural communities monitor Election Campaign

The people of rural and remote Australia are very eager to hear what commitments the major Parties will make to help overcome health and health service inequities in the bush.

The NRHA has asked the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Greens for indications of their intentions in relation to the top 10 priority issues for improving health status and equity of access to health services.

Dr Jenny May, Chairperson of the Alliance, said that in the process of developing its Election Charter the Alliance's member bodies agreed that the matter of greatest importance is government commitment to sustainable rural communities.

"This will require increased emphasis on rural and remote health workforce strategies and regional development," Dr May said.

"Rural people are looking for a sign that the Leaders really understand the opportunities and the special challenges of living in rural and remote Australia - and that these will not be ignored. Hopefully the Leaders can begin to do this in Sunday's leaders' debate"

"It is vital that progress is made in the term of the next Government towards management and control of public hospitals and primary care based on regional communities of interest. It's a worry that, so far, the major Parties are either not focused on health at all or are concerned mainly with public hospitals and GP superclinics in outer metropolitan areas," she said.

The NRHA, in conjunction with the Rural Doctors Association of Australia, is running an online survey to clarify what local access non-metropolitan people have to a range of health services. The survey is available through the websites of those two organisations.

"It's too early yet for the Alliance to report on the major political Parties through its Election Scorecard," Dr May said. "But it is clear that both of them are weak in at least one key area. The Labor Government has yet to deliver effectively on mental health services, including in rural and remote areas, and the Coalition will disappoint many people if it proceeds with its decision not to invest in broadband and e-health for rural and remote Australia," she said.

The scorecard to be used by the NRHA for its weekly report on the Parties is attached and summarises the 10 top priorities on which rural people are expecting commitments.

Election Scorecard 2010
23 July - Number 1

This Election Scorecard relates to the top ten priorities for improving rural and remote health, and rates the political Parties' election announcements against them.

Key:

0 no commitment yet or the Party will not address the priority

1 commitment(s) which partially meet the priority

2 commitment(s) which fully meet the priority

Commitment to policy and funded program action for:

1. improving sustainability of rural/remote communities through regional development
2. a fair rural/remote share of mainstream funding, especially public hospital resources
3. access to primary care as close to home as possible - including through health reform in train
4. workforce development for all professions, particularly for dental health
5. bipartisan support for better health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
6. targeted health promotion and illness prevention for rural and remote communities
7. support for smaller hospitals and for local control of primary care
8. improved mental health care nationally, including for rural and remote Australians
9. investments in rural and remote aged care facilities and healthy ageing
10. stronger and better-funded Patients' Assisted Travel Schemes

Total

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Rural Australians urged to participate in national survey on healthcare access
Apple iPad up for grabs

The Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) and National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA) are urging all people who live in rural and remote Australia to fill out a five-minute online survey about access to health services in their communities. Those completing the survey by midnight on Sunday 15 August 2010 will enter the draw to win an Apple iPad.

The national survey aims to determine the level of access to health services available to those who live in the bush and their expectations about access to healthcare.

RDAA President, Dr Nola Maxfield, said: "This survey is about assessing people's satisfaction with access to healthcare in their local area, so RDAA and NRHA can better lobby for more healthcare resources.

"We want participants to feel they can be frank about the access to healthcare they have in their community, without feeling that they are in any way being critical of their local doctors, nurses or other healthcare professionals.

"It is more about the system itself, finding out how satisfied you are with the number of healthcare professionals you have available in your town and whether you believe you have adequate local access to hospital and other health services.

"It gives all rural Australians an opportunity to provide feedback on key issues regarding access to healthcare, such as how long you have to wait for an appointment and how far you have to travel to access healthcare for a range of conditions."

NRHA Executive Director, Gordon Gregory, said: "In this day and age, all Australians should have access to local health services whether they are having a heart attack, are injured in a farming or road accident, are having a baby, or need ongoing treatment for a long-term chronic illness. This should include the one-third of all Australians who live in the bush.

"The survey will help us gather up-to-date information on just how hard it is for rural and remote Australians to get to see doctors, nurses, midwives, dentists, physios and a range of other health professionals, so we can make the case for better supports to entice more of these much-needed professionals to country areas."

Those who complete the survey by midnight on Sunday 15 August 2010 will go in the draw to win an Apple iPad thanks to the support of Telstra.

To complete the survey, go to www.ultrafeedback.com/survey/994 or see the links on the front pages of <http://www.rdaa.com.au> or <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>.

All information collected will remain confidential and will be for the use of RDAA and the NRHA only.

The survey has been supported and developed by UltraFeedback.

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Media Release

17 July 2010

The Leaders know the importance of rural and remote health

In Julia Gillard and Tony Abbott, the Election campaign has two people with close and long-term understanding of the importance of rural health and health policy.

The NRHA has today published its Election Charter calling on Leaders to commit to 10 key fields of action to overcome the inequities faced by the people of rural and remote Australia. Action across these 10 key fields will not only improve health outcomes but also contribute to the nation's economic productivity.

The NRHA's Election Charter offers the Parties an affordable, coherent way forward to improve health and community vitality for people in rural and remote areas. Dr Jenny May, Chairperson of the Alliance, will provide the public and the media with weekly updates on commitments in these 10 areas.

"We'll be asking the Leaders to commit to a range of action to improve the lot of the families, communities and industries of rural, regional and remote areas," Dr May said.

Progress can be made through redoubled commitments to health reforms that are already in train. These include improving local access to primary care, a fair share of the extra resources for hospitals, and strengthening and expanding our rural health workforce.

A key medium-term solution to health and workforce issues is regional development.

"We've been encouraged by recent references to how policies relating to population, immigration, resource rent taxation and remote zone allowances can differentiate between particular regions. If you add them all together you're not far from a regional development policy. Investing in healthy people through investing in our health services builds healthy communities at the heart of our nation," Dr May said.

Two other national issues with particular implications for rural people are yet to be dealt with adequately by either the Labor Party or the Coalition. These are the parlous state of mental health and dental health. We need significantly greater national attention in these areas and specific approaches to target the major shortfalls in rural and remote areas.

Election Charter at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/election2010>
