

National Rural Health Alliance E-forum 6 June 2008

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#### FOR IMPROVED RURAL HEALTH, LOOK OUTSIDE THE HEALTH SECTOR

The National Rural Health Alliance has called on the Government to improve the wellbeing of the more than seven million Australians in rural and remote areas by investing in a comprehensive plan to develop infrastructure, education, housing and illness prevention. The full text of the Alliance statement is at

<http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/look%20outside%20the%20health%20sector.pdf> and is reproduced below.

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#### REGIONAL AND REMOTE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Now is the time to seriously tackle the entrenched disparity and unacceptable outcomes in Indigenous health as a matter of urgency. The Alliance submission to the Senate Select Committee considers the effectiveness of the Northern Territory emergency response; the impact of government policies on wellbeing; children's health, welfare, education and security; and employment and enterprise opportunities. The Submission is available at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/publications/nrha%20submission%20on%20indigenous%20communities.pdf>

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## E-News from the Alliance: May 2008

### Health Reform in Australia

There have been many opportunities over the last few months for the Alliance to submit its views on policy changes that affect the health and wellbeing of people in rural and remote Australia - and it looks like there will be 'review and rationalisation' for some time to come. The Alliance's most recently completed submissions have been to the Health and Hospitals Reform Commission on ways in which rural health might benefit from redesign of the Australian Health Care Agreements (AHCAs); to the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations on the Expansion of the Commonwealth Tertiary Scholarships Program; to the House of Representatives Inquiry into Obesity in Australia; and to the Australia 2020 Summit.

The 'Beyond the Blame Game' Report from the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission (NHHRC) has proposed some performance indicators for use in the Australian Health Care Agreements that are to be rolled over for a year from 1 July 2008 and then converted into a new broadbanded National Healthcare Agreement from 1 July 2009. The indicators would have the capacity to provide information about how health services are being provided and accessed in rural areas by comparison with metropolitan areas. The NRHA is being consulted by the AIHW on its related performance indicator work. The report on the audit of the rural health workforce proposed, among other things, the establishment of an Office of Rural Health within the Department. This Office will be tasked with consolidating various aspects of rural health work, including a review of existing rural programs.

Following the review of *Healthy Horizons* consideration is being given to its successor and the possibility of a National Rural Health Plan.

The 2008 Federal Budget confirmed the implementation of some of the pre-election commitments to rural and Indigenous health. The Alliance continues to have an interest in these initiatives and their implications for consumers and professionals in rural areas. The rollout of the GP Super Clinics across Australia has begun. Approximately half of these will be located in regional areas. The process begins with a consultation meeting between government, local professionals and local consumers. The Alliance will provide consultation information to people on its database in the locations where meetings are to be held. Other issues on which the Alliance will focus include the review of the MBS; development of a National Primary Health Care Plan; and the work of the National Preventative Healthcare Task Force.

You can find most of our submissions on the website under 'Publications', 'Submissions':

<http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/publications/?IntContId=58&IntCatId=6>

These documents are provided for your information and comment.

### 10th National Rural Health Conference

#### Calling for Abstracts in June

The 10th National Rural Health Conference will be held in Cairns on 17-20 May 2009. The Call for Abstracts will be announced in the next edition of *Partyline*. Details will also be available on the website at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>

### Election of new *friends* Advisory Committee

Nominations close at the end of this week for the *friends* Advisory Committee, after which an election will be held to select two representatives from each State/Territory. Members of

*friends* can nominate themselves or another *friend* they know to be interested.  
If you have not rejoined for 2008 there is a membership form on the *friends* page of our website at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>

Calling for articles for the next issue of *Partyline* (#33)  
The next edition of *Partyline* will be out soon - if you would like to contribute an article please send it to the *Partyline* Editor by 21 June - [partyline@ruralhealth.org.au](mailto:partyline@ruralhealth.org.au)  
Electronic versions of *Partyline* are always available in the 'Publications' section of our website at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/publications/?IntContId=57&IntCatId=6>

Australian Journal of Rural Health  
Vol 16, Issue 3 - now available to subscribers on-line and in hardcopy.  
This issue includes articles on: Partnerships to promote mental health of NSW farmers; Using overseas registered nurses to fill employment gaps in rural health services; Rural Pharmacy in New Zealand; and Profile of the rural allied health workforce in northern New South Wales and comparison with previous studies.  
There is also a free virtual issue of the AJRH on Indigenous health available at <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/loi/ajr>

Fortnightly eforum  
To subscribe or contribute to the fortnightly eforum go to <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au> - see link in the bottom left hand corner. eforum is a moderated newsletter containing media releases, news and conference information relating to the rural health sector. It is sent only to those people who have specifically subscribed to it. There is an archive of past eforums on the Alliance website at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/eforumarchive/?IntCatId=19>

Please keep in touch with us on all things rural and remote.

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#### RURAL HEALTH EDUCATION FOUNDATION BROADCAST ON SBS TV

SBS television has selected a Rural Health Education Foundation program on Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder for an encore screening at 1.00pm on Monday 23 June.

"Drinking for Two?" is a half-hour documentary which poses the question "Is it safe to drink at all while you're pregnant?"

The program profiles a number of people affected by Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, along with their families. Cases studies are used to illustrate the issues for children, adults and Indigenous communities in particular. The program is presented by Julie McCrossin, former presenter of ABC Radio National's Life Matters, and includes experts Professor Elizabeth Elliot (The Children's Hospital at Westmead, NSW), Ms Lorian Hayes (National Indigenous Australian Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Education Network) and Dr Lara Wieland (Mulungu Aboriginal Corporation Medical Centre, QLD).

"Drinking for Two?" is also available for purchase from the Rural Health Education Foundation DVD and VHS video and can be experienced online via video webstreaming and audio podcast. For more information, go to <http://www.rhef.com.au/programs/708/708.html>

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10th NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

The 10th National Rural Health Conference will be held in Cairns in May 2009. Keep an eye on our website at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/conferences/docs/10thNRHC/10thNRHC.htm> for up-to-date information about the Conference. The first announcement will be the Call for Abstracts in mid 2008.

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NEW STROKE PROGRAMS TO GET WEB TREATMENT ON JUNE 10

The Rural Health Education Foundation invites you to join a live web-cast where leading health professionals will provide the most up-to-date information on effective stroke prevention, assessment, treatment and management. The web-cast will detail the 'patient journey' - from stroke event, through rapid transportation, hospital treatment, rehabilitation, and return home - and considers the implications for intervention with rural and remote patients and their carers.

The web-cast will be chaired by Dr Norman Swan, presenter of the Health Report on ABC Radio National. Panel participants include: Professor Chris Levi, Director of Acute Stroke Services, John Hunter Hospital, Newcastle, NSW Dr Debbie Kesper, Rehabilitation Physician, Bendigo Health Care Group, Bendigo, VIC Associate Professor Paul Middleton, Chief Medical Adviser to NSW Ambulance Service, Sydney, NSW Dr Charles Kerr, General Practitioner, Castlemaine, VIC.

Striking Back: Treatment and Management of Stroke LIVE web-cast - Tuesday 10th June 8.00pm (AEST) Register to participate in the interactive web-cast by clicking here or copying and pasting the following link

<http://webcast.streamlogics.com/audience/index.asp?eventid=20070>

An archived version of this web-cast will be broadcast by the Foundation through its satellite television network on June 17th and 20th.

Produced by Rural Health Education Foundation, Funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. For information about this event visit the Foundation

<http://website www.rhef.com.au>

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PARTYline Newsletter

The March 2008 version of PARTYline is now available. Contents include:

- \* The full agenda on the rural health workforce challenge
- \* Calls for further debate about professional scopes of practice, multi-disciplinary teams and the design of training systems for health professionals.
- \* Reports on the forthcoming Federal Budget, the Health and Hospitals Reform Commission, ambulance services, allied health and the work-life balance of general practitioners.
- \* A two-page spread on 'Advice to the Health Minister' from friends of the Alliance.

PARTYline is available at

[http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/publications/partyline\\_32\\_08.pdf](http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/publications/partyline_32_08.pdf)

Calling for articles for the next issue of *Partyline* (#33)

The next edition of *Partyline* will be out soon - if you would like to contribute an article please send it to the *Partyline* Editor by 21 June - [partyline@ruralhealth.org.au](mailto:partyline@ruralhealth.org.au)

Electronic versions of *Partyline* are always available in the 'Publications' section of our website at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/publications/?IntContId=57&IntCatId=6>

The Alliance's newsletter, PARTYline, is a means of exchanging information between those with an interest in rural health, including friends of the Alliance, health consumers, health professionals, students and policy makers. Contributors report on their personal rural experiences, on programs with which they have been involved, provide information on new initiatives and resources, and it is a vehicle for opinions on rural health issues and events.

PARTYline has a print circulation around Australia of 13,000 and is also available on-line below. PARTYline readily accepts contributions from readers - articles (up to 500 words) and photographs can be sent to [partyline@ruralhealth.org.au](mailto:partyline@ruralhealth.org.au)

The electronic version of Partyline is also available in the 'Publications' section of our website at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/publications/?IntContId=57&IntCatId=6>

If you don't receive Partyline but would like to, send your contact details to [nrha@ruralhealth.org.au](mailto:nrha@ruralhealth.org.au) and let us know if you'd prefer a hard copy in the mail or email notification of its availability on the webpage.

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#### RDAA STATEMENTS

National Consensus Framework for Rural Maternity Services -- Submission to the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission  
30 May 2008

[http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded\\_documents/National%20Consensus%20Framework%20for%20Rural%20Maternity%20Services%20--%20Submission%20to%20the%20National%20Health%20and%20Hospitals%20Reform%20Commission.pdf](http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/National%20Consensus%20Framework%20for%20Rural%20Maternity%20Services%20--%20Submission%20to%20the%20National%20Health%20and%20Hospitals%20Reform%20Commission.pdf)

RDAA, RANZCOG and NSW Rural Doctors Network submission to the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission -- Sustaining the Rural Specialist Medical Workforce: Locum Relief Through Regional Supernumerary Posts  
30 May 2008

[http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded\\_documents/RDAA,%20RANZCOG%20and%20NSWRDN%20submission%20to%20the%20NHRC%20--%20June%202008.pdf](http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/RDAA,%20RANZCOG%20and%20NSWRDN%20submission%20to%20the%20NHRC%20--%20June%202008.pdf)

RDAA Submission to the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission  
30 May 2008

[http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded\\_documents/ACFD2BD.pdf](http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/ACFD2BD.pdf)

New international guidelines underline need for better incentives for rural doctors

27 May 2008

[http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded\\_documents/New%20international%20guidelines%20under%20line%20need%20for%20better%20incentives%20for%20rural%20doctors%20--%20May%202008.pdf](http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/New%20international%20guidelines%20under%20line%20need%20for%20better%20incentives%20for%20rural%20doctors%20--%20May%202008.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 Editorial Office

Australian Journal of Rural Health

550 Swanston Street

Carlton VIC 3053

June 2008 issue now available. Contents include:

Editorial -May you live in interesting times!

Review Article - Extended scope practitioners and clinical specialists: A place in rural health?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's experience when interacting with the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale: A brief note

Effects of a 12-month exercise program on cardiorespiratory health indicators of Vietnam War veterans resident in the tropics

Exploring the barriers and enablers to attendance at rural cardiac rehabilitation programs

Risk behaviours and blood borne virus exposure for transient workers in rural Victoria

Rural pharmacy in New Zealand: Effects of a compulsory externship on student perspectives and implications for workforce shortage

Profile of the rural allied health workforce in Northern New South Wales and comparison with previous studies

Using overseas registered nurses to fill employment gaps in rural health services: Quick fix or sustainable strategy?

Partnerships to promote mental health of NSW farmers: The New South Wales Farmers Blueprint for Mental Health

Community perception of childhood drowning and its prevention measures in rural Bangladesh: A qualitative study

Short Report - Geographical location and sunburn in Queensland adults

Grazings

Reducing serious delays in diagnosis of younger onset dementia

PHC RIS: Supporting those juggling the dual roles of practitioner and researcher

From the Journal Associates - ARNM: Give us a voice and you will reap the rewards

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

Students and researchers keen to learn more about the changing facts surrounding Indigenous health are encouraged to consult the 2008 'virtual issue' of the prestigious *Australian Journal of Rural Health*. Freely available through the website <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/loi/ajr> readers can access 22 key reports published in the last decade covering some of the most pressing topics in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

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#### INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS WHO WANT TO DIE IN HOMELANDS FACE OBSTACLES

Lack of transport is just one of the issues that health professionals providing end-of-life care in remote Aboriginal communities face. Equipment shortages, unreliable power supplies, poor discharge planning for patients treated in metropolitan hospitals, problems with transport, and lack of telephone access, are just some of the problems faced by health professionals providing end-of-life care in remote Aboriginal communities. These findings are from NHMRC-funded research into palliative care service delivery in the Northern Territory, conducted by the International Program of Psycho-Social Health Research (IPP-SHR) at Central Queensland University (CQU). Further information is at <http://uninews.cqu.edu.au/UniNews/viewRelease.do?story=5051>

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#### AIHW REPORTS

##### Higher risk of heart disease for Indigenous peoples

As many as one in eight Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have some form of cardiovascular disease. Rates of cardiovascular disease (CVD) are 30% higher among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples than among non-Indigenous Australians. Hypertension was the most common cardiovascular condition in Indigenous Australians followed by coronary heart disease, heart failure and rheumatic heart disease. More than half of Indigenous adults have three or four of the following risk factors for CVD: physical inactivity, daily smoking, not enough fruit and vegetables, high alcohol consumption, obesity, and diabetes. Coronary heart disease was responsible for more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths between 2002 and 2005 than any other single cause.

The AIHW media release is at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/mediacentre/2008/mr20080605.cfm> and the full publication at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10549>

##### Venomous bites and stings in Australia to 2005

There were 11,602 cases of venomous bites and stings that resulted in hospitalisation in the 2002-05 period, an age-standardised rate of 19.4 cases per 100,000 population. One-third (33.5%) of cases in the three-year period were spider bites, most frequently attributed to redback spiders. Bee stings accounted for nearly one-quarter (23.7%) of hospitalised cases in 2002-05 and 15.1% of cases were attributed to venomous snakes. Rates of venomous bites and stings increased almost linearly according to the remoteness of the person's place of usual residence. Residents of major cities had the lowest rate of serious bites and stings (10.7 per 100,000 population) while the highest rate was observed for residents of the very remote regions of Australia (73.6 per 100,000 population).

<http://www.nisu.flinders.edu.au/pubs/reports/2008/injcat110.php>

Australian hospital statistics 2006-07

Admissions to private hospitals grew by an estimated 5.1% in 2006-07 while public hospital admissions grew by 3.3%. There were 7.6 million hospital admissions in total in 2006-07, a 4.0% increase over the previous year. In 2006-07, most admissions were same-day stays (50% in public hospitals, 65% in private hospitals). This was consistent with a long-term rise in the proportion of admissions that were same-day, from 46.3% in 1997-98 to 55.8% in 2006-07. In 2006-07 there were almost 557,000 admissions for elective surgery from public hospital waiting lists. Fifty per cent of these admitted patients waited 32 days or less. This median waiting time was the same as for the previous year, but had increased from 28 days in 2002-03. There were about 6.7 million emergency department presentations, with 70% of people being seen in the recommended time for their urgency category. The proportions seen on time were 99% of resuscitation cases (seen within 2 minutes), 78% of emergency cases (within 10 minutes), 65% of urgent cases (within 30 minutes) and 66% of semi-urgent cases (within 60 minutes). In 2006-07, public hospital expenditure was \$26.3 billion-5.6% greater than in 2005-06 after adjusting for inflation.

The AIHW media release is at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/mediacentre/2008/mr20080530.cfm> and the full publication at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10587>

Transport accidents and suicide top causes of injury death among youth

The AIHW report, "*Injury among young Australians*", shows that injury as a whole was responsible for two-thirds of all deaths of young people aged 12 to 24 years in 2005, and for one in six hospitalisations. Transport accidents were responsible for 44% of injury deaths and 20% of injury hospitalisations in this age group. Suicides accounted for 32% of injury deaths. Injury remained the major cause of death despite a halving of injury death rates over the two decades to 2005 - This decline was almost entirely due to a 70% decrease in transport accident deaths in young people, but there has also been a modest fall in suicide deaths over the same period. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people had considerably higher rates of death and hospitalisation due to injury than other young Australians. The hospitalisation rate for assault was six times as high. Hospitalisation and death rates from injury also increase with remoteness and socioeconomic disadvantage.

The AIHW media release is at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/mediacentre/2008/mr20080604.cfm> and the publication at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10500>

AIHW Access no. 25: June 2008

Contents:

Special feature articles on Indigenous Australians:

Indigenous health programs: AIHW role

Indigenous housing: the building blocks of change

People behind the stats-the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Welfare Unit

Working in partnership-AIHW and the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

From the Deputy Director-E-health and old-health

AIHW developing performance indicators for the new health care agreements

Report profile-Occupational asthma in Australia

Improving access to data... and making better use of it through data linkage

Report profile-Diabetes: Australian facts 2008

Australia's health 2008 conference notice

Available at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10631>

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HOUSEHOLD EXPENDITURE ON HEALTH: A SNAPSHOT, 2004-05  
(ABS 4836.0.55.001)  
<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/4836.0.55.001?OpenDocument>

In 2003-04 households in the Northern Territory reported the lowest proportion of household health expenditure (3.8%), while households in the ACT (5.7%) reported the highest proportion of total expenditure on health, partly reflecting the age and income profiles in the two territories.

While the national trend was for households in capital cities to spend a higher proportion of their income on health expenses than households in the balance of their states, the exception was Queensland, where households in Brisbane spent 4.4% of their income, compared to an average of 5.3% for households in the rest of Queensland.

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Join friends of the Alliance in 2007. By joining friends you will receive the updated CD 'Rural and Remote Health Papers 1991-2007', a 2007 friends certificate, and regular issues of PARTYline newsletter. Membership of friends would also give you the opportunity to be involved more closely with the Alliance's information dissemination and policy work. You will become part of a group of people who contribute to and support the work of the National Rural Health Alliance.

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MAPS AND CENSUS PROFILES, AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS GEOGRAPHICAL CLASSIFICATION, 2006  
(ABS 4706.0.30.001)  
<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4706.0.30.0012006?OpenDocument>

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

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AMA AWARDS 2008 - EXCELLENCE IN HEALTHCARE

This year's AMA Excellence in Healthcare Award has been won by Dr Nigel Stewart, head of the Northern Regional Paediatric Unit at Port Augusta Hospital in South Australia, a paediatrician who had worked tirelessly for at-risk key medical services, particularly for

children and indigenous Australians. The AMA statement is at <http://www.ama.com.au/web.nsf/doc/WEEN-7F6UCF>

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**BUSH CRISIS LINE - 1800 805 391**

Bush Crisis Line is a twenty-four hour confidential telephone support and debriefing service for multi-disciplinary remote and rural health practitioners and their families. It is staffed by qualified psychologists with remote and cross-cultural experience, is toll free and available from anywhere in Australia. For more information <http://www.bushcrisisline.org.au>

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**TECHNICAL COMMITTEE OF THE COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP FOR FARMING AND FISH SAFETY**

The Collaborative Partnership will run from 2008-2013. Its mission is to improve the health and safety of workers and their families in the farming and fishing industries across Australia. The main function of the technical committee is to give sound advice on the identification, selection and progress of the Partnership's research and development investment to the Management Committee. The Technical Committee will have representatives from the following disciplines:

- Epidemiology
- Safety in machinery use / engineering
- Depression
- Farming
- Fishing
- Evaluation of health programs
- Learning Systems
- and RIRDC (as managing agent).

Members of the technical committee will be chosen for their technical expertise in the disciplines listed above and their capacity to relate their expertise to the objectives of the Collaborative Partnership.

For more information on applying contact Jane Fisher, Senior Research Manager, National Rural Issues, RIRDC on (02) 6271 4149.

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**RURAL HEALTH ON THE WEB**

(From Google Alert, <http://www.googlealert.com>)

Marshfield Clinic Research Foundation - National Children's Center ...  
The National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety strives to enhance the health and safety of all children exposed to hazards ...  
[http://www.marshfieldclinic.org/NFMC/pages/default.aspx?page=nccrahs\\_welcome](http://www.marshfieldclinic.org/NFMC/pages/default.aspx?page=nccrahs_welcome)

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From: Adrienne Hallam  
Subject: Details for NHHRC community engagement forums

Below are the details for the Commission's community engagement forums:

Thursday 5 June - 6.00pm-9.00pm - Parramatta Sydney

Wednesday 11 June - 6.00pm-9.00pm - Alice Springs

Monday 16 June - 6.00pm-9.00pm - Cairns

Thursday 19 June - 6.00pm-9.00pm - Brisbane

Thursday 24 June - 6.00pm-9.00pm - Melbourne

Thursday 26 June - 6.00pm-9.00pm - Shepparton

Wednesday 2 July - 6.00pm-9.00pm - Darwin

Tuesday 8 July - 6.00pm-9.00pm - Perth

Wednesday 9 July - 6.00pm-9.00pm - Adelaide

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#### RURAL HEALTH ON THE ABC

(From ABC Health Updates, <http://abcmail.net.au/t/73489/614869/1366/0/>)

Macklin appoints NT intervention review board

The former head of the Kimberley Land Council, Peter Yu, will lead a review into the intervention into Northern Territory Indigenous communities.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/06/06/2267716.htm>

GOLDEN STAPH SERIOUSLY THREATENS INDIGENOUS HEALTH (AM:  
31/05/2008)

<http://abcmail.net.au/t/170200/614869/3567/0/>

CLAIMS OF COVER-UP OVER MT ISA LEAD CONTAMINATION (Lateline:  
30/05/2008)

<http://abcmail.net.au/t/170200/614869/3569/0/>

IN LIKE FLYNN (Landline: 01/06/2008)

The Royal Flying Doctor Service has recently turned 80. Megan Pailthorpe went back to where it all began in Queensland's north-west, and found the RFDS is now developing preventative healthcare programs in remote communities.

<http://abcmail.net.au/t/170200/614869/3579/0/>

FLYING DOCTORS (Stateline Queensland: 23/05/2008)

<http://abcmail.net.au/t/164581/614869/3428/0/>

Petrol prices 'threatening rural dialysis patients'  
Kidney Health Australia says the rising cost of petrol is threatening dialysis patients in regional Australia.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/05/25/2254815.htm>

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#### SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S COUNTRY HEALTH CARE PLAN

South Australia's Country Health Care Plan will change the way country health services are delivered to continue to provide safe and high quality health care that also meets the health challenges of an ageing population, the increasing incidence of chronic disease, national workforce shortages and ageing infrastructure.

A new approach to the delivery and coordination of health care services in the country is proposed. A "hub and spoke" model will be established where health services of different sizes work together to ensure a wide range of services is available locally. Four Country General Hospitals will be the "hub" hospitals providing enhanced services at Whyalla, Port Lincoln, Berri and Mount Gambier.

The Country General Hospitals will provide specialised services using visiting health professionals, salaried medical officers and local general practitioners. Radiating from the general hospitals will be other health units, the "spokes", delivering a variety of care, based on the needs of the population, workforce and safety considerations.

Details are at <http://www.health.sa.gov.au/Default.aspx?tabid=526>

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#### ARTICLE IN "RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH"

'Water safety in the bush: strategies for addressing training needs in remote areas'  
For the 85% of Australians living by the coast, being water safe is a part of life. This culture isn't always found in the bush. This project looks at an innovative strategy for providing and implementing a water safety program.

<http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=855>

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#### FUNDING BOOST FOR NSW RURAL AND REGIONAL HEALTH

NSW Minister for Health Reba Meagher said the NSW 2008-09 Health Budget provides \$3.8 billion for rural and regional NSW, an increase of \$139 million over last year. In addition, the Iemma Government will invest around \$250 million on capital works projects throughout rural and regional NSW.

Details are at [http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/news/2008/20080603\\_16.html](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/news/2008/20080603_16.html)

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CURRENT ISSUE OF eMJA, 2 June 2008

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

There is pressure on medical schools to produce not only more doctors, but to prepare them for work in a range of geographical areas of need, according to an article in the latest issue of Medical Journal of Australia. Prof David Wilkinson Head of the School of Medicine at the University of Queensland, and his co-authors, said the critical shortage of the rural medical workforce in Australia is continuing but there are concerns with the latest policy to tackle the problem. Research shows that by 2012, the shortfall of doctors in rural and remote areas could reach 1,182.

From the Editor's Desk: Bedevilled by bugs

Editorial - Human research ethics - a work in progress

Editorial - Vitalness of vital signs, and medical emergency teams

Editorial - "Of droughts and flooding rains": philanthropy for health and medical research

Research - Significant reductions in methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteraemia and clinical isolates associated with a multisite, hand hygiene culture-change program and subsequent successful statewide roll-out

Research - Decrease in breast cancer incidence following a rapid fall in use of hormone replacement therapy in Australia

Research - Classification and description of stillbirths in New South Wales, 2002-2004

Research Enterprise - Research governance: current knowledge among clinical researchers

Research Enterprise - Fair inclusion of men and women in Australian clinical research: views from ethics committee chairs

For Debate - Respiratory rate: the neglected vital sign

Clinical Update - Premature ejaculation: a clinical update

Viewpoint - Coping with increasing numbers of medical students in rural clinical schools: options and opportunities

Snapshot - An osseous cause of dysphagia

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## NSW RURAL MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY AND CRITICAL CARE ACCESS PLAN

The RMHECCAP provides a framework for the development of emergency mental health services tailored to specific rural and remote conditions: distance, population distribution, workforce and available hospital services, and identifies the resource requirements to meet those needs. The plan assists rural areas to develop an implementation plan based on networking of services from regional bases to promote: improved safety of transport; increased access to specialist mental health advice and support to more remote facilities; training of health staff in rural mental health emergencies; the appropriateness of services to the level of patient need and environment; and mainstreaming of mental health emergency care.

The plan is available at [http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/pubs/2006/pdf/rural\\_mental\\_health.pdf](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/pubs/2006/pdf/rural_mental_health.pdf)

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From: Roger Strasser

Subject: ICEMEN Conference: 9-14 June 2008

ICEMEN (International conference Community Engaged Medical Education in the North) takes place in Northern Ontario June 8 - 14. Presented jointly by Flinders University, Australia and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM), Canada, this conference has "something for everyone". The first two days in Sudbury will focus on community based medical education program delivery; the middle day will be "medical education on the move" with on-site learning in several NOSM communities; and the final two days in Thunder Bay will be focused on rural clinical skills education, in collaboration with the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada.

Full information is available through the conference website: <http://www.nosm.ca/icemen>

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Celebrate International Men's Health Week!

Each year, International Men's Health Week is held (June 9-15th 2008) to raise awareness about a range of health issues that affect men in our community. International Men's Health Week is an opportunity for the community to think about men and their health and provide the support and encouragement for men to make their health a priority. Andrology Australia provides a number of free booklets on a range of men's health issues to help men understand when things go wrong. As part of International Men's Health Week, Andrology Australia is encouraging men to put their health first for themselves and their family. It is important that men learn more about their bodies, visit a GP or think about their lifestyle to include regular exercise and healthy eating. Go to the Andrology Australia website for more health information and to enter the International Men's Health Week competition. You could WIN a trip to Melbourne with two friends to play a round of golf with Ambassador Merv Hughes. Visit the Andrology Australia website, <http://www.andrologyaustralia.org> to enter.

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3rd Regional Perspectives Conference - 'Understanding sustainable regions'

We all know location matters. People in different places work differently and live differently, yet all are part of the community of Australia. Research of the fundamental character and function of regions brings economics close to where we all live, identifies many key 'people issues' and allows new insights into the nation. If we don't understand the regions where we live, how can we appreciate the bigger picture. This year's theme will cover four main topics - new directions in regional policy, understanding community wellbeing, understanding economic fundamentals - growth, change and contrasts across Northern Australia, and climate shocks - understanding regional adaptation.

Keynote speaker, Professor Philip McCann, Professor of Economics, Waikato Management School, The University of Waikato, New Zealand, will speak on '*Globalisation, Knowledge and Regions*'. Eminent speakers include; Professors Ann Harding, John Handmer, Rolf Gerritsen and Andrew Beer, Dr Neil Barr and Messrs, Reg Howard-Smith, John Angley and the senior research team at BITRE led by Dr Gary Dolman.

BITRE's 3rd Regional Perspectives Conference, '*Understanding sustainable regions*' is to be held in the Mural Hall at Parliament House Canberra on 17 June 2008.

Further information is at <http://www.regionalperspectives.com.au/>

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From: McLean, Cherie  
Subject: Australia's health 2008 conference

*How are we going? How do we know?*  
Reserve your place for *Australia's health 2008* - the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's major biennial health conference providing insights into the health of Australia.

National Convention Centre - Canberra  
Monday 23 June - Welcome Dinner  
Tuesday 24 June - Conference

The program has been finalised and registrations are NOW open.

Guarantee your copy of *Australia's health 2008* - an essential reference and resource for all Australians with an interest in health, by registering for the conference.  
Registration Cost \$440 (inc. GST)  
Details at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/eventsdiary/ah08/index.cfm>

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Success stories: *Environmental, social, emotional & spiritual health* of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

CRC for Aboriginal Health is co-hosting a 1 day satellite workshop of Population Health in Brisbane Sunday 6th of July. CRCAH Research Director Professor Ian Anderson will be presenting a Plenary session. For more information and registration details [view flier at http://www.crcah.org.au/events/downloads/Congress-08-Indigenous-health-wshop-rego-v3-2.pdf](http://www.crcah.org.au/events/downloads/Congress-08-Indigenous-health-wshop-rego-v3-2.pdf).

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INAUGURAL RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH SCIENTIFIC SYMPOSIUM  
6-8 July 2008, Brisbane

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POPULATION HEALTH CONGRESS 2008  
A Global World - Practical action for health and Well-being

The Population Health Congress 2008 will be held on July 6-9 in the Brisbane Convention and exhibition Centre. Regular updates on Congress 2008 will be available at <http://www.populationhealthcongress.org.au> - log on to register your interest.

The Population Health Congress 2008 is for everyone working in Population Health in Australia and New Zealand - abstracts will be accepted over the full range of public health,

health promotion and epidemiological topics.

Conference Coordinators  
PO Box 139  
Calwe ll ACt 2905  
Ph (02) 6292 9000  
[congress2008@confco.com.au](mailto:congress2008@confco.com.au)

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2008 Fulbright Symposium Emerging Leaders Forum 12 July 2008  
Hosted by The CRC for Aboriginal Health and Flinders University, Adelaide

The mission of the Emerging Leaders Program is to inspire and motivate people who are emerging or potential leaders in their communities and who are committed to promoting healthy communities and building a prosperous country to take action to address health inequity and the social determinants of health in their own communities. Read more at <http://som.flinders.edu.au/FUSA/PublicHealth/fulbright/emergingleaders.htm>

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2nd NATIONAL MEN'S HEALTH CONFERENCE - "FROM BABIES TO BLOKES: THE MAKING OF MEN"

MAN, the Men's Advisory Network, Western Australia's peak men's organisation, will host their second national conference entitled 'from babies to blokes: the making of men' in Fremantle, Western Australia in August 2008. The Men's Advisory Network (MAN) is the peak body for service providers, organisations and individuals concerned with men's health, wellbeing and other issues affecting males of all ages in Western Australia. With nine outstanding keynote speakers already confirmed, this conference will be an important learning experience for all those who work with men and boys. A new understanding of manhood is essential to improving the wellbeing of the whole community. We invite your participation. The Call for Papers is available online <http://www.promaco.com.au/2008/man/>

The Men's Advisory Network Inc. 2nd National Conference Fremantle, Western Australia  
Esplanade Hotel 3-6 August 2008

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Continence Awareness Week 3 to 9 August 2008  
Website <http://www.continence.org.au>

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RANZCOG 2008 Australian Indigenous Women's Health Meeting  
14-16 August 2008, Darwin

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) is convening an Indigenous women's health meeting, with the aim of bringing together health professionals across the country with the common interest and desire to

improve the health and well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.  
<http://www.crcah.org.au/communication/news.html#RAZ>

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### 9th INTERNATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

14-16 August 2008, Holiday Inn, Gold Coast.

The revised link for access to the conference website and for abstract submissions is

Conference website: <http://www.gcimh.com.au/conference/>

Abstract Submission [http://astmanagement.com.au/gcimhforms/MH\\_Abstract.asp](http://astmanagement.com.au/gcimhforms/MH_Abstract.asp)

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### 2008 SARRAH CONFERENCE

2008 National SARRAH Conference: Many Paddocks One Herd. 27-30 August 2008, Yeppoon, Central Queensland

Registrations are now open for the 2008 SARRAH Conference.

<http://www.sarrah.org.au/site/index.cfm?display=87530>

This conference is the peak opportunity for rural and remote allied health and oral health professionals to come together and present, discuss, debate and summarise the elements of their professional lives that bind them together.

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### Insights & Solutions: 2nd International conference

INSIGHTS and SOLUTIONS: the combined 2nd International Conference on Alcohol and Other Drug Related Brain Injury and the Brain Injury Australia National Conference 2008 (Melbourne, Australia, Monday 1 - Wednesday 3 September 2008). As you may already know, leading acquired brain injury organisations, arbias and Brain Injury Australia, have joined forces to bring you this exciting and informative three day event. The combined conference recognises the need for innovative approaches and improved practice in the field of acquired brain injury and this will feature throughout the conference program. The overarching theme, INSIGHTS and SOLUTIONS, will provide a focal point for exploring all facets of acquired brain injury and presents an opportunity for people with acquired brain injury, their families and carers, clinicians, professional workers, researchers and policy makers to: -access cutting edge national and international research -drive education and prevention campaigns -build stronger treatment and support networks. Online registration is now open via this link <https://www.secureregistrations.com/brain08/>.

For more information: <http://www.arbias.org.au> or <http://www.bia.net.au> or email [events@adf.org.au](mailto:events@adf.org.au) or phone (03) 9728 8137

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### CRANA Conference 2008

Australia's Remote Health Challenge: Is Primary Health Care the solution?

11 - 14 September 2008

Cairns, Queensland

More information at <http://www.crana.org.au/cr.php?ID=9>

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2008 AIDA Symposium - Our Culture, Our Kids, Our Future  
Saturday 4 October, 2008  
Darwin  
Information at <http://www.aida.org.au/news.asp?id=30>

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The 2008 School of Rural Health Research Conference  
Chronic Disease Management in Rural Areas  
16 October 2008  
School of Rural Health, Shepparton, Victoria  
More information at  
<http://www.ruralhealth.unimelb.edu.au/announcements/conference/index.htm>

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17th National Conference on Incontinence - 5 to 8 November 2008 - Grand Chancellor Hotel,  
Hobart  
Website <http://www.continence.org.au>

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ARNM's 2008 Annual Conference

Rural Nurses and Midwives: There's No Stopping Us Now  
6 - 7 November 2008  
Glenelg Adelaide, South Australia  
More information at <http://www.arnm.asn.au/index.php?/content/view/62/99/>

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**CONTRIBUTION AND SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION AND DISCLAIMER**

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

The NRHA e-forum is edited by a third party moderator, Jim Groves. As such, the Alliance does not control postings and the contents do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Alliance. Nor do postings necessarily reflect the view of Jim Groves or any organisation he is associated with. Jim Groves can be contacted at [grovesc@winshop.com.au](mailto:grovesc@winshop.com.au)

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

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Media Release

4 June 2008

For improved rural health, look outside the health sector

The National Rural Health Alliance has called on the Government to improve the wellbeing of the more than seven million Australians in rural and remote areas by investing in a comprehensive plan to develop infrastructure, education, housing and illness prevention.

Chair of the Alliance, John Wakerman, said much of the work being done for rural health is being impeded by insufficient whole-of-government attention to the determinants of illness that fall outside the scope of the health sector.

"Communities that provide good housing, good quality local schools, career opportunities, social and artistic outlets, safe roads and affordable fresh food are healthy places for children and families. They are also more likely to attract and keep their health professionals," Professor Wakerman said.

"If Governments were to invest more in the sustainability of rural communities, some workforce issues would take care of themselves. Improved health outcomes in the bush will require investment in all of those things that make a vital and comfortable community - and not rely solely on the efforts of our currently overworked traditional health professionals," he said.

The existing structure of remuneration and working conditions for health professionals tends to favour city practice. As a consequence rural and remote areas - which are home to 35 per cent of Australia's taxpayers - have access to only 15 per cent of the nation's GPs, 5 per cent of newly graduating GPs and receive 20 per cent of all Medicare rebates.

"Rural communities are also desperately short of dentists, nurses and allied health professionals," Prof Wakerman said.

"A new incentive system for rural health professions is required - one that is graduated for remoteness and does not always rely on the fee-for-service model."

In a written submission to the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission, the Alliance also details a range of other initiatives that include:

- \*. Medicare should be boldly extended to provide no-cost or low-cost access to whichever clinician can cost-effectively and safely provide each intervention that is clinically required.
- \*. The value of local hospitals and the importance of rural women being able to have their babies close to home should be reflected in significant and urgent re-investment in the maintenance and safety of small rural hospitals and rural maternity services.
- \*. Access to broadband should be a fundamental right, with people in rural and remote Australia able to access information communications technology that allows equal capacity to benefit from new health technologies.
- \*. Where services are not available locally, a uniform national patients' travel and accommodation scheme should be available to enable people to travel for treatment.
- \*. A no-fault system of medical indemnity would be more equitable and cost-effective, and

would help to reverse the current trend of specialists moving away from rural areas.

\*. Systemic reform of the health system will support other efforts to close the 17 year gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

"Achieving equal health for people in rural Australia is not just an equity issue: health is a key economic input which contributes to greater national productivity, improved workforce participation and increased economic growth - as well as to lower health care costs through reduced hospital admissions and disability," said Prof Wakerman.

People in rural and remote areas potentially have a lot to gain from the reform plans being led by the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission - particularly if health outcomes are given higher priority by governments as a whole.