

**National Rural Health Alliance
E-forum 7 September 2007**

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NEWS FROM THE ALLIANCE: AUGUST 2007

Election 2007

Council of the NRHA visited politicians in Parliament House, on 9 August seeking the commitment of political parties to the Alliance's key priorities in the lead-up to the coming Federal Election. Our key priorities and detailed bids can be found on the front page of our website at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>

Partyline No 31

The next edition of Partyline will be out before the Federal Election. It will contain details of the Alliance's 2007 Election Charter and other articles of current interest. Partyline can be found in the Publications section of our website at:

<http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/publications/?IntContId=57&IntCatId=6>. If you would like to receive Partyline, send your contact details to 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.

'Rural and Remote Health Papers 1991-2007' CD Out Now

The 'Rural and Remote Health Papers 1991-2007' CD is now available and has been sent to all 9th Conference delegates and financial members of *friends* of the Alliance. The CD contains all papers, publications and Conference proceedings produced by the Alliance since 1991, as well as some other key documents on rural and remote health. If you would like to receive a copy you can find a *friends* membership form on our website at:

<http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/friends/?IntCatId=4>

Public Seminar: Listening with Compassion, Responding with Respect - the wellbeing of Refugees in Rural and Remote Australia - 7 August 2007

Proceedings of this Seminar (presentations, photographs, audio files and transcripts) are now available on the Public Seminar page of our website at

<http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/seminars/?IntCatId=18>

AJRH Writing to Publication Seminar: CD Available

Presentations, audio files and transcripts from the Writing for Publication Seminar which was held in conjunction with the 9th Conference in Albury are available on our website at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/ajrh/?IntContId=170&IntCatId=20>. If you do not have internet access and would prefer to receive it on CD, send your postal address to leanne@ruralhealth.org.au and we'll put one in the post to you.

Health Reform Summit

The Australian Health Care Reform Alliance held a National Summit 'Reform in the Australian Health Sector' on 30-31 July 2007 in Canberra. The Summit's communique and media release can be found on the AHCRA website at <http://www.healthreform.org.au>

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 for up-to-date information about the Conference. The first announcement will be the Call for Abstracts in early 2008.

Latest News

To keep up-to-date with Alliance media releases and other important information don't forget to regularly visit the Latest News section of our website <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/news/?IntCatId=8>

Please keep in touch with the Alliance and continue to keep us informed about what's happening in rural and remote Australia.

Leanne Coleman
Office Manager, NRHA
Phone: 02 6285 4660

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PROFESSOR JOHN WAKERMAN RE-APPOINTED TO LEAD

At its recent 16th Annual General Meeting in Canberra, Council of the National Rural Health Alliance re-elected professor John Wakerman as Chairperson for another year.

- Members of the incoming Board are:
- Chairperson John Wakerman
 - Deputy Chairperson Jenny May
 - Secretary Owen Allen
 - Honorary Treasurer Pauline Wardle
 - Immediate Past Chairperson Sue McAlpin
 - Ordinary Member Sophie Heathcote
 - Ordinary member Irene Mills
 - Ordinary member Lesley Young

Members of the Board will appoint two members of Council as Moderators to form a full Board complement of 10.

While in Canberra, Council of the Alliance met with Federal Health Minister, Tony Abbott, Shadow Minister Nicola Roxon, and other parliamentarians. The key materials presented to parliamentarians are available on the front page of the NRHA website at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>

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'SUPER CLINICS' DEMAND BOOST IN FUNDING AND WORKFORCE NUMBERS

The National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA) supports Labor's plan to establish 'Super Clinics' in rural and regional areas - but cautions that high costs and current workforce shortages might require a higher level of investment than currently proposed. The NRHA statement is at

<http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/media/super%20clinics%20and%20rural%20areas%2027%20august.pdf> and is reprinted below.

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9th NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE - PROCEEDINGS OUT NOW!

7 - 10 March 2007, Albury, New South Wales

Those unable to attend the 9th National Rural Health Conference in Albury (7-10 March 2007) should take heart. The National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA) has comprehensively updated its website by adding post-Conference information to keep you informed about the state of health in Australia's rural and remote areas.

For instance a Conference Communique highlights the two burning issues that remain even after 17 years of fruitful discussion - the lower rate of Indigenous life expectancy and the insufficient focus within national research programs on rural and remote health and wellbeing.

The NRHA invites you to download the Communique at a keystroke by visiting <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/conferences/?IntCatId=9> and clicking on the Visit the Conference hotlink.

The revised website also contains a downloadable copy of the 18 priority recommendations covering matters such as Indigenous health, arts-in-health, the health workforce and research to help rural communities cope with the health and social effects of the drought.

A full set of 250 Conference recommendations is also available. They provide a snapshot of current thinking on rural and remote health issues identified by delegates in March 2007 under the theme Standing up for Rural Health: Learning from the past - Action for the future.

But wait there's more...

The new-look site includes colour headshots of each of the 20 keynote speakers, including transcripts of what they said and audio accounts that allow you to better gauge how each one was delivered.

The quality lineup includes the keynote address of Federal Health Minister, Tony Abbott, as well as Senator Kate Lundy, the Shadow Minister for Health Promotion. Other guest speakers included Rhonda Galbally, Steve Clark, Philip Davies and John Menadue, among others.

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Manuscript submissions to The Australian Journal of Rural Health can now be made online through Manuscript Central. Easy and fast submission process; track the progress of your article at any time; safe and secure site. Simply log on to <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ajrh> to submit your manuscript today and share the wealth of your knowledge. Full author instructions and guidelines can be found at the AJRH homepage - <http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/ajr>

The October 2007 issue of the journal is available online now at <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/links/toc/ajr>. Articles include:

- * The Northern Territory can provide hope for the future
- * Where is the evidence that rural exposure increases uptake of rural medical practice?
- * Informing rural and remote students about careers in health: Factors influencing career decisions
- * Diabetes risk factors, diabetes and diabetes care in a rural Australian community
- * Improving access to and outcomes from mental health care in rural Australia
- * Where do I go from here: We've got enough seniors?
- * Self-reported confidence and skills of general practitioners in management of mental health disorders
- * Cardiovascular risk levels in general practice patients with type 2 diabetes in rural and urban areas
- * Supporting an emerging workforce: Characteristics of rural and remote therapy assistants in Western Australia
- * Grazings
- * From the Journal Associates

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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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LABOR'S "SUPER CLINICS"

Federal Labor has announced it will invest \$220 million in the health system to establish GP Super Clinics in local communities. The investment will ensure more Australian families have access to doctors, nurses, specialists and allied health professionals, such as physiotherapists, podiatrists, dieticians and psychologists, all in one centre, in their local community where they need them.

The statement by Opposition Leader Kevin Rudd and health spokesperson Nicola Roxon is at <http://www.alp.org.au/media/0807/mshealoo260.php> and the policy paper "paper, *New Directions for Australia's health - Delivering GP Super Clinics*" is at http://www.alp.org.au/download/new_directions_for_australias_health_gp_super_clinics_final.pdf

The Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) welcomed the recognition by the Australian Labor Party that better government support in building primary healthcare infrastructure will be required to improve health services in disadvantaged areas, particularly in rural Australia, but the Association warned that improved initiatives and incentives to get and keep more doctors and other health professionals in the bush will be just as critical for the next Federal Government. The full text of the RDAA statement is at http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/Rural%20Practice%20infrastructure%20ALP%20policy%2027%20Aug%202007.pdf

AMA President, Dr Rosanna Capolingua, said that, after close examination of Labor's plan for GP Super Clinics, the policy raises more questions than answers to the primary health care needs of Australian patients. The AMA statement is at <http://www.ama.com.au/web.nsf/doc/WEEN-76G664>

The proposal was welcomed by the Doctors' Reform Society. The DRS statement is at <http://www.drs.org.au/media/2007/media270807.htm>

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PARTYline Newsletter

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

Partyline Edition 30 includes:

- * highlights from the 9th National Rural Health Conference, including reviews of keynote addresses, in-depth discussion of health reform, the role of the arts in achieving good health, impressions from delegates, student voices, policy impact of recommendations, rural health winners, and pictorial highlights
- * equal health within a generation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- * responses to Budget 2007-08
- * writing for publication
- * telling your rural health story
- * rural health news
- * resources
- * dates for your calendar.

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LIFELINE INFORMATION SERVICE - 1300 13 11 14

Your Rural Mental Health Information Service

Lifeline's Information Service is a rural mental health information service. Information provided includes: referral to services and web sites, printed material and a range of self help resources. The self-help resources focus on practical steps to help promote mental health in a range of areas. For information and copies of resources call or visit <http://www.lifeline.org.au/infoservice> and further information is available at infoservice@lifeline.org.au and <http://www.lifeline.org.au>

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NEW ARTICLES IN RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH

'Child abuse and the 'Little Children are Sacred' Report: a rural paediatrician's perspective' Where are the children? That is the question rural paediatrician Dr Peter Jones wants answered. This letter is a part of the series from people with personal or professional insight into the emergency measures imposed on remote Aboriginal communities in response to charges of child abuse. Peter reflects on his 18 years of professional experience and questions how the 'emergency response' will actually improve the situation for abused and neglected children and their families.

<http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=856>

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DENTISTS IN RURAL AREAS ARE TOO THINLY SPREAD

The Australian Dental Association (ADA) has called on the Federal Government to address the maldistribution of the current dental workforce which is negatively impacting on the delivery of services in areas of need such as in rural, regional and remote parts of Australia. The ADA statement is at <http://www.ada.org.au/newsroom/articles,category,media.aspx>

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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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\$6 MILLION FOR RURAL PALLIATIVE CARE

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Health and Ageing, Senator Brett Mason, said the Government was providing more than \$6 million from 2007 to 2010 to expand the Rural Palliative Care Project.

Officially opening the 9th National Palliative Care Conference, Senator Mason, said the funding would support Divisions of General Practice in regional and rural areas to develop local palliative care service delivery.

The full text of Senator Mason's statement is at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr07-bm-mas039.htm>

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RURAL HEALTH ON THE ABC

(From ABC Rural Newsletter, <http://www.abc.net.au/rural/default.htm> and Health Updates, <http://www.abc.net.au/health/maillinglist.htm>)

ABC News Online, 28/08/2007

A former head of the Australian Medical Association (AMA) says health workers in remote Indigenous communities should be paid more than those in cities.

FEDERAL GOVT PLANS MERSEY HOSPITAL TAKEOVER (PM: 03/09/2007)

<http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2007/s2022970.htm>

PETROL BRAIN (Catalyst: 30/08/2007)

For twenty years, an epidemic of petrol sniffing has devastated the remote Aboriginal community of Maningrida in Arnhem Land, NT. In their quest to bridge the cultural divide, scientists and health workers have developed a brain function test that works for Aboriginal people - so effective it's now in use for clinical trials, sports medicine, NASA research, and the general population.

<http://www.abc.net.au/catalyst/stories/s2019179.htm>

Indigenous health must be Govt's top priority: AMA

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/09/06/2026117.htm>

Govt intervention restricts Indigenous welfare spending

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2007/09/06/2026157.htm>

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AMA ANNOUNCES KEY HEALTH ISSUES FOR THE 2007 FEDERAL ELECTION

AMA President, Dr Rosanna Capolingua, has released "Key Health Issues for the 2007 Federal Election", a summary of the major health issues that the AMA considers will win or lose votes at the upcoming election.

"Health is without doubt a priority election issue," Dr Capolingua said. "Australia has a good health system by world standards, but it is not providing equal access for all Australians to high quality health care and services."

"Key Health Issues for the 2007 Federal Election" sets out practical policy recommendations under 18 headings, including Indigenous health, public hospitals, aged care, rural health, nutrition and obesity, Medicare, global warming, alcohol, smoking, and private health.

"Key Health Issues for the 2007 Federal Election is available at <http://www.ama.com.au/web.nsf/doc/ween-76q23p> and the AMA statement is at <http://www.ama.com.au/web.nsf/doc/WEEN-76RAWF>

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CURRENT ISSUE OF eMJA
(Available at <http://www.mja.com.au/>)

Rapid online publication, 20 July 2007
HIV diagnoses in Australia: diverging epidemics within a low prevalence country

- Current issue: 3 September 2007
From the Editor's Desk
Lung transplantation: does age make a difference?
Health technology assessment in Australia: challenges ahead
Beliefs of young people and their parents about the harmfulness of alcohol, cannabis and tobacco for mental disorders
Live birth following day surgery reversal of female sterilisation in women older than 40 years: a realistic option in Australia?
Outcomes after 10 years of a community-based flexible sigmoidoscopy screening program for colorectal carcinoma
Successful lung transplantation for adolescents at a hospital for adults
Health technology assessment in England: assessment and appraisal
Health technology assessment in Canada: diversity and evolution
An evaluation of methods used in health technology assessments produced for the Medical Services Advisory Committee
Patient delay in responding to symptoms of possible heart attack: can we reduce time to care?
Postural syncope: mechanisms and management
Von Meyenberg complexes simulating diffuse liver metastasis in rectal carcinoma
Blood group incompatibility in kidney transplantation: definitely time to re-examine!
Lymphogranuloma venereum: an emerging anorectal disease in Australia

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2006 CENSUS DATA BECOMING AVAILABLE FROM ABS

The Community Profile Series contains six separate profiles aimed at providing information on key Census characteristics relating to persons, families and dwellings and covering most topics on the Census form. The profiles are excellent tools for researching, planning and analysing small and large geographic areas. They enable comparisons to be made between different geographic areas. The profiles which will be available for the 2006 Census will be: Basic Community Profile (BCP), Place of Enumeration Profile (PEP), Indigenous Profile (IP), Time Series Profile (TSP), Expanded Community Profile (XCP) and the Working Population Profile (WPP).

The Indigenous Profile (IP) consists of 34 tables containing key Census characteristics of Indigenous persons and households. Some tables provide comparisons with the non-Indigenous population. The data are based on place of usual residence. The IP will be released in two phases. First release tables are those tables containing classifications which

are easy to process and are available on release day. Second release tables contain classifications which require more complex processing and will be available on the second release day.

Census data is available at
<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/ViewContent?readform&view=ProductsbyCatalogue&Action=Expand&Num=2.1>

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3rd Annual Australian Nurse Practitioner Association Conference
21-22 September 2007
Sheraton Hotel, Perth, WA
For more information, visit <http://www.dcconferences.com.au/anpa07>

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THE LIME CONNECTION II "CULTURES ACROSS THE INDIGENOUS HEALTH SPECTRUM: ACHIEVING BETTER OUTCOMES"

The Medical Deans of Australia and New Zealand (Medical Deans) and the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association (AIDA) announces The LIME Connection II conference, held in Sydney from Sunday 23rd to Tuesday 25th September, 2007.

Leaders in the field of Indigenous medical education and practice will present their experiences and share innovative approaches through a mix of keynote addresses, oral and poster presentations, group discussions and a public lecture. Topics will include:

- * reviewing medical schools' progress towards implementing the curriculum framework and Indigenous student initiatives
- * learning and sharing with other health science disciplines, postgraduate medical education bodies, medical colleges and divisions
- * defining cultural safety in Australian health and medical education
- * looking toward the future to examine what's possible and where we go from here

For further information, please visit the LIME Connection II web site at
<http://www.limenetwork.net.au/conference/welcome>

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From: Michael Blair
Subject: Australian College of Mental Health Nurses 33rd Annual International Conference

The Australian College of Mental Health Nurses is to hold its 33rd Annual Conference in Cairns in 2007.

The theme for the conference, "Mental Health Nurses: Making Waves", not only illustrates the tropical location of the 2007 conference, it is also intended to reflect the idea that historically derived factors influencing development in Mental Health Nursing, reach out and influence others with related concerns.

Waves convey ideas of movement and change. History evolves as events change. Its influence on the future changes with developments that are based on the lessons learnt and experienced. As a wave rolls through, its predecessor is completely changed and yet waves are comprised of those that have come before. Our theme challenges presenters to address related topics. We know that mental health issues will remain important to communities and individuals in the years and decades to come. Mental health nursing is challenged to make waves and to be a key player in this expanding sphere.

The ACMHN Inc., through its national Conferences, local seminars, educational functions, scholarships and awards, has enjoyed a long and productive relationship with key sponsors. We hope that existing sponsors will take this opportunity to continue a mutually rewarding relationship, and that new groups will be inspired to join us.

The Web site URL for persons to express an interest in attending or sponsoring the conference is <http://www.astmanagement.com.au/anzcmhc7/>

All those persons that express an interest in attending via the web site will go into the draw for a free registration to the conference.

The conference will be held at the International Hotel in Cairns from the 8th to the 12th of October 2007.

For further information contact:
Mick Blair
Co-convenor
ACMHN Inc. 33rd International Conference 2007

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ANTI-POVERTY WEEK

Help fight poverty and hardship in Australia and overseas. Organise an activity during the Week - 14-20 October 2007 - big or small, local or national. FOR INFO & IDEAS, see <http://www.antipovertyweek.org.au> OR CONTACT US AT 1300 797 290; or apw@antipovertyweek.org.au

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Climate Change and Human Health Conference
Tuesday 16 and Wednesday 17 October 2007
Park Hyatt Hotel, Melbourne, Australia
<http://www.healthclimate2007.com>

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From: Scott Wagner
Subject: NSW Rural Allied Health Conference 2007, Dubbo, October 18-19

Details are at <http://www.nswrahc.com>.

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ACRRM AGM and Conference - Friday 26 October to Sunday 28 October

ACRRM will hold its AGM in NSW on the weekend of 26-28 October 2007. A program of educational activities will also be held for practitioners, registrars and students. Information at <http://www.acrrm.org.au/>

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UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE, SCHOOL OF RURAL HEALTH, 2007 RESEARCH CONFERENCE

The University of Melbourne, School of Rural Health, invites you to participate in the 3rd Annual Shepparton Research Conference on Tuesday 27th November 2007 from 9am to 5pm.

The research conference, entitled: "Moving Forward: Rural Research & Knowledge Transfer" is intended for individuals and organisations with an interest in rural health, including general practice, primary health care, integrated care and population health, research and evaluation. Register online by accessing the School of Rural health website <http://www.ruralhealth.unimelb.edu.au> and clicking on the conference link after that date. A hardcopy of the registration pack can be obtained by emailing the Conference Secretariat.

Pauline Venn Conference Secretariat pvenn@unimelb.edu.au Ph: 03 5823 4532

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From: Jane Howorth - ECC Information Desk
Subject: NSW Rural Mental Health Conference

This year's NSW Rural Mental Health Conference is taking place in Batemans Bay, 3 - 5 December 2007, hosted by the Greater Southern Area Health Service. Further information on the conference website:

<http://www.rmhconference.com> or by contacting info@eastcoastconferences.com.au, tel 02 6650 9800.

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"DISADVANTAGE AND DIVERSITY" - AUSTRALIA'S WELFARE 2007 CONFERENCE

Thursday 6 December, The Marque Hotel, 102 Northbourne Avenue, Canberra

"Disadvantage and Diversity", a one-day conference to be held in the nation's capital, will provide a forum for debate and discussion on some of the issues facing Australia's Welfare. Topics covered will include ageing and aged care, children, youth and families, welfare service resources, and the dynamics of homelessness. if you would like to register your

interest to receive further information please contact the conference coordinator by telephone or email - Alison Diamond, Tel (02) 6244 1287, Fax (02) 6244 1299, Email conference2007@aihw.gov.au

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

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

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

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

The Forum will involve five days, with at least one day (or equivalent) in local field visits to see the relevant work of NGOs etc. There are likely to be optional additional visits after the Forum either to the famous Institute of Rural Management in Anand, Gujarat and/or to the equally famous Birla Institute of Technology in Pilani, Rajasthan.

The date of the conference will be around the end of January or beginning of February 2008. If you are interested, please check out our website at <http://www.International-Rural-Network.org> and email Nicola.swan@btinternet.com to register your interest in keeping informed as soon as possible.

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DIVERSITY IN HEALTH CONFERENCE

The Diversity in Health 2008: Strengths and Sustainable Solutions Conference (DIH 2008) will be the major event in diversity health in Australia for 2008.

The international conference will be held at the premier conference site at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre, from 10-12 March 2008. DIH 2008 will bring national and international leaders in the health industry together to showcase new and innovative approaches to providing quality health care for Australia's diverse communities. The conference will consider, review and develop strengths and sustainable solutions in the overall approach to health and well-being of culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

To register or to find out more about this momentous event, please go to: <http://www.dhi.gov.au/conference>. Brochures can be downloaded off the website or you can contact the Conference Secretariat on Tel: +61 2 9840 3800 Fax: +61 2 9840 3319, or email: dhi@swahs.health.nsw.gov.au

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From: Emma Grayson
Subject: 10th International Paediatric and Child Health Nursing Conference

The 10th International Paediatric and Child Health Nursing Conference is to be held at the Holiday Inn Esplanade and Darwin Entertainment Centre, Northern Territory, from Wednesday, 30 April to Friday, 2 May 2008. The conference is being hosted by the Australian Confederation of Paediatric and Child Health Nurses. The conference is expected to attract between 200 and 400 delegates from across Australia and abroad.

Through the implementation of the theme "Crossing barriers", this conference aims to illustrate that barriers can and must be crossed to improve health outcomes for children and young people. The conference aims are: to advance paediatric and child health nursing's contribution to health care and facilitate the dissemination of evidence highlighting effective nursing interventions to arise the profile of the benefits of interdisciplinary collaboration to identify future directions for paediatric and child health nursing to provide a forum that stimulates debate and collegiality.

For more information, to register your expression of interest or to download the call for abstracts, please visit the conference website at <http://www.ipchnconference.com.au> or by contacting the conference secretariat via email at info@ipchnconference.com.au or by telephone +61 7 3858 5503.

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

Come to Brisbane and join in Australia's population health event of the decade. Four organisations are working together to provide a line-up of international and national speakers that promises to be excellent.

The Population health Congress 2008 will be held on July 7-9 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.

Enquiries:
Conference Coordinators
PO Box 139
Calwe Il ACt 2905
Ph (02) 6292 9000
congress2008@confco.com.au

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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 for up-to-date information about the Conference. The first announcement will be the Call for Abstracts in early 2008.

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CONTRIBUTION AND SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION AND DISCLAIMER

The NRHA e-forum is edited by a third party moderator, Jim Groves. 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).

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

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

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Media Release

27 August 2007

'Super clinics' demand boost in funding and workforce numbers

The National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA) supports Labor's plan to establish 'Super Clinics' in rural and regional areas - but cautions that high costs and current workforce shortages might require a higher level of investment than currently proposed.

"We are encouraged that some of the focus would be in rural and regional areas (where Medicare is under-utilised because of workforce shortages) and in towns 'which are currently poorly served' by Commonwealth services. But the plan does not make it clear how these workforce shortages would be overcome," Professor John Wakerman, Chair of the NRHA, said today. "However, with a national health plan in place, and rural and remote issues properly reflected in that plan, we could make this work for people in rural areas."

He was responding to Opposition Leader, Kevin Rudd's proposal for Labor to commit \$220 million to establish 'GP super clinics' in local communities.

"The emphasis on building multi-purpose health infrastructure in country areas is one of the NRHA's top priorities and we are pleased to see this commitment from the Opposition. However, the cost should not be underestimated, particularly if the program is to cover regional and outer metropolitan areas as well as rural and remote towns," Professor Wakerman said.

"With each local allocation for infrastructure (including training facilities and patient education facilities) costing \$1-25 million, \$220 million will soon be spent. Implementation of the scheme would need to be flexible to account for the diversity of rural and remote practice settings. For example, some remote clinics may only have a visiting general practitioner," he said.

Perhaps more important than the financial constraint is the current shortage in rural and remote areas of health professionals - not only doctors and nurses, but dentists, psychiatrists and allied health staff (psychologists, podiatrists), whose shortages are acute.

"Rural people will want to know how the Labor Party plans to improve the supply and distribution of health professionals," he said.

"There needs to be recurrent funding to get health professionals into areas of workforce shortages - which become more serious with increasing remoteness."

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