

National Rural Health Alliance E-forum 9 May 2008

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IT'S TIME TO BE BOLD FOR RURAL HEALTH

Rural and remote residents will have high expectations for the proposed Office of Rural Health and will be watching closely to see that it delivers on its brief of driving much-needed reform in response to the findings of the Rural Health Workforce Audit. The full text of the Alliance statement is at

<http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/media%20release%201%20may%202008.pdf> and is reproduced below.

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WORKFORCE AUDIT REVEALS CHALLENGES FOR RURAL HEALTH

An audit of Australia's rural and regional health workforce has revealed the previous Government relied on 17-year-old population figures – from 1991 Census figures - in developing incentives for doctors and other rural workforce policies.

The Government has described the state of affairs in rural health as "dire" and has said it will reform this system to base incentives on current population figures and real need.

The audit, conducted by the Department of Health and Ageing, also found that:

- * The current supply of health professionals is not sufficient to meet current needs.
- * This situation will get worse as both the population and the workforce age.
- * We are highly reliant upon overseas trained health professionals, with 36% of doctors working in Australia trained overseas. This figure rises to 41% in rural and remote areas.
- * The supply of health professionals in many rural and regional centres is low to very poor. For example: The average number of full-time general practitioners per 100,000 population varies from a peak of over 100 in the best-serviced major cities to as low as 25.3 in some very remote areas, while the average number of medical workers varies from a peak of over 600 in the best-serviced major cities to as low as 30 in some very remote areas.

The Government has said that it will embark on a comprehensive overhaul of the rural health workforce programs. It has announced that it will:

- * Immediately establish an Office of Rural Health in the Department of Health and Ageing, to drive reform in the rural health sector.
- * Over the next 12 months reform the remoteness classification structure (RRMA) to ensure that incentives and rural health policies respond to current population figures and real need.
- * Over the next 12 months examine all existing programs that support rural health professionals, to determine how to better support communities in most need of assistance.
- * Continue to invest in rural and regional health services to ensure families get the health services they need – including the new announcement today of \$6.3 million extra funding for a number of existing rural clinical schools and university departments of rural health to expand their capacity to provide rural education and training support.

The statement by Health Minister Nicola Roxon is at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr08-nr-nr056.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2008&mth=4> and the workforce audit report is at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/work-res-ruraut>

The Rural Doctors Statement on the audit report is at http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/Rural%20health%20workforce%20audit%20--%20April%202008.pdf

The Australian Nursing Federation's statement is at http://www.anf.org.au/02_anf_news_media/news_press_080430.html

The AMA statement is at <http://www.ama.com.au/web.nsf/doc/WEEN-7E7BP3>

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ALLIANCE MAKES STAND FOR INCREASED RURAL STUDENT SUPPORT

The National Rural Health Alliance has called for increased support for rural students who need to live away from home to undertake tertiary study. The Alliance was responding to a discussion paper, published by the Department of Education,

Employment and Workforce Relations (DEEWR), on plans to expand the scope of the Commonwealth Scholarships Program and double the number of scholarships by 2012.

The Alliance's submission is available on its website <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>. The Alliance's statement is at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/news/?IntCatId=8> and is reproduced below.

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RURAL AUSTRALIA WELCOMES BEGINNING OF THE END OF THE BLAME GAME

People in rural and remote Australia face a healthier future if the Government embraces the approach recommended by the *Beyond the Blame Game Report* released yesterday.

Prepared by the newly established National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission, the report suggests re-styling the Australian Health Care Agreements to cover some of Australia's major health and health care challenges. It also recommends holding both the Commonwealth and States accountable for health outcomes, with clear responsibility for particular service provisions.

The full text of the Alliance statement is at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/media%20release%209%20may%202008.pdf> and is reproduced below.

The statement and report by the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission is available on the Commission website at <http://www.nhhrc.org.au/>

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CHIROPRACTORS JOIN PEAK BODY FOR RURAL HEALTH

The National Rural Health Alliance continues to grow in size and diversity with the recent admission of the Rural Indigenous and Health-interest Group (RIHG) of the Chiropractors' Association of Australia, bringing to 28 the number of current member organisations. The full text of the Alliance statement is at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/media%20release%206%20may%202008.pdf> and is reproduced below.

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BALANCING THE BENEFITS: ASTHMA AND COMBINATION THERAPY UPDATE

Satellite television broadcast Produced by the Rural Health Education Foundation
Sponsored by the National Asthma Council Australia, with funding from an unrestricted

educational grant from AstraZeneca
Tuesday 20th May 8.00pm Sydney time (EST) – LIVE Friday 23rd May 12.30pm
(Repeat)
<http://www.rhef.com.au/programs/810/810.html>

The program will outline the best practice use of asthma combination therapies, including the appropriate selection of medications and different management regimens, in the context of latest research. Discussion case studies will reinforce learning outcomes in a clinical setting.

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International Nurses' Day - May 12
Celebrate nurses and midwives wherever you are

Over the coming week the skills and commitment of nurses and midwives will be celebrated across the world as part of the celebrations for International Nurses' Day. Further information is at the Australian Nursing Federation's website at <http://www.anf.org.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 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 early 2008.

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From: Lyn Eiszlele <lyn@ruralhealth.org.au>
Subject: National Nutrition Networks Conference (NNNC 08)

An update to all those who attended the NNNC 08

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Conference Recommendations Committee has developed a set of priority recommendations for future action and advocacy for key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nutrition issues, which is now available on both the HealthInfoNet and NNNC 08 websites.

<http://www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au>
<http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>

YARNING PLACE ON HEALTHINFONET

HealthInfoNet also provides a facilitated 'yarning' place for on-line nutrition discussion, resource sharing and support. The success of this depends on YOU to join up and contribute. Go to http://www.healthinonet.ecu.edu.au/nutrition_yarningplace

The Conference team
National Rural Health Alliance

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MABEL

Improving your working life - MABEL survey to be sent to every doctor in Australia.

MABEL (Medicine in Australia: Balancing Employment and Life) is a major new national, longitudinal survey of doctors that aims to make a difference. Funded by the NHMRC and conducted by researchers at the University of Melbourne and Monash University, invite letters for the first wave are being sent to all doctors in Australia during May and June. For more information please visit the website <http://www.mabel.org.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

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

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 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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RDAА STATEMENTS

Audit shows desperate need for rescue package in getting more docs to the bush

30 April 2008

http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/Rural%20health%20workforce%20audit%20--%20April%202008.pdf

Doctors plead Government: charge the paddles and revive rural health in Budget '08

7 May 2008

http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/Doctors%20plead%20government%20--%20charge%20the%20paddles%20and%20revive%20rural%20health%20in%20Budget%20'08%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

April 2008 issue now available. Contents include:

Rural and remote public health in Australia: An introduction to the special issue

Rural and remote public health in Australia: Building on our strengths

Review Article - Addressing the health disadvantage of rural populations: How does epidemiological evidence inform rural health policies and research?

Implementing a chronic disease strategy in two remote Indigenous Australian settings: A multi-method pilot evaluation

Lukumbat marawana: A changing pattern of drug use by youth in a remote Aboriginal

community

Mobilising a rural community to lose weight: Impact evaluation of the WellingTonne Challenge

Rural obesity, healthy weight and perceptions of risk: Struggles, strategies and motivation for change

Physical activity behaviours of adults in the Greater Green Triangle region of rural Australia

An evaluation of a community pharmacy-based rural asthma management service

Evaluation of iodine levels in the Riverina population

Short Report - Feeling safe in one's neighbourhood: Variation by location among older Australians

Grazing - Health workforce crisis: How to achieve a work–life balance

From the Journal Associates - NRF: Mental health support for rural practitioners

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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AIHW REPORTS

Occupational asthma affects thousands

Exposure to agents such as wood dust, paint fumes, solvents, latex and baking flour triggers up to 3,000 new cases of asthma every year in susceptible workers in Australia. Occupations with the greatest risk for occupational asthma include farming, painting, cleaning, baking, animal handling and chemical work. Other at-risk occupations include nursing, welding, food processing, dentistry, timber and forestry industries, and industries that produce metals, plastics, electronics, rubber and textiles.

Media release at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/mediacentre/2008/mr20080508.cfm>

Full publication at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10328>

Maternal deaths low in Australia

Australia continues to have one of the lowest maternal death rates in the world. Over the three years from 2003–2005, only 65 maternal deaths occurred that were either directly or indirectly related to the pregnancy or its management. During the three-year period from 2003–2005, one woman died for every 11,896 women giving birth, giving a maternal death ratio of 8.4 per 100,000 women. Although this rate compares favourably with the rates in other developed countries, maternal death rates for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander women are still more than two and a half times as high as for other women. For Indigenous women, there were 21.5 deaths per 100,000 women giving birth, versus 7.9

per 100,000 for non-Indigenous women. The fact that Indigenous mothers continue to experience a higher rate of mortality than non-Indigenous women remains a serious concern.

Media statement at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/mediacentre/2008/mr20080502.cfm>

Full publication at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10470>

Falls in Indigenous infant mortality rates, but wide disparities still exist

There have been some improvements in the health and welfare of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. There were significant falls in mortality rates for Indigenous babies between 1991 and 2005 in Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory, the only jurisdictions for which data were available for the full period and of sufficient quality to report. There were also falls in the mortality rates of all Indigenous people in Western Australia over the same period. The report also found improvements in the socio-economic status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Despite these gains, the health status of Indigenous Australians has shown little improvement in recent years, and remains considerably below that of non-Indigenous Australians.

Media statement at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/mediacentre/2008/mr20080429.cfm>

Full publication at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10583>

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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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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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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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RURAL HEALTH ON THE ABC

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

STUDIES SHOW HIGH SUICIDE RATE FOR VETS

Elysse Morgan (Adelaide, SA)

There has been a lot of publicity into the shortage of vets across the country and the long working hours that they put in. But it's only now, with studies in two states, that the extent of depression among vets has been quantified. Veterinary practitioners in Australia have one of the highest expected suicide rates of any profession.

RURAL GP SHORTAGE WORSENS (News Video: 01/05/2008)

<http://abcmail.net.au/t/140713/614869/2994/0/>

INDIGENOUS AT RISK FROM TASER ROLLOUT (Science Online: 29/04/2008)

<http://abcmail.net.au/t/140713/614869/3036/0/>

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SOCIAL ATLAS OF RURAL AND REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

The Social Atlas of Rural and Regional Australia focuses on the people and communities of Non-metropolitan Australia – those Australian who live outside the State and Territory capital cities. In 2001, Non-metropolitan Australia had a population of 6.9 million people, 36.6% of all Australians and growing at a rate of 0.8% per annum. The Social Atlas illustrates the similarities and differences between Metropolitan and Non-metropolitan Australia. The Atlas is available at

<http://www.affashop.gov.au/product.asp?prodid=13896>

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ARTICLES IN ‘RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH’

'Rural GPs' satisfaction with radiology services to their communities: a qualitative study'
Obtaining an X-ray in a small rural community where rural GPs have to also act as radiographer can be a challenge. This qualitative study from Australia gives an insight into the GPs' view of this aspect of health care.

<http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=902>

'Radiation therapy education for rural and remote GPs'

For the 50% of rural cancer patients who must undergo radiation therapy for cancer, both access to and obtaining accurate information about that treatment is difficult. This article highlights the information gap and foreshadows action to assist rural GPs to meet this

patient need.

<http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=888>

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CURRENT ISSUE OF eMJA, 5 May 2008

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

From the Editor's Desk: Good and safe doctors

Editorial: A day in the life of a doctor-in-training

Editorial: "I want the one for older women" — extending the human papillomavirus vaccine population base

Editorial: Food allergy and anaphylaxis — dealing with uncertainty

Research: All in a day's work: an observational study to quantify how and with whom doctors on hospital wards spend their time

The burden of influenza in healthy children in South Australia

An observational study of emergency department intern activities

Research Enterprise: Perceptions in health and medical research careers: the Australian Society for Medical Research Workforce Survey

Research Enterprise: The National Health and Medical Research Council Road Map: a strategic framework for improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health through research

Public Health: Persistent risk of tuberculosis in migrants a decade after arrival in Australia

For Debate: Umbilical cord blood banking: public good or private benefit?

Notable Cases: An Australian case of *Streptococcus suis* toxic shock syndrome associated with occupational exposure to animal carcasses

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ETHICAL RESPONSIVENESS – 2008 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Stamford Grand, Adelaide, 23-25 May 2008

You are invited to attend the third national conference for the Australian College for Child and Family Protection Practitioners in Adelaide.

The conference theme "Ethical Responsiveness" reflects the broad contexts of Australian child and family practice. Workers in the child and family welfare sectors are generally ethical and responsive. This conference celebrates the work done by both statutory and non-government agencies alike in supporting vulnerable children, young people and their families. As debates continue within the child and family welfare system about the effectiveness of strategies to support vulnerable children, the professions are instead struggling to reconcile the need for appropriate supportive relationships with clients against ever increasing compliance bureaucracy. This conference supports the presentation and testing of practice frameworks and is interested in hearing about approaches which make a real difference to people's lives. Conversely presentations on

practice issues are also welcomed to improve the evidence base of the profession.

The Conference secretariat is based at the Mackay Offices of Relate Human Services, PO Box 1401, Mackay 4740, Phone 07-49575400 Fax 07-49575488
Email: accfpp@bigpond.net.au
<http://www.relatehumanservices.com.au/events.htm>

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From: Rogan McMahon-Hogan <rogan.mcmahon-hogan@deafnessforum.org.au>
Subject: National Deafness Summit 08

The Deafness Forum of Australia is pleased to announce that registrations are now open for the 2008 National Deafness Sector Summit which will be hosted in Canberra 24-25 May 2008. These biennial summits are a fantastic opportunity for disability professionals, carers and the Deaf and hearing impaired community to learn about new developments in the sector, a chance to discuss issues, network and catch up with old friends. The previous summit held in Perth in 2006 was very successful, and we look forward to more success in 2008. Further information is available through the Deafness Forum Website <http://www.deafnessforum.org.au> or via email info@deafnessforum.org.au

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**2008 GENERAL PRACTICE AND PRIMARY HEALTH CARE RESEARCH
CONFERENCE – HEALTH FOR ALL?**

4 -6 June 2008, Hobart

The aim of this Conference is to address and reflect on what we have (and have not) done towards achieving the goal of Health for All. Keynote speakers will provide and challenge you with their take on: 1) Health for All? (with researchers, practitioners and policy makers); and 2) how to have a greater impact on improving primary health care.

Further information regarding the Conference, program, workshop details and the abstract submission process are all available on <http://www.phcris.org.au/conference/2008>

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2008 Rural Health Symposium
5 - 7 June 2008
Wellington, New Zealand
Information at <http://www.conference.co.nz/index.cfm/RHS08>

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From: Roger Strasser <Roger.Strasser@NorMed.ca>
Subject: ICEMEN Conference: 9-14 June 2008

Now is the time to register for ICEMEN (International conference Community Engaged Medical Education in the North) which 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.

Our 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.

This event is an important vehicle to provide the latest economic and social analysis for our regions. Presented in a face to face environment, the sessions are designed to encourage discussion and debate.

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 <cherie.mclean@aihw.gov.au>
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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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

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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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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

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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 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 (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 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

1 May 2008

Health alliance makes stand for increased rural student support

The National Rural Health Alliance has called for increased support for rural students who need to live away from home to undertake tertiary study.

The Alliance was responding to a discussion paper, published by the Department of Education, Employment and Workforce Relations (DEEWR), on plans to expand the scope of the Commonwealth Scholarships Program and double the number of scholarships by 2012.

In welcoming the move Alliance Chairperson, John Wakerman, asked for at least half the scholarships in the new categories to be awarded to students from rural and remote areas.

“Rural students are currently under-represented in tertiary institutions. Our brightest kids are keen to get a uni qualification and then contribute to the rural workforce and the local community, but they face particular cost and distance barriers in accessing tertiary education,” Professor Wakerman said.

“The Alliance has a strong interest in education because of its impact on employability, financial capacity and social wellbeing - all significant determinants of health,” he said.

The Alliance recommends removal of the anomalies associated with State borders when determining eligibility for the new National Accommodation Scholarships, and an increase in the value of existing scholarships to take account of the real costs of studying away from home.

It believes eligibility for the scholarships should be based on the distance between the student’s family home and the tertiary institution at which they are studying.

“It’s pretty clear that a rural student cannot live at home if their university is 100km away. And eligibility should apply regardless of whether the tertiary institution is in the person’s home State or in another State,” Prof Wakerman said.

”If the Government is serious about addressing rural workforce challenges, it needs also to increase investment in rural primary and secondary education, as well as other means, to ensure comparable rural participation in tertiary studies.”

The Alliance’s submission is available on its website <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>

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Media Release

1 May 2008

It's time to be bold for rural health

Rural and remote residents will have high expectations for the proposed Office of Rural Health and will be watching closely to see that it delivers on its brief of driving much-needed reform in response to the findings of the Rural Health Workforce Audit.

This is the view of National Rural Health Alliance, the peak body for rural health in Australia and one of the contributors to the workforce audit.

Alliance Chair, John Wakerman, said there were no surprises in the report.

“The audit has confirmed what rural people already knew - based on evidence and anecdote - about the dire workforce shortages in rural and remote areas,” said Professor Wakerman.

“It is timely that there will be a RRMA review, and the Alliance stands ready to work with the new Office of Rural Health in the interests of improved health for rural people.”

“The money promised for various projects will be put to good use, but the new Government needs to move quickly away from a piecemeal approach to rural health. The Minister describes these measures as “downpayments”, but the time has well and truly come for bold downpayments and comprehensive, evidence-based investment in rural health. Rural communities have been waiting a long time for significant reform. This is an opportunity for the Government to show it has a serious commitment to rural health,” Prof Wakerman said.

For example, in its budget submission the Alliance recommended a national undergraduate student placement system for a range of health disciplines which would promote equity and move away from fragmented programs into an integrated national system. This is an investment in our future workforce. We've also outlined a three-pronged approach to improving access to dental services and reducing the current long waiting lists.”

For both these proposals there is a good evidence base. They are opportunities for the Government to do something bolder at a national level,” Prof Wakerman said.

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Media Release

9 May 2008

Rural Australia welcomes beginning of the end of the blame game

People in rural and remote Australia face a healthier future if the Government embraces the approach recommended by the *Beyond the Blame Game Report* released yesterday.

Prepared by the newly established National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission,

the report suggests re-styling the Australian Health Care Agreements to cover some of Australia's major health and health care challenges. It also recommends holding both the Commonwealth and States accountable for health outcomes, with clear responsibility for particular service provisions.

The National Rural Health Alliance says rural and remote communities will welcome the inclusion of clear benchmarks for hospitals and other health services, including mental health and dental health services.

Alliance Chair, John Wakerman, says rural and remote regions have been significantly under-serviced for years, with health professionals increasingly under stress and people in some rural areas having to wait up to four years for a dental appointment.

“We welcome the clarification of accountabilities, prioritisation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and the reporting of rural, remote and metropolitan differences on all indicators. Re-orientation of the acute care system to achieve increased focus on prevention, chronic disease management, care-co-ordination and multidisciplinary practice is also a good outcome,” said Professor Wakerman.

“However, the true measure of success will be when people in country Australia can get a dental appointment when they need it and we begin to notice shorter waits for elective surgery, the same as in metropolitan areas.

“The annual reporting on Indigenous life expectancy will keep governments and all Australians focused on the goal of equal health within a generation,” Prof Wakerman said.

“We are disappointed there are no explicit benchmarks for patient travel schemes, which urgently need upgrading and national uniformity. We know locational disadvantage exists across different suburbs in all capital cities. But it has a very concrete meaning when the nearest specialist is 1500 kilometres away.”

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Media Release

6 May 2008

Chiropractors join peak body for rural health

The National Rural Health Alliance continues to grow in size and diversity with the recent admission of the Rural Indigenous and Health-interest Group (RIHG) of the Chiropractors' Association of Australia, bringing to 28 the number of current member organisations.

The RIHG represents 870 chiropractors providing services to country people in 700 locations across rural and remote Australia.

Alliance Chair, Professor John Wakerman, welcomed the newest Member Body and expressed the hope that membership would bring benefit to both organisations as well as to people in rural and remote areas.

Secretary of the RIHG, Dein Vindigni, said the RIHG's work in implementing and evaluating multi-disciplinary health programs in rural communities was consistent with the Alliance's vision of good health and wellbeing in rural and remote Australia.

"Membership in the Alliance will enhance our capacity to efficiently access information, networks and resources at community, state and national levels," he said.

RIHG membership comes at a time of unprecedented activity in rural health during which the Alliance is engaging with the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission and the development of a National Primary Health Care policy to ensure the interests of rural and remote communities are appropriately represented.

Ongoing work involves maintaining a priority focus on Indigenous health, support for rural students in pursuing tertiary qualifications and overcoming the shortage of dental services in rural areas.

In addition the Alliance maintains its involvement and interest in the review of Healthy Horizons, the re-funding of the existing Rural Health Strategy, the roll out of around 15 GP Super Clinics in rural areas and the rural health aspects of next week's Budget.