

National Rural Health Alliance E-forum 18 July 2008

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THE PRICE OF CHANGE: WELCOME SUPPORT FOR RURAL AND REMOTE AREAS

The release of the Green Paper on the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme includes special recognition of the need to compensate and support households and businesses in rural and remote areas. The full text of the Alliance statement is at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/media%20release%2017%20july%202008.pdf> and is reproduced below.

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From: Don Howe
Subject: Lobbying for improved rebates for Patient Assisted Travel Schemes (PATS)

Don Howe of Dubbo in Western NSW is a member of CHRRA. He is also an active member of the Western NSW Rural Advocacy Network (RAN) which is one of a number of RANs in NSW set up by and working in conjunction with The Cancer Council of NSW.

One of the current projects of our RAN is to head up an alliance of like-minded organisations to lobby for considerable improvements to the NSW PATS scheme - IPTAAS. We are currently in research mode.

We would like to hear from other organisations in other states who are currently lobbying for PATs improvements in their states.

We are aware of the excellent PATS report produced late last year by the Senate Committee on Community Affairs and are disappointed that the implementation of its findings have been delayed by Minister Roxon by referring the matter to a further committee to report back later this year.

In the past when the NSW government have received lobbyists for IPTAAS improvements, the government have compared their performance with the lack of PATS improvements in other states. We have heard that a similar scenario has taken place when lobbying has occurred in other states.

The handing down of the Senate PATS inquiry has produced an excellent climate for all patients in all states to lobby for improvements. We would love to hear from PATS lobbyists in other states so that we may be able to exchange information and experience. Please contact Don Howe better.iptaas@hotmail.com or phone 02 6882 6136.

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CALL FOR ACTION TO KEEP OUTBACK COMMUNITIES VIABLE

The peak non-government body responsible for improving the lives of people in rural and remote areas has called for an inquiry into the health, viability and productivity of Australia's outback communities which are under increasing pressure. People in isolated rural and remote areas should also be supported if, as seems likely, they bear a disproportionate share of the costs of climate change and of related policies such as an Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS). The full text of the Alliance statement is at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/media%20release%2015%20july%202008.pdf> and is reproduced below.

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SHARING KNOWLEDGE A KEY TO IMPROVED RURAL HEALTH

Delegates to the three-day inaugural Scientific Symposium in Brisbane this week agreed on the need to raise the status of rural and remote health research as a step towards improving the health of Australia's rural communities. The full text of the statement is at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/symposium%20july%202008.pdf> and is reproduced below.

For the program and papers from the recent Inaugural Rural and Remote Health Scientific Symposium see the Other Conferences section of the NRHA website at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/OtherConferences/?IntCatId=29>

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10th NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

The NRHA is calling for abstracts for the 10th National Rural Health Conference.

The Conference is being held in Cairns, 17–20 May 2009.

The website at <http://10thnrhc.ruralhealth.org.au/> includes information for speakers, sponsors and exhibitors - as well as for all delegates.

The Call for Abstracts is at <http://10thnrhc.ruralhealth.org.au/papers/?IntCatId=8>

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REVIEW OF THE NH&MRC GUIDELINES ON ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER

The RACP are conducting a public consultation on the *draft guidelines on attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)* and would like to invite your input into this document.

The draft Guidelines describe ADHD in an Australian context and provide information on the assessment, treatment and care of individuals with ADHD based on the current scientific evidence and the clinical consensus of Australian experts. The draft Guidelines have been prepared in accordance with NHMRC guideline development procedures.

The draft Guidelines, a submission form and a template for comments are available to download from the RACP website; <http://www.racp.edu.au/> from Saturday 28 June 2008. The closing date for submissions is 5 pm AEST Monday 28 July.

You can send your submissions: By email to adhd.guideline@racp.edu.au
By Fax to 03 9820 9931
By mail to ADHD Stakeholder Review
Royal Australasian College of Physicians
PO Box 7210
St Kilda Rd, Vic 8004

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LAUNCH OF THE NATIONAL INDIGENOUS HEALTH EQUALITY COUNCIL

Establishment of the National Indigenous Health Equality Council was announced by the Prime Minister, Minister for Health and Ageing Nicola Roxon and Minister for Indigenous Affairs Jenny Macklin. The Council will advise the Government on the development and monitoring of health-related goals and targets to support the Government's commitments to closing the appalling life expectancy gap and unacceptably high rates of child mortality in the Indigenous population. The full text of the announcement is at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr08-nr-nr104.htm>

The Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA) welcomed the establishment of the National Indigenous Health Equality Council as a reassuring sign of the Government's commitment to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. AIDA also applauds the appointment of an Indigenous Chair and Deputy Chair as evidence of the importance of Indigenous health leadership in bringing about substantial change for Indigenous health. The Association's statement is at <http://www.aida.org.au/news.asp?id=34>

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RDAA STATEMENTS

National Roundtable meets to find solutions to the rural health workforce crisis

A roundtable of 15 peak rural health and consumer groups will meet on 22 July 2008 at Parliament House in Canberra to come up with solutions to the rural health workforce crisis.

http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/RDAA%20Media%20Alert%20-%20Roundtable%2018July08RHWA.pdf

RDAA congratulates new RACGP President

The Rural Doctors Association of Australia congratulates Dr Christopher Mitchell on his election as President of the Royal Australian College of General Practice.

http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/RDAA%20congratulates%20RACGP%20President%2018July08.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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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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PATHWAYS INTO THE HEALTH WORKFORCE FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE

The Pathways into the health workforce for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: A blueprint for action report is now available to download. While 2.3% of the Australian population are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, only 1.6% of the national health workforce is made up of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The Report provides key recommendations and issues that focus on maximising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in the health workforce, and retaining and building the capacity of the existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce.

The report is available at <http://www.aida.org.au/pathways.asp>

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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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From: Peter Kenny
Subject: Social impacts of the drought

As part of the Australian Government's national review of drought policy, I have been appointed by the Hon. Tony Burke MP, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, to lead an expert panel to examine the social impacts of the drought on farm families and rural communities.

The panel is keen to hear about the social impacts being felt by individuals, families and communities as a result of drought. The panel also wants to find out what types of social support people value in times of drought. The panel has been asked to report to Minister Burke in September 2008.

The panel will be holding a series of public forums across Australia during the second half of July and August 2008. Information on the forums, including details of the locations, times and venues, are available from the National Review of Drought Policy's website at http://www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/drought/national_review_of_drought_policy

I would appreciate your assistance in encouraging people in your network that are affected by drought, including those people helping others deal with the pressures of drought, to attend one of the Panel's forums. Should people be unable to attend one of the forums but would like to have the opportunity to be involved, the panel is also accepting written submissions.

I released an *issues paper* on behalf of the panel on 27 June 2008, which is designed to help people with their submissions. The panel's issues paper can be downloaded from the National Review of Drought Policy's website. Written submissions must be with the panel by Friday 8 August 2008.

Peter Kenny
Chair
SECRETARIAT GPO BOX 858 CANBERRA ACT 2601
T 1800 200 876 F 02 6272 3027
E droughtpolicyreview@daff.gov.au W <http://www.daff.gov.au/droughtpolicyreview>

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Australian Organ Donor Register Online

The Australian Organ Donor Register is Australia's only national organ and tissue donor register and serves as a lifeline to the people on the organ transplant waiting lists. Register online at <http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au/public/services/aodr/register.jsp> to be an Australian Organ Donor now!

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INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL GRADUATES UNDERPIN INCREASED RURAL GP NUMBERS

Figures released by Australia's Rural Workforce Agencies show that the number of general

practitioners (GPs) working in rural and remote areas is increasing. This increase in GPs in rural communities is largely due to the Rural Workforce Agencies' recruitment and support of International Medical Graduates. The data also shows a continuation of trends evident in previous years, in that: GPs are working fewer hours, there are increasing numbers of female GPs in the bush; and solo doctor practices are decreasing.
Details are at http://www.rhwa.org.au/client_images/583081.doc

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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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From: Peter.Starkey@health.gov.au
Subject: RHSET Funding Round

This is to advise that the 2008-09 RHSET funding round was advertised on 28 June 2008 in public newspapers and at the following website:

Application packs & guidelines can be downloaded at <http://www.health.gov.au/tenders>

Grants for up to \$200,000 to be considered. Applications close on the 31 July 2008.
Projects must be completed by 30 June 2009

For further enquires contact Peter Starkey from 1 July 2008 on (02) 6289 1383 or email at RHSET@health.gov.au

Peter Starkey RHSET Secretariat
Mental Health and Workforce Division
Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing
ph 02 6289 1383 fx 02 6289 8049
Peter.Starkey@health.gov.au

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RURAL HEALTH ON THE ABC

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

INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND SMOKING DURING PREGNANCY (Health Report: 14/07/2008)

Smoking rates in Indigenous communities are high, and Aboriginal health workers and services need to know why so they can design ways of helping pregnant women quit. Researchers in Western Australia have looked at this by talking to Indigenous women directly. <http://abcmail.net.au/t/201159/614869/4277/0/>

Indigenous doctors welcome Health Equality Council

The Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association has welcomed the establishment of a national health council to help lower the life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/07/12/2301901.htm>

Researchers call for Indigenous kidney study participants

Researchers from the Menzies School of Health in Darwin are calling for participants for a new study into Indigenous kidney function.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/07/19/2308401.htm>

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CURRENT ISSUE OF eMJA, 7 July 2008

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

From the Editor's Desk: Good manners and doctors

Editorials

- * Sustaining health reform
- * Clinical stroke guidelines: where to now?
- * The changing landscape for cervical screening
- * Bone density and fracture risk

Research

- * Outcomes of patients with transient ischaemic attack after hospital admission or discharge from the emergency department
- * High prevalence of tinea capitis in newly arrived migrants at an English-language school, Melbourne, 2005
- * The increasing problem of motorcycle injuries in children and adolescents
- * Data-mining of medication records to improve asthma management
- * The effect of socioeconomic status on outcomes for seriously ill patients: a linked data cohort study

Health Care

- * Beyond the blame game
- * Health care reform: looking back to go ahead
- * Measurement for improvement: a survey of current practice in Australian public hospitals

Awards

- * Award winners at the 2008 AMA National Conference

Snapshot

- * Acute colonic pseudo-obstruction (Ogilvie syndrome) with Chilaiditi syndrome

Public Health

- * Invasive pneumococcal disease in Indigenous people in north Queensland: an update, 2005-2007

Book Reviews

- * Suburban shaman: tales from medicine's frontline
- * Girl stuff. Your full-on guide to the teen years

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RURAL HEALTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE: GARNAUT REVIEW PAPERS

The Garnaut Climate Change Review has released four background papers on health issues as

part of its Draft Report. The papers are:

- * The impacts of climate change on three health outcomes: temperature-related mortality and hospitalisations, salmonellosis and other bacterial gastroenteritis, and population at risk from dengue.
- * Climate change impacts on the burden of Ross River virus disease.
- * Climate impacts on the health of remote northern Australian Indigenous communities, who are likely to be disproportionately impacted by climate change.
- * Rural mental health impacts of climate change.

The papers are available at

<http://www.garnautreview.org.au/CA25734E0016A131/pages/draft-report-7:-the-impacts-of-climate-change-on-australia-the-impacts-of-climate-change-on-australia>

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ARTICLE IN "RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH"

'Desired attributes of new graduate nurses as identified by the rural community'

In the shadow of an ageing rural nursing workforce, an important question concerns the attributes desired among the new cohort of graduate rural nurses. This detailed Australian consumer research has identified some key outcomes that will equip future rural nurses for a career in the bush.

<http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=938>

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The Indigenous Apology - How will Service Delivery be Impacted

IQPC are pleased to announce the 8th annual edition of:

INDIGENOUS SERVICE DELIVERY 2008 - Working together for improved outcomes

Two Day Conference: 22 - 23 July, 2008

Pre and Post Conference Workshops: 21 & 24 July, 2008

Venue: Alice Springs

http://www.crana.org.au/n_d.php?ID=312

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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. Information is at <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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ACRA/CDN Trade "Health At The Heart Of Australia" - Exhibition Space, Deadline for
Abstracts

"Health At The Heart Of Australia" conference
Alice Springs Convention Centre 13- 15th August 2008
18th Annual Scientific Meeting and Exhibition of the Australian Cardiovascular Health and
Rehabilitation Association and 12th Annual Conference
Information at http://www.crana.org.au/n_d.php?ID=356

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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

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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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Alice Springs Renal Seminar

For all Health Professionals interested and/ or working in the prevention, early detection & management of Chronic Kidney Disease
Tues 23rd and Wed. 24th September 2008
0800 - 1630
Liebig Building Alice Springs Hospital Campus
More at http://www.crana.org.au/n_d.php?ID=401

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International Society of Aeromedical Services and Flight Nurses Australia

20th Scientific Meeting
2 - 4 October 2008
We invite you to South Australia for what promises to be the most dynamic and exciting Air Medicine Conference in Australasia. Entitled "Learning from the Past - Looking to the Future".

<http://www.crana.org.au/news.php?ID=400>

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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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Recruitment and Retention in the Health Workforce 08

The Refectory, Holme Building, University of Sydney
October 8th and 9th 2008, Sydney, Australia

For More Information Contact the Conference Organisers Bower Bird Information Services
Tel 61 2 4962 2588 Fax 61 2 4962 2599 Email sales@bowerbird.com
Website: <http://www.recruitmentandretention.org>

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ANTI-POVERTY WEEK
12-18 October 2008
<http://www.anti-povertyweek.org.au/>

JOIN IN ANTI-POVERTY WEEK 2008

Anti-Poverty Week focuses on poverty around the world, including Australia. One of the Week's focuses this year is on the relationship between health and poverty. Its main aims are to:

- * strengthen public understanding of the causes and consequences of poverty and hardship
- * encourage research, discussion and action to address these problems.

Last year, over 300 organisations and more than 10,000 people were involved around the country. Everyone is welcome to organise activities or join in something being organised by other people. The activities can be large or small, and activities at local levels are especially welcome.

The website <http://www.anti-povertyweek.org.au> includes basic fact sheets, promotional material, a calendar of activities and links to other sources of info and ideas.

For more info or to list activities on the website, contact us at 1300-797-290 or apw@anti-povertyweek.org.au

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National Preventive Health Summit
15-16 October 2008
Swissotel Sydney
Information at: tel (02) 9080-4090, info@iir.com.au
<http://iir.com.au/nphs/dm>

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WA HEALTH CONFERENCE 2008 - OUR HEALTH, OUR FUTURE
Call for Abstracts - opens 30 June 2008

You are invited to submit an abstract to be considered for a presentation and/or poster display at the WA Health Conference 2008 to be held from 15 - 17 October 2008 at the Perth Convention Exhibition Centre.

The theme of this year's conference is Our Health, Our Future. What will our healthcare needs be in 2020 and beyond? Who will be working in WA Health? What jobs will they be doing? What are we doing, or can we do, today to lay the foundations for the healthcare system of the future?

Submission details, including how to submit your abstract online, are available on the Conference web site <http://www.wahealthconference.health.wa.gov.au>
Abstract submissions close 5pm, Monday 28 July 2008.

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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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You are invited to attend the 2008 Rural Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program Forum
16 and 17 October 2008
Forster Tuncurry Memorial Services Club
Abstracts should be submitted by 30 July 2008 to
Hunter.BrainInjuryUnit@hnehealth.nsw.gov.au
<http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/birp/bird.html>

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The biennial ACRRM Scientific Forum will be held at Brighton Beach, Sydney 23-26 September 2008. This promises to be ACRRM's largest conference to date, comprising workshops, academic presentations and the AGMs of ACRRM and RDAA.
Details at <http://www.acrrm.com.au/>

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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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ANNUAL CONFERENCE WOMEN'S HOSPITALS AUSTRALASIA
'Minding our P's and Q's! Partnerships and Quality in Women's Healthcare'
Wed 19 November - Friday 21 November 2008
Manly Pacific Hotel Sydney NSW
<http://www.wcha.asn.au>

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NAIDOC Week celebrations for 2009 will be held from 5 to 12 July. Further information at <http://www.naidoc.org.au/>

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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
8 July 2008
Sharing knowledge a key to improved rural health

Delegates to the three-day inaugural Scientific Symposium in Brisbane this week agreed on the need to raise the status of rural and remote health research as a step towards improving the health of Australia's rural communities.

A key challenge is to strengthen the relationship between researchers and policy makers, and to enhance the mutual respect and contacts between them. This stronger relationship will build an understanding of the key determinants of health of the 7 million people who live in

rural Australia.

Over 60 research experts from all parts of the country and overseas agreed that years of research have provided good evidence about the health status of rural communities.

Symposium Convenor, Professor Desley Hegney, from the Research and Practice Development Centre, School of Nursing and Midwifery, University of Queensland, said a better mechanism must be found for sharing existing knowledge to alleviate the inequalities that exist between those who live in metropolitan areas and those who do not.

"We need to identify the most important gaps in Australia's rural and remote health research effort and find ways to translate research into action - to help improve health and related infrastructure and services," Professor Hegney said.

Overseas delegates to the Symposium included Professor Ray Pong, Research Director, Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research at Laurentian University in Canada, Professor John Beard from the Centre for Urban Epidemiological Studies at the New York Academy of Medicine and Professor Jane Farmer, Chair of the Millennium Institute at the Centre for Rural Health in Inverness, Scotland.

Delegates agreed further on the need for community consultation to determine the process by which people achieve and maintain good health in rural and remote Australia.

"We need to better understand how rural and remote contexts impact on the delivery and evaluation of health care," said Professor Hegney.

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Media Release

15 July 2008

Call for action to keep outback communities viable

The peak non-government body responsible for improving the lives of people in rural and remote areas has called for an inquiry into the health, viability and productivity of Australia's outback communities which are under increasing pressure. People in isolated rural and remote areas should also be supported if, as seems likely, they bear a disproportionate share of the costs of climate change and of related policies such as an Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS).

The National Rural Health Alliance believes all Australians should be concerned at the recent suggestion that governments consider assessing the longer term viability of remote communities - especially if this would mean that those deemed unsustainable would be 'written off' without a fair assessment of the impact on both costs and benefits.

Substantial economic, cultural and social losses would result if remote communities were simply cast adrift through cessation of vital services that should be accessible by all Australians.

Professor John Wakerman, Chair of the Alliance, says people in more remote areas contribute significantly to the nation's GDP through tourism, primary industry, land management and a

booming mining sector.

Despite this, many in remote areas are falling behind in health, education and earning capacity, and are already experiencing increased living expenses through rising petrol and diesel prices. More than half the areas classified as Very Remote are in the bottom quarter of socio-economic areas in Australia.

There are about 650,000 people in remote and very remote areas - or the equivalent of the combined populations of Darwin, Hobart, Townsville, Toowoomba and Bendigo. The Prime Minister has indicated that selected industries and population groups will be compensated if they bear a major part of the costs of emissions trading. This renewed focus on the benefits and costs of structural change should also encompass changes in the Murray Darling Basin and the development of new industries in the energy sector.

"Government decisions in these areas provide an opportunity to bring the people of remote areas back into the mainstream and to strengthen the resilience of their communities and economies," Prof Wakerman said. "But there needs to be a template or plan that underpins action - and sooner rather than later."

The Alliance sees the need for a systematic, empirical estimation of the infrastructure and services required to sustain remote communities. These decisions should be informed by the facts that those communities:

- provide healthier homes for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people than the regional centres to which they would otherwise have to move;
- house many of the country's much vaunted cultural, ecological and tourism assets; and
- if abandoned due to lack of services, would result in significant direct and social costs associated with relocation of residents.

The majority of people in more remote areas also have limited public transport options. The local price of goods in remote areas could skyrocket as the costs of their transport is included before the 10 per cent GST is calculated. Compensation through the ETS and realistic remote tax rebates would offset these disproportionate costs of living.

Professor Wakerman describes it as "paradoxical" that, while money is being spent on health, housing and policing through the Northern Territory intervention, people in remote areas still cannot access broadband and so are not able to help themselves by communicating with the outside world.

"Good information and telecommunications systems are essential for education, commerce, health services and engagement in the knowledge economy," he said. "All Australians, including the 3 per cent who are remote residents, need broadband access to function effectively in today's world."

Professor Wakerman has also drawn attention to the views of the Council of Remote Area Nurses of Australia, which recently called again on government to recognise remote area nurses and Aboriginal Health Workers as critical complements to efforts to recruit more doctors to the bush.

"This would allow the Australian, State and Territory Governments to end the unsafe practice of single nurse posts in more remote areas and fast-track development of the remote nurse

practitioner in the Northern Territory and other jurisdictions."

"These are the kind of bold initiatives we need to protect and enhance the future of small remote communities," said Prof Wakerman.

Issues surrounding the sustainability of rural and remote communities were a feature of last week's scientific symposium in Brisbane, which was attended by more than 60 of Australia's leading rural and remote health researchers.

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Media Release

17 July 2008

The price of change: welcome support for rural and remote areas

Yesterday's release of the Green Paper on the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme includes special recognition of the need to compensate and support households and businesses in rural and remote areas.

The National Rural Health Alliance predicts the economic transformation will impact heavily in rural and remote areas, which means the special measures for fuel prices and the agricultural and fishing sectors are particularly valuable.

However, in our view there remains a need for an overall policy framework and goal for the sustainability of rural and remote communities - and the nature of government's commitment to it.

The differential impact of emissions trading on people in rural and remote areas will come about because of their heavier use of fuels, the increased costs of transporting goods to and from the bush, and the fact that so much of the industrial infrastructure to be transformed is situated in those areas.

The general commitment to use "every cent raised from the selling of permits" to help households and businesses move to clean energy is not only welcome, but could help underpin new industries and jobs in rural and remote areas. Rural development is the best medium term policy for supporting health and quality of life in country communities.

The Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme will include transport, but the price impact on fuel will be offset by cuts in fuel taxes on a cent by cent basis for the first three years. The Government has also indicated there will be a rebate equivalent to the excise cut for businesses in agriculture and fishing which, like others exposed to heavy use of fuels, will face considerable investment and cost uncertainties for some time.

Australians on low and middle incomes will be compensated for the overall increase in the cost of living resulting from the new scheme, whose real impact cannot be estimated until the Government announces interim targets for carbon reduction later this year.

Hopefully many businesses in rural and remote areas will benefit from the Climate Change Action Fund, including for capital investment in the development of low emissions processes and technologies.

