

National Rural Health Alliance E-forum 4 July 2008

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THE OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH WILL HELP MEET IMPORTANT CHALLENGES

Prof John Wakerman, Chair of the National Rural Health Alliance, has welcomed the establishment of the new Office of Rural Health in the Department of Health and Ageing and committed the Alliance to working co-operatively with it to improve the health of people in rural, regional and remote areas.

"The establishment of this specific body for rural and remote health in the Commonwealth public service, led by an experienced Division Head and with two Branches at the moment, attests to the importance attached by the Australian Government to the health challenges faced by people in rural and remote areas."

The full text of the Alliance statement is at

<http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/office%20of%20rural%20health%202%20july.pdf> and is reproduced below.

The statement by the Health Minister Nicola Roxon announcing the Office of Rural Health is at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr08-nr-nr102.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2008&nth=7>. Ms Roxon says that as a first priority, over the next 12 months the Office will review the Australian Government's 60 targeted rural health programs, as well as the classification systems that determine eligibility for rural program funding.

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E-NEWS FROM THE ALLIANCE: JULY 2008

An Office of Rural Health

An Office of Rural Health has just been established in the Department of Health and Ageing to drive rural health reform in response to the findings of the Audit of Health Workforce in Rural and Regional Australia.

It will be led by Jan Bennet, a Division Head with experience in rural health policy and programs, and will play the lead role in evaluating, streamlining and strengthening the targeted programs for rural and remote health.

The new body will also lead a review of classification systems for metropolitan, rural and remote areas, and provide rural/remote input into the strategic work underway on many fronts to change and improve Australia's health system.

Improving Australia's health system

Despite Australians now having the second longest life expectancy in the world, we should not become complacent. A large part of Australia's success on the life expectancy front is not due to the health system itself but rather to all of the social, economic, cultural and community determinants of the way we live. These lifestyle issues need to be protected. Also, we should be supportive of efforts to improve Australia's health system. Hopefully some of you have been involved in the consultations run by the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission. It has the key challenge of reporting on a long-term health reform plan to provide sustainable improvements in the performance of the health system and providing a blueprint for tackling future challenges in the Australian health system by June 2009.

Other important work is being undertaken, including on prevention (obesity, alcohol and smoking), a new national primary care strategy, and performance indicators to be included in the new Australian Health Care Agreement.

Life expectancy

One of the headline figures from last week's launch of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's (AIHW) Australia's Health 2008 was the fact that the gap in life expectancy between Australia's Indigenous and non-Indigenous people has widened slightly between 1991 and 2005. Specifically, Indigenous mortality in SA, WA and NT is getting closer to that of other Australians, but the death rate of other Australians is getting much closer to zero. So while the absolute gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous life expectancy is decreasing very slowly, the relative gap is increasing quite appreciably (ie if Indigenous mortality is now 3 times that for non-Indigenous people, this trend would see that increase towards 4, rather than towards 2 or even 1 (parity)).

Many of us might say never mind the methodological niceties: let's get together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and governments to fix it.

Cairns is the place to be next May

Make sure you pencil in 17-20 May 2009 for the 10th National Rural Health Conference. The conference belongs to everyone in the rural and remote health sector - which of course includes many of those who work in the capital cities.

The call for abstracts will go live on the Alliance's website soon

(<http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>). The Conference is a major opportunity for you to say where

you want rural and remote health to be in two and five years time.

And hopefully you will come with imaginative ideas about how communities, professions and governments can be recruited to the belief that rural health is a good place to be.

The five themes of the 10th Conference will be: conquering health disadvantage, building a resilient response to political and environmental climates, consulting our communities on health, working together in health care teams and on service models that are effective, and celebrating 20 years of coherent activity in the rural and remote health sector.

Rural and Remote Health Scientific Symposium

Sixty of Australia's leading rural and remote health researchers are meeting to consider how the uptake of research evidence in policy and practice can be increased.

The meeting will consider the distinctive aspects of health status differentials and their determinants in rural and remote areas. How do rurality and remoteness affect the way health care and service delivery are provided including for chronic disease? What does the evidence base tell us about how to provide the best health care for people in rural and remote areas?

Papers from the Symposium will be published in a thematic issue of the Australian Journal of Rural Health in 2009.

Healthy Regions: Healthy People

This is the title of a recent submission from the Alliance to the House of Representatives Inquiry into a new regional development funding program. The submission's underlying premise is that regional development can make a major long-term contribution to the health of rural people. Communities that are inherently attractive and well-serviced are more likely to maintain a critical mass of population to support existing and new services, will more easily recruit and retain health professionals, and will be healthy places in which to live.

The Alliance has also made a submission to the Senate Select Committee on Regional and Remote Indigenous Communities. Our submission argued that a focus on childhood is a sure way to improve the wellbeing of people in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, with early intervention having the capacity to eliminate many of the health, educational and employment challenges of later life.

Australian Journal of Rural Health

The Australian Journal of Rural Health is now listed on the Thomson Scientific Database, meaning that it will receive an ISI (Institute for Scientific Information) impact factor some time soon.

The August issue of AJRH (16:4) will be available on-line in early July through the Wiley-Blackwell website

(<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/118489045/home?CRETRY=1&SRETRY=0>).

It includes articles on workplace stressors facing physiotherapists; harnessing social capital for the mental health of young people; long-term rural GPs and the changing nature of rural medicine; and depression in acute coronary syndrome.

Rural Australian Medical Undergraduate Scholarships (RAMUS)

The RAMUS Scheme assists students with a rural background to study medicine at university. Applications open in November each year and close the following January. Applications for 2009 will open in early November 2008.

A new brochure, aimed at current and prospective medical students, outlines the features and the eligibility criteria of the scholarship. For hard copies of the brochure, please contact the RAMUS team at the NRHA on 1800 460 440 or email ramus@ruralhealth.org.au.

Alternatively, download an electronic copy of the brochure

<http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/scholarships/?IntCatId=7>).

Are you getting the Partyline?

Keep a look out for the next issue of Partyline - and remember that if you want it electronically and not in hard copy, please let us know. The Alliance does not want an excessive footprint - but we are aware that many people in rural, regional and remote areas prefer a hard copy.

(Electronic) back copies of Partyline are always available in the 'Publications' section of our website and hard copies on request.

Fortnightly forum

The NRHA's eforum is a moderated newsletter containing media releases, news and conference information relating to the rural health sector.

To subscribe or contribute, go to <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au> - see link at bottom left. There is an archive of eforums in the Eforum Archive section.

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COAG COMMUNIQUE HEALTH AND INDIGENOUS REFORM

COAG has an ambitious health and ageing reform agenda proposed for implementation from 2009. This includes a substantial program of hospital reform, improvements to Indigenous health, chronic disease management and preventative health care.

Leaders agreed to sustained engagement and effort by all governments over the next decade and beyond to achieve the Closing the Gap targets for Indigenous people. As a first step, COAG agreed in principle to a National Partnership with joint funding of around \$547.2 million over six years to address the needs of Indigenous children in their early years.

The communiqué from the 3 July COAG meeting is at

<http://www.coag.gov.au/meetings/030708/index.htm>

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STRATEGIC THINKING REQUIRED FOR GOOD HEALTH IN THE BUSH

Figures contained in *Australia's Health 2008* suggest that, by targeting health improvements to the 2.5 per cent of Australians who are Indigenous and the 3 per cent living in remote areas, the government could eradicate a major part of the overall health differential between metropolitan and rural and remote areas.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) report confirms that the health of the small proportion of Australians who live in remote areas is far worse than those who reside in major metropolitan locations.

The full text of the Alliance statement is at

<http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/aihw%20and%20remote%20health%2024%20june%20final.pdf> and is reproduced below.

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10th NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

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

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TOP FLIGHT RESEARCH FIELD TO ATTEND RURAL HEALTH SYMPOSIUM

The country's leading rural and remote health researchers will pool knowledge about the adverse factors currently impacting country health when they attend the inaugural *Rural and Remote Health Scientific Symposium* in Brisbane. The full text of the Alliance statement is at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/media%20release%20symposium.pdf> and is reproduced below.

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OVER THE SEAS AND INTO THE BUSH: OVERSEAS TRAINED DOCTORS IN RURAL AUSTRALIA

Over the Seas & Into the Bush: Overseas Trained Doctors in Rural Australia
Funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing
Tuesday 15th July 8.00pm Sydney time (EST) "C repeat Friday 18th July 12.30pm (Repeat)
Duration: 105 minutes
This program provides a general overview of what OTDs need to know about Australian medical culture and how the Australian healthcare system works. The program looks at Medicare, and presents insights from supervising doctors, regional training providers, accreditation bodies, and professional organisations.
<http://www.rhef.com.au/programs/719/719.html>

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RDAA STATEMENTS

RDAA welcomes announcement of Chief Nursing Officer
26 June 2008
http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/RDAA-Media%20Release-CNO-26June08.pdf

New Office of Rural Health: a small voice in the wilderness?
2 July 2008
http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/Office%20of%20Rural%20Health%20--%20July%202008.pdf

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The Australian Journal of Rural Health is a multidisciplinary journal, which aims to facilitate the formation of interdisciplinary networks to build and advance rural practice for all health professionals.

Get published in the *Australian Journal of Rural Health!*

The Journal welcomes short reports and letters to the editor as well as review articles, original research articles and clinical perspectives. For useful tips on submitting your manuscript, read the FREE editorial, *How to get published in the Australian Journal of Rural Health.*

Manuscripts can be submitted online at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ajrh> Manuscript

Central or posted to:

AJRH Editorial Office

Australian Journal of Rural Health

550 Swanston Street

Carlton VIC 3053

June 2008 issue now available. Contents include:

Editorial -May you live in interesting times!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Short Report - Geographical location and sunburn in Queensland adults

Grazings

Reducing serious delays in diagnosis of younger onset dementia

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

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

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

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

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AIHW REPORTS

Australia's Health 2008

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) has published *Australia's Health 2008*, and it is freely available online. This 600 page publication provides a comprehensive and detailed statistical picture of what is happening in the Australian health care system. The report shows that Australians enjoy one of the highest life expectancies in the world - an average of 81.4 years, second only to Japan.

The AIHW Director, Dr Penny Allbon, said it was clear from the report that there was great scope for health improvements through tackling the so-called 'lifestyle' health risk factors. "In rank order, the greatest improvements can be achieved through reductions in tobacco-smoking, high blood pressure, overweight/obesity, physical inactivity, high blood cholesterol, and excessive alcohol consumption."

The AIHW media release is at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/mediacentre/2008/mr20080624.cfm> and the report is at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10585>

Type 1 diabetes in children still on the rise

The incidence of new cases of Type 1 diabetes in children is rising at around 3% a year. There were over 6,000 new cases in children aged 0-14 years between 2000 and 2006, which equates to more than two new cases each day. The report, *Incidence of Type 1 diabetes in Australia 2000-2006: first results*, shows that the rate of new cases of Type 1 diabetes was highest in children aged 10-14 years at 29 per 100,000 population.

The AIHW statement is at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/mediacentre/2008/mr20080702.cfm> and the full report is available at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10581>

AIHW urges caution on 'fattest nation in the world' claims

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) today urged caution on recent claims that Australia was the 'fattest nation in the world'.

AIHW Director Dr Penny Allbon said that although there was little doubt that Australia was in the worst third of developed nations for prevalence of adult obesity, the Institute did not know of any reliable statistics that would support the claim that we were worse than all other countries.

The AIHW media release is at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/mediacentre/2008/mr20080624b.cfm>

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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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HARD WORK AHEAD TO FIX PUBLIC HOSPITALS

The annual comprehensive report on our public hospitals shows they are under severe strain, with public hospital admissions increasing faster than population growth, according to Health Minister Nicola Roxon.

The State of Our Public Hospitals Report 2008, available at <http://www.health.gov.au/ahca>

highlights how much work lies ahead of us to deliver a better health and hospital system.
Hard Work Ahead to Fix Public Hospitals.

While some results are encouraging, others show the scale of the challenge ahead:

- * In 2006-07, public hospital admissions grew by around three per cent - this is more than twice the rate of population growth
- * In 2006-07, there were 6.7 million presentations to emergency departments - the equivalent of a third of Australia's population
- * The number of patients presenting to emergency departments between 1998-99 and 2006-07 increased by over 34 per cent
- * Indigenous Australians represent five per cent of public hospital admissions - but only 2.5 per cent of the Australian population.

The full text of the Minister's statement is at

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr08-nr-nr098.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2008&mth=6>

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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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DOCTOR CRISIS IN REMOTE CENTRAL AUSTRALIA

CRANA is calling on the Northern Territory Government to think outside the square and not to put all of its 'eggs in the one basket'.

"If the NT keeps focusing all of its energy and resources on just recruiting more doctors, then they risk destroying the backbone of remote health, the Remote Area Nurse (RAN) and Aboriginal Health Workers (AHW)" Warns the CEO of CRANA Ms Carole Taylor.

The full text of the CRANA statement is at http://www.crana.org.au/n_d.php?ID=404

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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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TELECOMMUNICATIONS UPGRADES

Remote Indigenous communities to receive community telephones
The Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator Stephen Conroy has invited applications to supply, install and maintain community telephone services in remote Indigenous communities.
http://www.minister.dbcde.gov.au/media/media_releases/2008/055

Regional locations to receive extended mobile phone coverage
The Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator Stephen Conroy, today released guidelines for the \$8 million Mobile Connect program for 2008-2009. "The program will fund new infrastructure for a list of priority locations, to extend terrestrial mobile phone coverage in rural and regional Australia," Senator Conroy said.
http://www.minister.dbcde.gov.au/media/media_releases/2008/054

Enhanced guarantee for remote areas broadband
The Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator Stephen Conroy, has released new program guidelines to enhance the Australian Broadband Guarantee.
http://www.minister.dbcde.gov.au/media/media_releases/2008/051

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RURAL HEALTH ON THE ABC

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

Health symposium to advise on rural strategies

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/07/06/2295554.htm>

AMA calls for Top End health body

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/07/05/2295384.htm>

Central Aust doctor shortage 'appalling'

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/07/04/2294157.htm>

Govts invest \$550m to cut Indigenous child mortality rate

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/07/04/2294068.htm>

Indigenous men make collective apology over abuse

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/07/03/2293532.htm>

Farm safety assistance increased

The New South Wales Government has increased assistance for farm safety programs.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/content/2008/s2291498.htm>

Flying Doctor faces sky-high fuel bills

The Royal Flying Doctor Service is seeking extra funds from state and federal governments to cover escalating fuel costs. Its fuel bill doesn't look like easing, with the crude oil price this hitting the \$US 145 per barrel mark. Flying Doctor chief executive, Nigel Milan, says roughly \$4 to \$5 million will be needed to cover the rising petrol bill. "To be fair, we've had a sympathetic ear," he says. "Our federal funding increased significantly last year and that did anticipate some increasing in fuel costs, not quite to the current level, but we are in very serious negotiations now at the state level and we are looking forward to a successful conclusion to those negotiations."

Drop the 'intervention' from intervention: AMA

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/06/29/2288935.htm>

Intervention 'ignoring plight of Indigenous men'

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/06/28/2288531.htm>

NT INTERVENTION: ONE YEAR ON (AM: 20/06/2008)

<http://abcmail.net.au/t/185383/614869/3889/0/>

<http://abcmail.net.au/t/185383/614869/3890/0/>

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CALL FOR COMMENT ON SPA'S NEW POSITION STATEMENT ON RURAL SUICIDE

Suicide Prevention Australia (SPA) occasionally publishes position statements on priority areas of suicide and self-harm prevention and postvention in Australia. These position statements are devised as foundation documents to provide a basis for understanding, discussion, teaching, delivery and research. Position statements support SPA's ongoing advocacy work and activities, and broader social agenda.

To date, SPA has produced position statements on the following critical issues of importance

- Suicide Prevention and Capacity Building in Australian Indigenous Communities; and Men and Suicide Future Directions. The next position statement due for publication is Responding to suicide in rural Australia.

The deadline for comments on SPA's draft position statement is Wednesday 16 July 2008. If you would like to review a copy of the draft position statement for comment, please contact the SPA office on (02) 9568 3111 or via email: ryan@suicidepreventionaust.org

Further information is available at
<http://www.suicidepreventionaust.org/WhatsNew.aspx#103>

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ABORIGINAL MEN: PART OF THE SOLUTION

Initiatives like the Aboriginal Male Health Summit near Alice Springs next week show Aboriginal men want to be part of the solution and not just seen as the problem in communities says Dr Mick Adams, chair of NACCHO, the peak body for Aboriginal medical services. The full text of the NACCHO statement is at
<http://www.naccho.org.au/Files/Documents/Aboriginal%20Men%20-%20part%20of%20the%20solution%20Media%20Release%2026-6-8.pdf>

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CURRENT ISSUE OF eMJA, 16 June 2008
(Available at <http://www.mja.com.au/>)

- From the Editor's Desk: Modish moments in medicine
- Editorial - Evidence-based advocacy: the public roles of health care professionals
- Editorial - Acute coronary syndromes: exploring the best way forward in optimising care
- Editorial - Cardiac repolarisation: the long and short of it
- Research - Invasive management and late clinical outcomes in contemporary Australian management of acute coronary syndromes: observations from the ACACIA registry
- Research - Causes of death in young Australians with type 1 diabetes: a review of coronial postmortem examinations
- Research - Impact of an ultrabroadband emergency department telemedicine system on the care of acutely ill patients and clinicians; work
- Research - Patterns and incidence of γ -hydroxybutyrate (GHB)-related ambulance attendances in Melbourne, Victoria
- Health Care - Cardiac rehabilitation program attendance after coronary artery bypass surgery: overcoming the barriers
- For Debate - Preventive health reform: what does it mean for public health?
- Public Health - The changing face of the Australian population: growth in centenarians
- Notable Cases - Takotsubo cardiomyopathy complicated by Dressler's syndrome
- Snapshot - In-vivo characterisation of coronary atherosclerosis with optical coherence tomography
- Letters
- Postpartum haemorrhage occurrence and recurrence: a population-based study
- Rural maternity units: how will they have a future?
- The national inpatient medication chart: critical audit of design and performance at a tertiary

hospital
Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA): 'missing the wood for the trees'
Paragonimiasis: an unusual case of haemoptysis
Changing perceptions of solar radiation and cancer risk: the role of the media
National health reform needs strategic investment in health services research
Supplement - Depression and primary care

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HEALTH LITERACY, AUSTRALIA 2006
(ABS 4233.0)

The publication will provide an overview of the relationships between health literacy skills and selected characteristics for different population groups and over time.
<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4233.0?OpenDocument>

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NAIDOC Week celebrations for 2008 will be held from 6 to 13 July. Further information at
<http://www.naidoc.org.au/>

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

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

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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. 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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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 - 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 & Wed. 24th Sept. 2008

0800 "C 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

27-30 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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ANTI-POVERTY WEEK

12-18 October 2008

<http://www.antipovertyweek.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.antipovertyweek.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@antipovertyweek.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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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
CALL FOR ABSTRACTS CLOSING DATE EXTENDED! 14th of JULY 2008
<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
2 July 2008

The Office of Rural Health will help meet important challenges

Prof John Wakerman, Chair of the National Rural Health Alliance, has welcomed the establishment of the new Office of Rural Health in the Department of Health and Ageing and committed the Alliance to working co-operatively with it to improve the health of people in rural, regional and remote areas.

“The establishment of this specific body for rural and remote health in the Commonwealth public service, led by an experienced Division Head and with two Branches at the moment, attests to the importance attached by the Australian Government to the health challenges faced by people in rural and remote areas.”

The Government says the new body is i° to drive rural health reform in response to the findings of the Audit of Health Workforce in Rural and Regional Australia;±.

“The immediate tasks facing it are vital to redressing health inequalities between the city and the bush. The Office of Rural Health is to play the lead role in evaluating, streamlining and strengthening the targeted programs for rural and remote health,” Prof Wakerman said.

“It will also lead on the review of classification systems for metropolitan, rural and remote areas. This has great potential importance for the support of workforce and service delivery programs - for example in determining which areas get a share in particular programs that are targeted by location.

“Above all, it will be the task of the Office of Rural Health to ensure that the particular characteristics of rural people, their health and their health services are accommodated through programs that fit well. It will provide rural input into the strategic work underway on many fronts to change and improve Australia's health system, and ensure that current examples of successful programs are generalised and expanded.

“In these important endeavours the Office of Rural Health will have the strong support of the National Rural Health Alliance,” Prof Wakerman said.

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Media Release

24 June 2008

Strategic thinking required for good health in the bush

Figures contained in today's launch of *Australia's Health 2008* suggest that, by targeting health improvements to the 2.5 per cent of Australians who are Indigenous and the 3 per cent living in remote areas, the government could eradicate a major part of the overall health differential between metropolitan and rural and remote areas.

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) report confirms that the health of the small proportion of Australians who live in remote areas is far worse than those who reside in major metropolitan locations.

It also confirms that overall, health outcomes in rural and remote areas are adversely affected by poor health among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who make up a greater proportion of residents in those areas.

Professor John Wakerman, Chair of the National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA), argues that a more closely targeted approach to particular population groups' and to remote areas where health outcomes are poorest - should be an integral part of the evidence-based approach to Australia's broad system for health, infrastructure and community services.

The NRHA, which is the peak non-government body involved in improving rural health for the bush, believes it perverse that there is relatively sparse evidence for the remote areas that contribute disproportionately to poor health.

“Death rates for Indigenous Australians have declined since 1991 and for the last several decades in places like the Northern Territory where data are available.

However, the rate of decline did not keep pace with the relative decline for the total Australian population,” Prof Wakerman said.

“Over half of Australia's very remote communities are in the bottom quarter on the measure of socio-economic status. Compared with major cities, life expectancy for people in remote

The country's leading rural and remote health researchers will pool knowledge about the adverse factors currently impacting country health when they attend the inaugural *Rural and Remote Health Scientific Symposium* in Brisbane later this week.

From July 6 some 70 invited health experts from Australia and overseas will attend the three-day event at the Brisbane Hilton. Among the keynote speakers are Professor Ray Pong, Research Director of the Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research at Laurentian University in Canada, and Professor John Beard from the Centre for Urban Epidemiological Studies at the New York Academy of Medicine.

Professor Pong will examine the distinctive aspects of morbidity and mortality in rural and remote areas while Prof Beard "C who spent almost 25 years working in rural NSW "C will explain the startling influence of socioeconomic and cultural factors on rural health at a time when regional Australia is doing it tough.

His address will deal with factors currently influencing the decline of so many rural communities, including climate change and the flight of young families to urban centres.

In another timely address, following the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's study on the state of *Australia's Health 2008*, Gordon Gregory from the National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA) will discuss the impact of rurality on the provision of health care in non-metropolitan areas. He will outline the various rural/remote requirements of health practice and service delivery.

Professor John Wakerman, Chair of the Alliance, will prompt discussion over the research priorities for innovative rural and remote primary health care models, while NRHA policy adviser Andrew Phillips will outline the varying patterns of disease in country areas. His paper will confirm poorer health outcomes in rural and remote areas, and identify coronary heart disease, traffic accidents and suicide as the major causes of higher rates of death outside Australia's major cities.

Professor Desley Hegney, from the Research and Practice Development Centre, School of Nursing and Midwifery, University of Queensland, is the Convenor of the Symposium. She will argue the need for further research to identify the characteristics of 'evidence-based practice' that will work in rural and remote environments.

Professor Jane Farmer, chair of the Millennium Institute at the Centre for Rural Health in Inverness, Scotland, will present on ways to evaluate policy outcomes as a means to improve access to care.

In another significant paper Emeritus Professor Max Kamien, from the University of Western Australia, will consider how politics impacts on the provision of health care in rural areas.

"Decision making is often linear, city-centric and usually ignores the preservation of the social fabric or survival of a town. Those at the grassroots often feel disempowered and used by a politicised bureaucracy," says Prof Kamien.

He argues that solutions lie in the regular collection of local quantitative and qualitative data as a reality check of the outcomes of national and state government policies. This, he says, will require a change from city-centric to rural-centric decision making.

The symposium program, as well as speech abstracts and some keynote addresses, is available online through the NRHA website at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>