

National Rural Health Alliance E-forum 12 September 2008

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#### SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM PREPARES DOCTORS FOR THE BUSH

Surveys show that rural students awarded grants under the Rural Australia Medical Undergraduate Scholarship (RAMUS) scheme are more likely to practise medicine in rural Australia as a result of their participation. This positive outcome accords with one of the core aims of RAMUS - to reinforce medical students' ties with regional and rural Australia - following its implementation in 2000 with funding from the Department of Health and Ageing.

The full text of the NRHA statement is at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/scholarship%20program%20prepare%20doctors%20for%20the%20bush%2012%20sept.pdf> and is reproduced below.

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#### HIGH POWERED TEAM TO DISCUSS NEED FOR HEALTH CARE PLANNING

The need for a national rural primary care strategy and an update on the state of Aboriginal health are among key topics for discussion at a public seminar to be held in the Great Hall of University House at the Australian National University in Canberra on 22 September 2008.

Hosted as part of the National Rural Health Alliance's 17th annual Councilfest, the National Planning in the Rural and Remote Health Sector symposium is expected to draw widespread attention from health practitioners, researchers, academics and consumers.

Professor John Wakerman, the Alice Springs-based chair of the 28-member Alliance, will open by sharing his thoughts on ways to build an improved rural and remote health system.

The former Victorian Health Minister, Rob Knowles, current chair of the Mental Health

Council of Australia and a member of the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission (NHHRC), will discuss the Commission's work to provide advice on practical reforms to the Australian health system. The Commission has been tasked to explicitly identify a long-term plan for improving rural health services.

Ms Pat Anderson, Chair of the Cooperative Research Centre for Indigenous Health, will update delegates about what is happening in Aboriginal health - and what is not.

Next in the line-up will be Dr Tony Hobbs, Chair of the Government's External Reference Group that is seeking ways to develop a National Primary Health Care Strategy. He will be followed by Tony McBride, Chief Executive Officer of the Health Issues Centre in Melbourne, who will discuss issues relating to the involvement of rural consumers and citizens in health services planning and evaluation.

The all-afternoon session which starts at 2 o'clock will wrap up with an address by Dr Bruce Simmons, Chair of the Rural Health Advisory Panel of the Australian Dental Association, on how to achieve better oral health for people who choose to live in the bush.

Registration is free by sending your contact details to [nrha@ruralhealth.org.au](mailto:nrha@ruralhealth.org.au)

Full proceedings of the event will later be published on the Alliance's website.

Further information available at  
<http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/seminars/?IntContId=5677&IntCatId=18>

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10th NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH CONFERENCE  
17-20 May 2009, Cairns, Qld

Closing date for abstracts that will make a difference in rural health

The need to rectify the health imbalance between people living in rural and remote Australia and those in urban areas, involve communities in managing their health while celebrating successful rural service models, are among topics for discussion at the 10th National Rural Health Conference to be held in Cairns.

More than 1,000 delegates from the rural and remote health sector are expected to attend the event from 17-20 May 2009.

But, while the Cairns Convention Centre will undoubtedly be the place to be for health professionals and consumers next May, those keen to provide research reports, workshops or other papers are reminded that 3 October 2008 is the closing date for receipt of abstracts.

"There is much to commend the five key themes selected for discussion at this important biennial event. The Organising Committee expects a bumper crop of original material from authors by the closing date, which will allow us to make suitable selections for an exciting and informative program," said Conference Convenor, Owen Allen.

Authors are reminded that abstracts relating to previously unpublished work should run no

longer than 400 words. In a high demand environment, the abstracts are the basis on which the review panel will choose one paper over another.

Abstracts should clearly communicate a summary of the new and significant material intended for presentation. Authors who intend to make a submission are invited to visit the [www.ruralhealth.org.au](http://www.ruralhealth.org.au) website and click on the 10<sup>th</sup> National Rural Health Conference panel for fuller particulars.

Further Contact:

Lyn Eiszele - Conference Manager: (02) 6285 4660

Marshall Wilson - Media: 0419 664 155

<http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>

Call for abstracts

Abstracts are being sought until 3 October 2008 for papers to be presented at the 10th Conference. Abstracts can be submitted via the Conference website at <http://10thnrhc.ruralhealth.org.au/> or faxed to 02 6285 4670.

The website will be regularly updated and contains all information about the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference, including abstract guidelines, registrations, program, sponsorship, exhibition and travel.

We look forward to seeing you in Cairns in May 2009.

Owen Allen

Conference Convenor, Atherton

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From: Rupa Ranasinghe

Subject: FW: Two more weeks to go

I wonder if you could please assist us to disseminate the info concerning ARRHPS and RAHUS application for 2009 scholarship funding. Please note that the closing date for the applications are on Monday 29 September 2008 and passing this info to your members and interested students in your uni is much appreciated. If you have already not submit your applications for funding please do so before the closing date as we will not accept any late application.

Applications close Monday 29 September 2008

Contact Info: Phone 1800 338 061 or email [rahus@ruralhealth.org.au](mailto:rahus@ruralhealth.org.au) or visit <http://www.sarrah.org.au>

RAHUS Scheme link: <http://www.sarrah.org.au/site/index.cfm?display=74992>

ARRHPS Scheme link: <http://www.sarrah.org.au/site/index.cfm?display=74994>

Contact Info: Phone 1800 338 061 or email [arrhpss@ruralhealth.org.au](mailto:arrhpss@ruralhealth.org.au) or visit <http://www.sarrah.org.au>

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MATERNITY SERVICES DISCUSSION PAPER LAUNCHED

Health Minister Nicola Roxon has launched a discussion paper on improving maternity services in Australia. Preliminary figures suggest Australia may be on the cusp of a new baby boom. In 2005, 267,793 women gave birth to 272,419 babies, the second highest number of births in Australia's history, second only to 1971.

The Discussion Paper canvasses a wide range of issues, including:

Whether midwives should be supported to play a greater role in birth and in postnatal care

- \* Opportunities for women to access a range of birth care options, including in public and private hospitals and at home
- \* Shortages of maternity professionals, especially in rural and remote areas
- \* The complex set of challenges facing the maternity workforce
- \* Transport for women in remote areas to access maternity services
- \* The high rate of caesarean sections in Australia compared to other countries
- \* Access to antenatal and postnatal services across the community, and
- \* Rising levels of postnatal depression.

Copies of the discussion paper can be found at  
<http://www.health.gov.au/maternityservicesreview>

Submissions are due by Friday 31 October 2008, and can be made by emailing [maternity.services.review@health.gov.au](mailto:maternity.services.review@health.gov.au), or mailing The Secretariat, Maternity Services Review, MDP 94, GPO Box 9848, CANBERRA ACT 2600

The full text of the statement by Health Minister Nicola Roxon is at  
<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr08-nr-nr121.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2008&mth=9>

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#### RDAA STATEMENTS

Review a "critical opportunity" to rebuild rural maternity care  
10 September 2008

[http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded\\_documents/Maternity%20services%20discussion%20paper%20--%20September%202008.pdf](http://www.rdaa.com.au/uploaded_documents/Maternity%20services%20discussion%20paper%20--%20September%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.

The Australian Journal of Rural Health is published on behalf of the National Rural Health Alliance by Blackwell Publishing Asia Pty Ltd  
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Richmond Vic. 3121  
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Fax: +61 (0)3 9274 3101  
E-mail: [melbourne@johnwiley.com.au](mailto:melbourne@johnwiley.com.au)

October 2008 issue now available. Contents include:

- Editorial - Occupational therapy practice in rural and remote South Australia
- Profile of occupational therapy practice in rural and remote South Australia
- Influences on medical students' decisions to study at a rural clinical school
- Geographical variation of incidence of cutaneous melanoma in Queensland
- Physical activity of young people in the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Region: An exploratory study
- The oral health status and treatment needs of Indigenous adults in the Kimberley region of Western Australia
- Subjective well-being, sociodemographic factors, mental and physical health of rural residents
- Increasing community participation in an Aboriginal health service
- Health knowledge acquisition by rural women with chronic health conditions: A tale of two Web approaches
- Royal Flying Doctor Service 'field days': A move towards more comprehensive primary health care
- Improving mental health capacity in rural communities: Mental health first aid delivery in drought-affected rural New South Wales
- Short Report - Rurability: Community support for rural families managing acquired brain injury
- Grazings
- Community work injuries: Country style
- PHC RIS: Health for all or health for some? Remembering Alma Ata : 'Health for All' 2008 General Practice and Primary Health Care Research Conference
- From the Journal Associates - SARRAH: Provision of allied health services to regional and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

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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Partyline 33 is out now! The August edition includes reflections from Tom Calma on the current challenges in Indigenous health, a report on the National Survey of Adult Oral Health, a look at the progress of health reform, articles on rural optometry, nursing and research, student reports on rural experiences, as well as readers' stories and latest news from *friends* of the Alliance.

Partyline is available in hard copy and online - go to <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>, then to Publications, then Partyline.

If you would like to subscribe to Partyline please email your contact details to [nrha@ruralhealth.org.au](mailto:nrha@ruralhealth.org.au) Subscription is free.

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Join *friends* of the Alliance now for 2009 and get discounted registration for the 10th Conference in Cairns in May. People who pay the *friends* fee after 1 September are members for the whole of the following calendar year. *friends* members will also receive the updated CD 'Rural and Remote Health Papers 1991-2009' (due out in late 2009), connection with the Alliance's policy work and regular issues of the *Partyline* newsletter.

Above all, membership of *friends* gives you the opportunity to support the Alliance and its work.

A new *friends* Advisory Committee has now been elected. Members are: Alicia Eaton (Vic), John Ferguson (Qld), Jane Fisher (ACT), Janet Fletcher (NT), Pauline Glover (SA), Nigel Jefford (WA), Marie Lally (SA), Suzanne Little (Qld), Irene Mills (WA), Beth Smith (TAS), Janie Smith (NSW), Janet Struber (NT), David Templeman (ACT), David Thompson (Vic) and Robin Toohey (NSW). Members of the Committee are soon to elect a Chairperson, who will be a Member of the NRHA Council.

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#### LIFELINE INFORMATION SERVICE - 1300 13 11 14

Your Rural Mental Health Information Service

Lifeline's Information Service is a rural mental health information service. Information provided includes: referral to services and web sites, printed material and a range of self help resources. The self-help resources focus on practical steps to help promote mental health in a range of areas. For information and copies of resources call or visit

<http://www.lifeline.org.au/infoservice> and further information is available at [infoservice@lifeline.org.au](mailto:infoservice@lifeline.org.au) and <http://www.lifeline.org.au>

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#### AIHW REPORTS

Public health spending up 12.5%, immunisation dominates

Total spending on public health activities in Australia grew by 12.5% in 2006-07, with immunisation activities responsible for most of the increase, according to a report released today by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). The report, *Public health expenditure in Australia 2006-07*, shows that organised immunisation programs accounted for \$436 million or 25% of the \$1.7 billion spent on public health activities by Commonwealth and state and territory health departments in 2006-07.

The AIHW statement is at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/mediacentre/2008/mr20080903.cfm> and the full report is at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10614>

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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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**AUSTRALIAN ROTARY HEALTH RESEARCH FUND SEEKS APPLICATIONS IN RURAL AND MENTAL HEALTH**

The Australian Rotary Health Research Fund (ARHRF) invites applications from teams of researchers/service providers/clinicians/consumers and carers, for funding to evaluate new or existing interventions/services designed to restore or promote the mental or rural medical health of Australians. The closing date for applications is Friday 3 October. For application forms and more information, go to <http://www.arhrf.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/>)

**Intervention 'has ignored report recommendations'**

Rex Wild says the Federal Government is ignoring the report he co-authored into child sex abuse in Aboriginal communities.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/09/14/2363960.htm>

The Rural Doctors Association says the state of Australia's maternity services needs action, not another Federal Government discussion.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/09/10/2360785.htm>

**Alice seminar addresses child neglect**

Child health and welfare workers are meeting in Alice Springs today to discuss how to reduce the Northern Territory's high rate of child neglect.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/09/11/2361551.htm>

**Doctors' group pushes to make rural health a priority**

The Rural Doctors Association wants regional health care to be made a priority as part of the Nationals' push for a Royalties to Regions scheme.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/09/09/2359741.htm>

#### Roxon flags maternity service overhaul

Federal Health Minister Nicola Roxon says Australia's maternity services need to be overhauled.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/09/10/2360426.htm>

#### Intervention gave Indigenous children vital health care: Chalmers

The head of the Northern Territory emergency response says health checks for children have given a record number of Indigenous children much needed medical attention.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/09/06/2357157.htm>

#### Health workers lament lack of dialysis machines

Aboriginal health workers have accused health bureaucrats of "playing God" by failing to provide an adequate number of dialysis units to treat the Kimberley's growing number of renal patients.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/09/04/2355461.htm>

#### Tassie weight loss challenge to raise men's health money

Two Tasmanian horticulturalists are putting their money where their mouth is, challenging each other to a 12-week weight loss program in the name of rural men's health.

<http://www.abc.net.au/rural/news/content/200809/s2354134.htm>

#### NT intervention failing to curb abuse: child advocate

The head of one of Australia's peak Aboriginal child protection agencies says the federal intervention has failed to achieve one of its key goals.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/09/04/2355790.htm>

#### Remote Australia a failed state: Indigenous policy makers

A group of experienced Indigenous policy makers is warning of a "perfect storm" in remote Australia that will have dire social and economic consequences.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/09/04/2354860.htm>

#### Health task force to urge more community consultation

The country health task force analysing the Government's plan for regional health services says its final recommendations will include more community consultation about the future of regional hospitals.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/09/01/2351362.htm>

#### More interpreters recommended for remote patients

The Northern Territory Coroner has recommended there be more Aboriginal interpreters in the health service to help patients from remote communities.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/09/01/2351761.htm>

#### Indigenous health in Australia still lagging

<http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/news/stories/200806/s2284701.htm>

#### Forgotten apology to forgotten Australians

<http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2008/s2350695.htm>

#### Indigenous welfare rules not working: task force head

<http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/news/stories/200806/s2280452.htm>

Doctors group says Australian Indigenous intervention caused harm  
<http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/news/stories/200808/s2350125.htm?tab=australia>

Shame, humiliation, anger the legacy of intervention: doctors  
The Australian Indigenous Doctors Association (AIDA) says the federal intervention has had a negative effect on the health and emotional wellbeing of people in the targeted communities.  
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/08/29/2349675.htm>

Indigenous intervention may need 15 years: Australia opposition  
<http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/news/stories/200806/s2287160.htm>

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### BLIGH GOVERNMENT ACTS TO STRENGTHEN RURAL WORKFORCE

A special unit aimed at establishing training pathways for rural and remote health professionals is being set up by Queensland Health. Health Minister Stephen Robertson said the unit would coordinate clinical education and training for pre-entry students, new graduates, and long-term employees of Queensland Health by establishing training pathways for each discipline. The full text of Mr Robertson's statement is at  
<http://www.cabinet.qld.gov.au/MMS/StatementDisplaySingle.aspx?id=59930>

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CURRENT ISSUE OF eMJA, 1 September 2008  
(Available at <http://www.mja.com.au/>)

From the Editor's Desk: Medical religion in Britain  
Editorials

Monitoring vaccine safety: a critical component of every immunisation program

Influence of television on demand for cosmetic surgery

Contemporary management of type 2 diabetes: blood glucose-lowering therapies and glycaemic targets

Research

Assessment of thyroid function during pregnancy: first-trimester (weeks 9-13) reference intervals derived from Western Australian women

Socioeconomic status and rates of breastfeeding in Australia: evidence from three recent national health surveys

Health Care

Standards for health care: a necessary but unknown quantity

Public Health

Mass psychogenic response to human papillomavirus vaccination

Research Enterprise

Are self-regulation and declaration of conflict of interest still the benchmark for relationships between physicians and industry?

Health Care Reform

Investing in the future: prevention a priority at last

Learning from past commissions

Medical Education

Does practice make perfect? The effect of coaching and retesting on selection tests used for admission to an Australian medical school

Peer physical examination: time to revisit?

Clinical Update

Chronic myeloid leukaemia: the evolution of gene-targeted therapy

New Drugs, Old Drugs

Migraine prophylaxis

Lessons from Practice

Treatment of severe pemphigus foliaceus with rituximab

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ADDRESS BY HEALTH MINISTER, NICOLA ROXON, TO CONGRESS OF ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER NURSES ANNUAL CONFERENCE, ADELAIDE

The Minister for Health and Ageing, Nicola Roxon, discussed Closing the Gap, the health workforce, and the Government's broader reform agenda for Indigenous health. The full speech is available at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/sp-yr08-nr-nrsp080910.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2008&mth=9>

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ARTICLES IN "RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH"

'Clinician's perspectives of the relocation of a regional child and adolescent mental health service from co-located to stand alone premises'

Children and young people need to be managed in an environment that is safe and appropriate - they shouldn't just be put in with the adults. This interesting study gives the clinician's perspective on how different it feels to see children in a purpose-designed place. <http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=893>

'Rural placements in Tasmania: do experiential placements and background influence undergraduate health science student's attitudes toward rural practice?'

This positive study on rural practice intention following a rural health placement in Tasmania, Australia, challenges us to capitalise on these intentions to enrich the rural health workforce with new graduates. <http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=962>

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INDIGENOUS CAUSE-OF-DEATH DATA FOUND TO BE INACCURATE (The Australian 12 September 2008)

THE cause of death is not accurately recorded for 40 per cent of Aborigines, complicating Kevin Rudd's promise to close the 17-year life expectancy gap between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. The revelation from the National Indigenous Health Equality Council came as its chairman, Ian Anderson, said yesterday the council might have to set lower initial health targets for indigenous Australians than for the rest of the population because of the

significant difference in life expectancy. The full article is at  
<http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,24332899-2702,00.html>

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### NEW ROUND IN \$30 MILLION TRAINING BOOST FOR AGED CARE WORKERS IN REMOTE AREAS

A further 1,400 aged care workers in rural and regional areas will be offered places to receive further training under a new round of the Australian Government's four-year \$30 million Support for Aged Care Training Program. The full text of the announcement by The Hon Justine Elliot MP, Minister for Ageing, is at

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/mr-yr08-je-je167.htm>

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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](http://www.crana.org.au/n_d.php?ID=401)

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### The Northern Territory Intervention - What Have We Learnt?

The Brisbane Institute proudly presents Dr Bill Glasson

Former AMA President, leading ophthalmologist and member of the Northern Territory Emergency Taskforce

Evening seminar 30th September 2008

Art gallery, Customs House, 399 Queen Street, Brisbane

Seminar begins 6.15 p.m. (Registrations from 5.30 pm)

The Northern Territory intervention arose out of the "Children are Sacred" Report which highlighted issues of safety for our children in indigenous communities. This presentation will outline the nature of this intervention, some of the strategies that have been put in place and the lessons learnt. How do we continue to narrow the gap in the health outcomes for our indigenous Australians?

Dr Glasson has been awarded an Order of Australia for his work in restoring sight to thousands of people. During his AMA presidency he played a significant role in finding a solution to the medical indemnity crisis.

To book: online at <http://www.brisinst.org.au/events> or Telephone: 07 3220 2198

Cost: \$25; \$15 concessions. Free to members and sponsors of The Brisbane Institute

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4th Annual National Elder Abuse Prevention Conference is on from October 1st - 3rd 2008 at the Quest East St. Kilda Function Centre; St Kilda Vic. Contact details; Elder Abuse Prevention Association 1300 884 665 <http://www.eapa.asn.au>

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#### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health at WONCA/RACGP ASC 2008

You are invited to the 51st Annual Scientific Convention being held in Melbourne from 2-5 October 2008. This year's convention is combined with the Wonca Asia Pacific Regional Conference. The program on Friday 3 October on *Primary care and its role in the community* includes plenary presentations from Mick Adams and Ian Anderson. Also during the conference there will be Indigenous health workshops and many relevant papers presented. Further information at <http://www.racgp.org.au/aboriginalhealthunit/news/26334>

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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/n\\_d.php?ID=400](http://www.crana.org.au/n_d.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](mailto:sales@bowerbird.com)

Website: <http://www.recruitmentandretention.org>

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#### WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY - 10 OCTOBER 2008

World Mental Health Day (WMHD) is a significant annual international event that aims to celebrate and promote mental health. WMHD has been well established in Australia since

1992. The Day is internationally coordinated by the World Federation for Mental Health and cosponsored by the World Health Organisation, a specialised agency of the United Nations. In Australia, WMHD is held in conjunction with National Mental Health Week (NMHW), which is promoted by the relevant peak mental health organisations and other organisations in each State/Territory.

Information at <http://www.mhca.com.au>

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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](mailto: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](mailto:info@iir.com.au)

<http://iir.com.au/nphs/dm>

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#### WA HEALTH CONFERENCE 2008 - OUR HEALTH, OUR FUTURE

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?

Conference web site <http://www.wahealthconference.health.wa.gov.au>

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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](mailto:Hunter.BrainInjuryUnit@hnehealth.nsw.gov.au)  
[http:// www.health.nsw.gov.au/birp/bird.html](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  
October 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](mailto:grovesc@winshop.com.au) (do not "reply" to this email - send contributions to [grovesc@winshop.com.au](mailto:grovesc@winshop.com.au)). Contributions received by the Friday of publication will be included in the e-forum.

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

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

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### Media Release

12 September 2008

Scholarship program prepares doctors for the bush

Surveys show that rural students awarded grants under the Rural Australia Medical Undergraduate Scholarship (RAMUS) scheme are more likely to practise medicine in rural Australia as a result of their participation.

This positive outcome accords with one of the core aims of RAMUS - to reinforce medical students' ties with regional and rural Australia - following its implementation in 2000 with funding from the Department of Health and Ageing.

Administered by the National Rural Health Alliance, the objective is to increase the number of medical practitioners in rural and remote areas by providing selected medical students from those areas with an unbonded scholarship of \$10,000 a year.

RAMUS incorporates a mentorship program that pairs every scholar with an experienced medical practitioner located in a rural or remote area. Since it began more than 1400 RAMUS scholarships have been awarded, with over 750 having graduated from medicine.

Key findings from a 2006 survey of RAMUS graduates showed:

- \*. 75 per cent of respondents agreed participation in the scheme had increased their intention to practise medicine in rural or remote Australia
- \*. 80 per cent indicated an intention to do so, with the majority of scholars forming the intention while still in high school or at university
- \*. personal preference for a rural lifestyle was the strongest positive factor to influence RAMUS students to start or continue in rural or remote practice after graduation

\*. opportunities for greater diversity and responsibility in rural practice also ranked highly.

A 2007 survey of current scholarship holders reflected a similar positive perception of the scheme and its objectives. It showed 92 per cent of respondents agreed RAMUS had increased their intention and commitment to practise rural medicine, while 99 per cent agreed the level of payments significantly enhanced the capacity to complete their studies.

The results of both surveys are available on the NRHA website at <http://www.ruralhealth.org.au>

So too, is additional information about RAMUS including detail on how to apply for a scholarship.

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