

National Rural Health Alliance E-forum 15 August 2008

In this issue:

- * NRHA Symposium - 'National planning in the rural and remote health sector'
- * Rural and remote mental health: the poor cousin
- * 10th National Rural Health Conference - Call for Abstracts
- * Chronic Disease and Kidney Failure: New Findings Underline Indigenous Health Crisis
- * People with a Need for Assistance - A Snapshot, 2006
- * AIHW Reports
- * Rural Health on the ABC
- * Articles in "Rural and Remote Health"
- * What's On
- * Contribution and subscription information and disclaimer
- * Full text of "Rural and remote mental health: the poor cousin"

+++++

NRHA Symposium - 'National planning in the rural and remote health sector'
Monday 22 September 2008
The Great Hall, University House, ANU

- 2.00pm Welcome to Country - Matilda House
- 2.05pm NRHA Welcome - John Wakerman, Chairperson
- 2.10pm Preliminary views of the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission - tbc
- 2.40pm Reconciling national planning and Indigenous health in rural and remote areas - tbc
- 3.00pm Discussion
- 3.30pm Rural people and a new National Primary Care Strategy - Tony Hobbs, Chair of the External Reference Group for the Strategy
- 3.50pm Involving rural consumers - Tony McBride, Chief Executive Officer, Health Issues Centre
- 4.10pm Oral and dental health: a case study in better national planning - Bruce Simmons, Rural Interest Group of Australian Dental Association
- 4.30pm Discussion
- 5.30pm Close

To Register: Please provide your name, organisation and contact details to leanne@ruralhealth.org.au or 02 6285 4660

+++++

RURAL AND REMOTE MENTAL HEALTH: THE POOR COUSIN

Figures released this week by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) show a huge fall-off between city and country for Medicare-funded mental health services provided by psychiatrists and allied health professionals. The bulk of mental health services covered by Medicare are in fact being accessed by people in the cities.

The full text of the Alliance statement is at <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/mediareleases/mediarelease8august2008.pdf> and is reproduced below.

+++++

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

Cairns is the place to be next May

Don't forget to pencil in 17-20 May 2009 for the 10th National Rural Health Conference in Cairns, Qld. The Conference belongs to everyone in the rural and remote health sector - which also includes many who work in capital cities.

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 are: 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 the rural and remote health sector. There will also be a special Community Day.

Call for abstracts

Abstracts are now being sought for 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 10th 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

+++++

From: Rupa Ranasinghe
Subject: ARRHPS Scholarship funding

The Australian Rural and Remote Health Professional Scholarship Scheme is now open for application.

Applications are invited from eligible health professionals (excluding doctors and nurses) who work in rural and remote communities for scholarships to assist continuing professional education. Scholarships may be granted for a range of activities, including clinical placements, short courses, postgraduate tertiary courses and attendance at professional conferences. The application package including application form, scholarship guidelines and frequently asked questions can be downloaded from the SARRAH website - <http://www.sarrah.org.au>

The closing date for applications is 29th September 2008.

Applicants are encouraged to apply online as this greatly assists the SARRAH staff to process the application form information.

Further information is available from Rupa Ranasinghe, Scholarship Program officer, phone: (02) 6162 0321 or at the email arrhpss@sarrah.org.au

+++++

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 - Successful recruitment: What now?

Review Article - Harnessing the social capital of rural communities for youth mental health: An asset-based community development framework

Original Articles

Workplace stressors experienced by physiotherapists working in regional public hospitals

Retention of general practitioners in rural Nepal: A qualitative study

Creating a database to facilitate multilevel analyses of mental health determinants and outcomes in rural and remote areas

Quality of life in Hepatitis C virus infection: Assessment of rural patients living in north-western New South Wales

Rural carers online: A feasibility study

Integrated Community Policy Uptake Model: Responding to select Manitoba and Saskatchewan rural women's experiences of health reform/renewal

Public support for anti-smoking legislation varies with smoking status

Rural inpatient rehabilitation by specialist outreach: Comparison with a city unit

Short Reports

Long-term rural general practitioners: Their original interest and considerations towards a change in rural medicine

Depression in acute coronary syndrome: Has the evidence been implemented?

Practical Practice Pointers - Learning and being a first-time student supervisor: Challenges and triumphs

Grazing - PHC RIS: Snapshot of Australian primary health care research
From the Journal Associates - ARNM: Promoting nursing in general practice
Letter to the Editor - Provision of health care in a geographically isolated Australian territory

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.

+++++

CHRONIC DISEASE AND KIDNEY FAILURE: NEW FINDINGS UNDERLINE INDIGENOUS HEALTH CRISIS

Indigenous Australians are facing shocking rates of chronic disease and kidney failure according to research findings being released today by the Public Health Association of Australia.

"Rates of end-stage kidney failure are 8-10 fold greater for Indigenous people than for other Australians. The most recent results also indicate that there is considerable under-diagnosis of preventable chronic diseases in Northern Territory Aboriginal communities," explained Michael Moore, Chief Executive Officer of the Association.

The full text of the Association's statement is at <http://www.phaa.net.au/documents/mediaRelease/20080805IndigenousAustraliansfacechronicdisease.doc>

+++++

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.

+++++

PEOPLE WITH A NEED FOR ASSISTANCE - A SNAPSHOT, 2006 (ABS 4445.0)

As measured by the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia, Inner Regional areas are more likely than other areas to have a comparatively high proportion of people needing assistance. In 2006, 5.0% of people in Inner Regional Australia needed assistance, compared with 3.4% of people in Major Cities and 2.8% of people in Very Remote areas. Some of these differences are related to the age structures of the populations in the different regions. In Very Remote areas, there are relatively few older people, whereas Inner Regional areas generally

have an older population. As people get older, there is a tendency for them to relocate, moving away from Remote and Very Remote areas and into Inner and Outer Regional areas in order to gain access to appropriate medical and community facilities. There is also a trend for people retiring to move away from Major Cities to Regional areas. When the effect of age structures has been taken into account, the differences between regions are no longer as distinct and, in 2006, Major Cities had the lowest adjusted proportion of people needing assistance.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4445.0?OpenDocument>

+++++

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>

+++++

AIHW REPORTS

Dentist labour force in Australia, 2005

In 2005 there were an estimated 11,868 dental registrations in Australia, of whom 10,074 were estimated to be practising. _ Since the 2003 labour force collection, there had been a 4% increase in the number of practising dentists. Across remoteness regions, the number of dentists per 100,000 population was higher in major cities (58.6) than in remote areas (19.8).

Details at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/den/dlfia05/dlfia05.pdf>

See also reports on dental hygienists, dental prosthetists and dental therapists - details at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm>

Mental health services in Australia 2005-06

It is estimated that one in five Australians will experience a mental illness at some time in their lives and 11% of respondents to the 2004-05 National Health Survey reported that they had a long-term mental or behavioural problem.

There was a big variation according to area of residence, with relatively low numbers of psychiatrist services being provided outside major cities. In 2006-07, there were 113 services per 1,000 population in major cities and 19 services per 1,000 population in very remote areas. There was also a fall-off between city and country for Medicare-funded mental health services provided by allied health professionals. In 2006-07, there were 33 services per 1,000 population in major cities and 22 services per 1,000 population in remote areas. In very remote areas, 5 services were provided per 1,000 population.

The AIHW release is at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/mediacentre/2008/mr20080806.cfm> and the full publication is available at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/hse/mhsa05-06/mhsa05-06.pdf>

+++++

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!

+++++

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>

+++++

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>

+++++

RURAL HEALTH ON THE ABC

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

People in rural Australia are more likely to have hypertension, and less likely to be treated for it, than their city counterparts.

<http://www.abc.net.au/health/thepulse/stories/2008/08/07/2320519.htm>

PATIENTS GO ONLINE BUT DON'T TRUST THE INFO (The World Today: 05/08/2008)

<http://abcmail.net.au/t/219668/614869/4531/0/>

Remote mental health services falling short: report

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/08/06/2325621.htm>

Relief director of nursing hits the road

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/08/04/2322953.htm>

+++++

CURRENT ISSUE OF eMJA, 4 August 2008

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

From the Editor's Desk: Medical workforce expansion - uncertain times
Editorials

Pelvic pain in women: common and challenging
Mandatory reporting of professional incompetence
Venous thromboembolism - a major health and financial burden: how can we do better to prevent this disease?
Problem gambling: what do general practitioners need to know and do about it?
Research
Prevalence and correlates of three types of pelvic pain in a nationally representative sample of Australian women
The incidence of venous thromboembolism: a prospective, community-based study in Perth, Western Australia
How will Australian general practitioners respond to an influenza pandemic? A qualitative study of ethical values
Variable uptake of recommended interventions to reduce mother-to-child transmission of HIV in Australia, 1982-2005
Medicine and the Media - The newsworthiness of cancer in Australian television news
Medical Education
The mini clinical evaluation exercise (mini-CEX) for assessing clinical performance of international medical graduates
Development of the Australian Core Competencies in Musculoskeletal Basic and Clinical Science project - phase 1
Efficiency of clinical training at the Northern Territory Clinical School: placement length and rate of return for internship
Health Care Reform
Health policy and reform: gathering the evidence
What is the health service for?
The people principle in Australian health care
Notable Cases - Paediatric lobar lung transplantation: addressing the paucity of donor organs

+++++

ARTICLES IN "RURAL AND REMOTE HEALTH"

From malaria to mental health, climate change is having an impact on rural health. *Rural and Remote Health* readers are invited to enlarge their knowledge by accessing the following unique articles from the special Climate Change issue.

The future, our rural populations and climate change - a special issue of *Rural and Remote Health* - <http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=1039>

Population health needs beyond ratifying the Kyoto Protocol: a look at occupational deprivation - <http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=927>

Control, uncertainty, and expectations for the future: a qualitative study of the impact of drought on a rural Australian community - <http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=950>

Malaria and pond-based rainwater harvesting linkages in the fringes of central highland Ethiopia - <http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=956>

Responding to health impacts of climate change in the Australian desert -

<http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=1008>

+++++

From: Fiona Armstrong
Subject: CoNNO National Nursing Research Symposium Melbourne 22 August

The National Nursing Research Symposium is to be held in Melbourne on 22 August 2008. The Coalition of National Nursing Organisations (CoNNO) is hosting the National Nursing Research Symposium.

The exciting program featuring national and international research experts will include a Keynote Address from successful nursing researcher Professor Simon Stewart (Head, Preventative Cardiology, Baker Heart Research Institute).

Please contact the CoNNO Secretariat if you require any further information.

Fiona Armstrong
Federal Professional Officer
Australian Nursing Federation
For the CoNNO Secretariat
Level 1, 365 Queen Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
T: 03 9602 8500 M: 0438 900 005 E: fiona@anf.org.au

The Coalition of National Nursing Organisations (CoNNO) is made up of more than 50 national nursing organisations in an alliance to work collectively to advance the nursing profession to improve health care. The members of CoNNO represent the national interests of nurses in all sectors of the health profession, and comprise national nursing organisations from over 50 different speciality areas of nursing practice.

+++++

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.

+++++

Menzies Lecture Series and Short Course in Improving Aboriginal Child Health 29-30 August

Menzies School of Health Research in Darwin is holding a two day short course on "Improving Aboriginal Child Health - what works and what's new". It will take place on

Friday 29 and Saturday 30 August and will include the 2008 Alan Walker Lecture Series with presentations by David Brewster, Jonathan Carapetis and Paul Torzillo.

For more information and short course registration, go to <http://www.menzies.edu.au/shortcourses> or contact Belinda Hosking on 08 8922 8657 or Belinda.Hosking@menzies.edu.au. 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

+++++

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>

+++++

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

+++++

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>

+++++

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>

+++++

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

+++++

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>

+++++

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>

+++++

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>

+++++

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

+++++

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>

+++++

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>

+++++

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>

+++++

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>

+++++

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/>

+++++

17th National Conference on Incontinence - 5 to 8 November 2008 - Grand Chancellor Hotel,
Hobart
Website <http://www.continence.org.au>

+++++

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/>

+++++

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>

+++++

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

+++++

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.

+++++

Media Release
8 August 2008
Rural and remote mental health: the poor cousin

Figures released this week by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) show a huge fall-off between city and country for Medicare-funded mental health services provided by psychiatrists and allied health professionals. The bulk of mental health services covered by Medicare are in fact being accessed by people in the cities.

The AIHW report, *Mental health services in Australia 2005-2006*, confirms that one in five Australians will experience a mental illness at some time in their lives. And one in 10 encounters at GP surgeries nationwide involve a mental health problem.

Psychiatrist occasions of service, as one example, display a large variation by area of residence. In 2006-07 there were 113 psychiatry services per 1,000 people in major cities and just 19 services per 1,000 in very remote areas.

Professor John Wakerman, Chair of the National Rural Health Alliance, said the figures confirm that people in rural and remote areas are the poor cousins where mental health services are concerned.

"One third of Australians live in rural and remote areas, suffer at least the same incidence of mental illness, and for some groups higher rates, but have measurably much worse access to the services they need in the present system," he said.

"We need to build sustainable primary health care systems for the bush that include mental health services. These will be different from those in the city and different between rural areas and remote areas.

"Rural and remote Australia is best serviced by multi-disciplinary models specifically designed for their particular circumstances. The fee-for-service model is dependent on health

professional supply and is failing people in the bush.

"We need to systematically apply models that are known to work, such as shared care.

We also need to address workforce issues by supporting undergraduate mental health professional placements, enhancing professional development opportunities and providing incentives for mental health staff to relocate and stay in rural areas," he said.