



AUGUST 2003 Edition - a newsletter for RAMUS Scholars and their mentors

Welcome to the first issue of *Gone Fishin'*. A peculiar name for a newsletter, particularly this newsletter, I know. Let me explain. How many times have you wished you were somewhere else? Well *Gone Fishin'* is the metaphor for whatever you would rather be doing when you're doing something you'd rather not be doing!

The aim of the newsletter is to share information about RAMUS and, when the occasion arises, about rural general practice more generally, from the point of view of scholars, mentors and administrators. For scholars we will give and receive tips about preparing learning plans and reports and also share some individual reports with you – with permission of the authors of course. For mentors, we will share information about the Rural Doctor Mentor Scheme, the feedback we receive from scholar mentors. We will also provide material and references for material about the broader aims and goals of the scheme. We may even be able to develop a network between mentors so they can exchange their RAMUS mentoring experiences. Finally, we will publish and respond to issues about RAMUS raised by mentors, scholars and other stakeholders through a frequently asked questions section.

Finally, we will publish and respond to letters we receive about the scheme.

When is *Gone Fishin'* Available?

The newsletter will be distributed by email and hard copy in July, November and March with 'old' issues available on the website www.ruralhealth.org.au. Hover over scholarships and choose the RAMUS option. To access the actual site content you will need your membership number, username and password. To be reminded of these, email ramus@ruralhealth.org.au

RAMUS is now in its fourth year of operation with an alumnus which numbers almost 200. Although it is probably too soon to be measuring the success of RAMUS in achieving its stated goal of increasing the number of general practitioners in rural and remote Australia, four years is long enough for us to have learnt a few things about running the scheme and to have made improvements accordingly. Again, from our evaluation feedback, we know it's not perfect so we keep working at it....

With regard to ex-scholars, we will, where possible, follow up and let you know how they are progressing.

*The opinions expressed in *Gone Fishin'* are those of contributors and not necessarily of the National Rural Health Alliance or its individual members bodies*

Notes for Mentors

Running a quick eye over the responses to our evaluation shows that the level of service to mentors may not be appropriate as the could be, even though without the services of our mentors the scheme would not be able to operate. While we will be testing ways to address this shortcoming, any ideas are most welcome.

RAMUS LOGO

To celebrate the launch of the newsletter, the new RAMUS logo gets its first outing



Staff Profile

Staff Profile



Introducing Janine Sahlqvist..... a new voice you will meet on the RAMUS toll free line.....

Janine is the newest member of the RAMUS administration team. She fits her part-time hours between the myriad of her other jobs and interests. Her role in the office includes updating information on OSCAR. So when you forward us new details it is Janine who takes care of that information. Janine has been with the team for approximately four months.

Janine has 2 young children and lives on a 20-acre property. She breeds Arabian horses. Her other 'child', Mystic Rose, is due to foal in a couple of weeks. She has 4 dogs, 2 chooks and 6 horses on her own property and a number of other horses that she keeps on her parents' farm. Her interests are netball, running and, of course, her beautiful Arabian horses.

Like so much of Australia, Janine's property is drought affected and hand feeding her horses and other animals keeps her poor. Janine also helps her parents run their 8000-acre cattle property outside of Captain's Flat. Her work includes the mustering of wild bulls in Crow Valley, which is 'heaven on earth' according to Janine. This mustering task calls for strong and tough horses but her Arabians are up to the task!

Janine lives 45 minutes out of town. Though she is able to access medical services when she needs them, she would rather use alternate methods of treatment for her family's ailments, which to date have been minor. She encourages RAMUS scholars to be open-minded to alternative methods of treatment as they move into their medical careers.

'I would kill myself if I did not have my freedom, my animals and my farm. My daughter and young son can run and ride freely without fear, except for the snakes.....'

Rural Health Club News

*Contributions received from the clubs for the information of RAMUS Scholars.
Other clubs will be featured in future editions.*

From WILDFIRE

is the Monash University rural health club. We aim to encourage and support both rural and urban origin students contemplating working in country Australia. Our role is to provide opportunity for rural experience and raise awareness about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, while providing information about the possibilities and diversity of rural health. Members are able to participate in numerous activities, including: social events, BBQs, dinners with informative guest speakers, clinical skills training days, educational lectures, opportunities to attend rural health conferences, road trips to promote rural health careers to rural high school students and heaps more!

If you want more information, feel free to check out our website at www.med.monash.edu/wildfire or contact us at wildfire@med.monash.edu.au

From RAHMS

the Rural Allied Health and Medical Society, is a club for medical, optometry, psychology and social work UNSW students and has over 200 members! Some RAHMS members are from the country, others are from the city. Some plan to live in the country or at least work there for a while. Others are just curious about what rural health is. So, if you are interested in the health issues in rural Australia, going on heavily subsidised weekend trips, Indigenous health and issues, International health, some great social events, meeting people from other universities, those cool orange shirts that you will see everyone wearing or the new rural clinical schools the RAHMS is for you.

If you have any questions contact Justine Brindle on (02) 93853250, or justine@unsw.edu.au
Please take a look at our website <http://clinical.web.unsw.edu.au/rural/rahms.html>



Contact Club RHI NO

c/o School of Medicine
James Cook University
Townsville QLD 4811

From RHINO

Rural Health in the Northern Outback

RHINO is the student rural health club of the James Cook University in North Queensland. RHINO was founded in August 2000. RHINO aims to encourage and promote rural health issues and opportunities within the health disciplines of the university, like medicine and pharmacy. RHINO provides many rewarding activities for its members that are both fun and educational.

This includes trips away to rural locations around North Queensland, guest speakers from around Australia and the world, skills nights, social events and heaps more!

<http://www.jcu.edu.au/school/medicine/rhino/rhino.htm>

A word from the Department of Health and Ageing...

Dear RAMUS Participants

It gives me great pleasure to contribute to the inaugural Rural Australia Medical Undergraduate Scholarship (RAMUS) Scheme newsletter on behalf of the Department of Health and Ageing. The National Rural Health Alliance is to be commended for this initiative, which should assist to enhance the flow of information to participants in the Scheme.

The Australian Government has a firm commitment to the RAMUS Scheme. This level of commitment has been shown by the Government's announcement in the 2003-04 Budget, of continued funding for the Scheme of \$4.2 million over the next four years. This continued funding ensures that medical students from rural backgrounds with demonstrated financial need will have the opportunity to seek Australian Government support to assist in the completion of their medical degree.

I would like to thank all the RAMUS students and mentors, who have taken the time to fill in and return the evaluation surveys that were recently sent out by the Department. The response to date has been excellent and some very thoughtful comments on the future development of the Scheme have been provided.

I encourage all of you to complete the survey so that your feedback is heard as part of our ongoing efforts to ensure the Scheme is meeting its primary goals of enabling and encouraging students to consider a career in rural medicine. It is important that the Department is able to provide evidence that the Scheme is meeting its objectives and the information provided in the evaluation surveys is central to this effort.

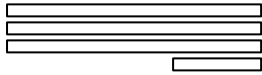
The evaluation surveys will also assist us to continue to improve the operation of the Scheme in partnership with our hard working managers, the National Rural Health Alliance. In particular, we are keen to ensure that communication with both students and RAMUS mentors is effective and that all participants have a full understanding of the requirements of the Scheme.

Finally, I would like to wish all RAMUS students all the best for their continuing studies. I trust that the RAMUS Scheme has provided valuable financial support during the completion of your degree and that your participation in the Scheme has given you further encouragement to consider a career in rural medicine once you have completed your training.

Yours sincerely

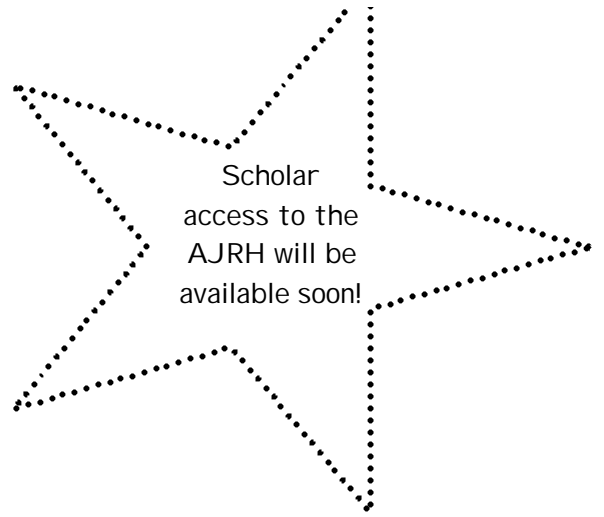


Brett Lennon
Assistant Secretary
Workforce and Quality Branch
Department of Health and Ageing



Email/Mail Bag

Any comments on *Gone Fishin'*, or any issues raised.
Email: ramus@ruralhealth.org.au



Scholar access to the AJRH will be available soon!

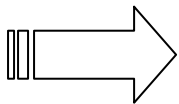
RAMUS Administration Evaluation

Thanks to all who have responded to the evaluation we forwarded recently. The response has been excellent. The external analysis of the responses received will take a bit longer than first thought due to the number of responses received. Information about the outcome of the evaluation will be forwarded to scholars and mentors when available.

'OSCAR' says it's time for ...

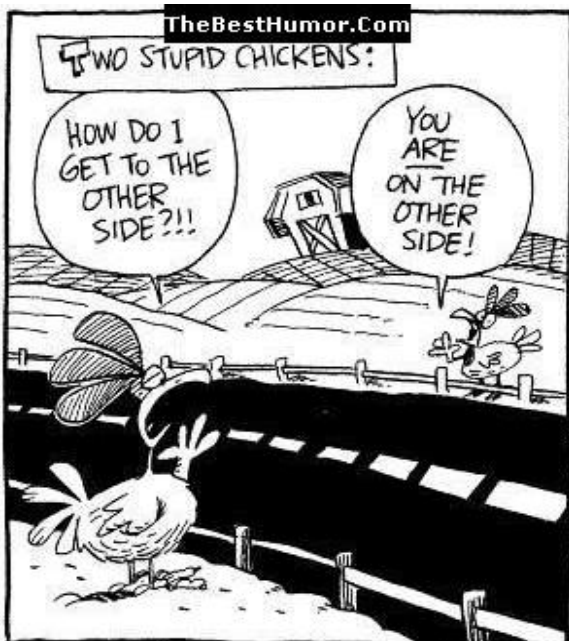
Let me introduce OSCAR – it's our **O**perating **S**ystem for **C**ontact **A**dministration and **R**esponse.

Oscar contains all the scholar and mentor contact, payment and paperwork details. You will recall the new acquittal requirements for scholars that were introduced this year. We have just commenced auditing these requirements and will be contacting people by email for any paperwork that is outstanding—for example, proof of membership of rural health clubs is one area where our records are incomplete.



NEXT ISSUE

See the November issue for guidance about preparing scholar reports, mentor reports and some examples of the feedback we are receiving.



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