

# IRCSTWHILE

## Rural Researchers Regroup at Sydney Uni

The Rural Research Capacity Building Program had its annual face to face workshop at the University of Sydney in February 2008. In total 34 candidates from the 2006 and 2007 intakes worked hard over the three day program.

improve the quality of their literature reviews and journal articles.

The overall feedback from the participants indicated that the workshop was extremely valuable to them.

Prof David Lyle, A/Prof David Perkins, A/Prof Jeffery Fuller, A/Prof Lyn Fragar and Prof Brian Kelly provided valuable input on both qualitative and quantitative dilemmas being faced by the research candidates.

Rural Research Support Officer, Emma Webster explained "The above well known rural researchers were able to make suggestions and explain theories to help candidates progress their work onto the next stage. This support is invaluable in order for candidates to complete their project".



Research candidates hard at work during their workshop at the University of Sydney

A/Prof Perkins and Prof Lyle also conducted sessions in preparing a literature review and writing for publication. These are often new skills for health workers and candidates welcomed the input, which assisted them to

The Rural Research Capacity Building Program is gearing up for its third intake. Please check the IRCST website for application details now as the closing date is June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008.



2006 and 2007 candidates take a break from the lecture theatres with mentors: Prof. David Lyle, A/Prof David Perkins and A/Prof Lyn Fragar



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## Putting the spotlight on:

# “The NCAHS Positive Approach to Care of the Older Person”



Last year IRCST allocated almost \$2 million in funding for a range of research and service improvement projects.

The following article describes a project in the North Coast Area Health Service, and was provided by the Project Managers: Frances Barraclough, Nurse Manager Professional Development and Anne Moehead, Nurse Practitioner Psychogeriatrics.

The NCAHS Positive Approach to Care of the Older Person 10 month program culminated in a wonderful graduation celebration at Coffs Harbour in November 2007. Thirty participants had the opportunity to showcase their learning and present the outcomes of their workplace clinical improvement projects.

Three written assessment tasks were included in the program with each participant identifying a workplace issue, undertaking a literature review and implementing a practice improvement project which was aimed at facilitating practice change within their workplace.

Thirty nurses completed the program and have formed a strong clinical network that facilitates discussion and debate, reflective practice and a sustainable interest in aged care.

We now have 30 clinical champions with advanced skills and mastery within aged care. We have developed sustainable resources to influence change in the workplace and significantly improve patient outcomes.

We have enhanced our partnerships and links with residential aged care facilities, aged care assessment teams and Southern Cross University.

The formal evaluation of the project is now underway and it is anticipated that a book will be published emphasising the Australian context to aged care.

Several of the participants have now enrolled in a Masters in Aged care program as a result of this course.

Following are a few quotes from the participants of the course which highlights their experience:



The program is based within a work based learning philosophy and is an excellent example of what can be achieved when academia and workforce combine in response to the North Coast growing aged population. This work based learning program has led to significant practice development, service change, education and research opportunities.

The NCAHS Positive Approach to Care of the Older Person program has achieved its aims to promote excellence in rural and remote clinical services and practice. This program could not have been achieved without the encouragement and financial assistance of the NSW Institute of Rural Clinical Services and Teaching.

The program included workshops highlighting future challenges in aged care providing clinical skills in assessment of the older person influencing change in the workplace academic writing and research skills.

An innovative 12 week e-learning module on dementia and delirium was developed as part of the program, with participants having to contribute to and post their experiences on-line. This module is presently being made available on the NSW DOH intranet site as a learning resource state-wide.

*“I found this course a very positive experience. I learned a lot, my attitude has changed a lot towards older patients, but I think it's going to be a long journey to get the rest of the hospital system to see that we need to change the way we do things. Thank you”*

*“I would like to thank everyone that has been involved in the programme. I hope it has been a success for you but more importantly I hope its success will make a difference on the floor, where the heart of caring for the older person takes place”*

*“Please run the course again so others can experience the positive aspects of this course and potentially motivate others to make improvements in the way we care for older persons as they are all some ones mother/ father/ brother/ sister/ or family member and have a right to expect “best practice” care”*

For additional information, please contact:  
Anne Moehead on (02) 6620 2612  
[anne.moehead@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:anne.moehead@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au) or

Frances Barraclough on (02) 6620 2143  
[frances.barraclough@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:frances.barraclough@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au)

# Completion of Rural Stroke Project



Hastings Macleay Opening: Matthew Kinchington, Kim Parrey, Chris Crawford, Colin Crighton



Bathurst Opening: Gerard Martin, Claire Blizard, Linda Cutler, Chris Levi, Alison Chandler



Orange Education Dinner: Claire Blizard, Fran Gearon, Chris Levi, Alison Chandler



Armidale Opening: Di Marsden, Chris Levi, Alexandra Little, Fergus Fitzsimons, Christine Robertson, Rachel Peake, Gerry DeGabriel



Tamworth opening: Michael Di Renzo, Rachel Peake, Michael Pollack, Neville Sampson, Peter Harradine, Peter Martin

It has been a year since the sites that were successful in receiving NSW state government funding under the 2002 NSW Rural Health Plan for the implementation of models of organised stroke care was announced. The successful sites were: Orange/ Bathurst, Dubbo, Tamworth, Armidale, Hastings Macleay, Wagga Wagga and Shoalhaven and what a busy year it has been for the sites. A key component of each of the "hub and spoke" models was the appointment of a stroke care coordinator (SCC). All seven SCCs commenced between September and December last year and have been working hard with their local clinicians and communities to establish and implement their funded models.

The sites have also been supported in the establishment of their new services with teleconferences and site visits by Dr Michael Pollack and Associate Professor Chris Levi from The Australasian Stroke Unit Network in their capacity of clinical leaders for the Rural Stroke Project; Mark Longworth, State Manager Stroke Services NSW; and myself, as the Rural Stroke Project Officer.

Throughout January and February this year six of the seven sites have had an official launch of their new stroke services. The official launches have included presentations on the Rural Stroke Project by an IRCST representative, a presentation by Dr Michael Pollack or Associate Professor Chris Levi and a presentation by a local representative, often the SCCs, on the new services and initiatives being implemented in their region. Wagga Wagga was fortunate to have the Hon Reba Meagher MP, NSW Minister for Health officially open the service and unveil the plaque for the new acute stroke unit. The other official openings were undertaken by:

- Hastings Macleay - Chris Crawford, Chief Executive, NCAHS
- Orange - Dr Claire Blizard, Chief Executive, GWAHS
- Bathurst - Mr Gerard Martin, Local Member of Parliament
- Dubbo - Linda Cutler, Executive Director, IRCST
- Armidale- Ms Christine Robertson, Member of the Legislative Council of NSW
- Tamworth - Michael Di Rienzo, Director Operations - Acute Networks, HNEAHS. The Tamworth launch also included a very moving, inspirational and funny speech by local stroke survivor, Peter Martin.

Shoalhaven are yet to announce the date of their official launch.

A number of the sites also had an educational dinner held in conjunction with their launches. These were well attended by a range of health professionals including ambulance officers, nursing, allied health, pharmacists, hospital based Drs as well as GPs. Representatives from health services management were also in attendance. Chris Levi was the keynote speaker at the Hastings Macleay and Orange/ Bathurst dinners; Michael Pollack and Dr James Hughes, a local Neurologist at the Tamworth dinner and Dr Jagdish Maharaj, a local Rehabilitation Physician at the Dubbo dinner. The dinners were made possible by a generous education grant from Sanofi Aventis whose continuing partnership enabled stroke education to be undertaken in rural settings.

The 7th March 2008 was the last day of the Rural Stroke Project Officer position. To ensure the sustainability and progression of the achievements of the project, a committee has been established, made up of the seven SCCs from the funded sites. This committee meets on a regular basis and the members will each be taking on a role formerly undertaken by the Project Officer.

Alexandra Little, SCC based at Armidale will be taking over the Rural Stroke Email Distribution List. If you would like to be added to the list, Alex can be contacted at:

[Alexandra.Little@hnehealth.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Alexandra.Little@hnehealth.nsw.gov.au)

If you require contacts, information or have questions regarding the Rural Stroke Project please go to the Institute of Rural Clinical Services and Teaching website:

[www.ircst.health.nsw.gov.au/initiatives/rural\\_stroke](http://www.ircst.health.nsw.gov.au/initiatives/rural_stroke)

It has been a wonderful opportunity to be involved in this project to improve stroke services in rural NSW. I would particularly like to thank Linda Cutler, Chris Levi, Michael Pollack, Mark Longworth and the seven SCCs for all the support they have provided me in this role. I have had the pleasure of working with some wonderful, resourceful and dedicated clinicians across NSW in the past six months and I wish you all the best in your ongoing delivery of stroke services to your rural clients.

Regards,  
Di Marsden



Dubbo Opening: Michael Pollack, Patricia Doolan, Jagdish Maharaj



Wagga Wagga site visit: Mark Longworth, Katherine Mohr, Di Marsden



Wagga Wagga site visit: Katherine Mohr, Jenelle Harris, Martin Jude

# Feel like a little 'R&R'?

Rural & Remote: Information/Inspiration/Innovation  
.... connecting the dots ....

## 20-22 November 2008 Opal Cove Resort



### OUR VISION:

**TO CONTRIBUTE TO AN  
EFFECTIVE AND  
SUSTAINABLE  
RURAL AND REMOTE  
HEALTH SYSTEM**

For further information on the content of this newsletter please contact:

**NSW INSTITUTE OF  
RURAL CLINICAL  
SERVICES & TEACHING**

PO Box 4061  
Hawthorn Street  
Dubbo, NSW, 2830

Phone: 02 6841 2361  
Fax: 02 6841 2298



Don't miss this opportunity to be part of the inaugural NSW Rural and Remote Health Conference (R&RHC): Information/Inspiration/Innovation ...connecting the dots...

It is anticipated that the R&RHC will attract a wide range of health professionals from across rural and remote NSW. The conference is based on the following themes:

- **Doing it better!** (celebrating the creativity, resourcefulness and professionalism of rural and remote health workers)
- **Once you've seen one small rural town, you've seen one small rural town** (the uniqueness of each community requires flexible/adapted health services)
- **Health outside hospital walls** (recognising the valuable role of health initiatives and services provided outside the hospital)
- **Our Workforce - where to from here?** (initiatives to build and sustain our rural and remote health workforce)

#### CALL FOR ABSTRACTS:

The conference Organising Committee is seeking oral and poster presentations that relate to the conference themes, and would like to hear from individuals who live or work in a rural or remote setting such as:

- Rural or remote healthcare staff
- General Practitioners
- Managers
- Support workers
- Academics
- Consumers

**Abstracts will be received  
until 16th June 2008**

First time presenters are encouraged to submit.

Interested people should register their abstracts for the conference as soon as possible, by logging onto the conference website below.

[www.hotelnetwork.com.au/conferences/conferences/rural\\_health](http://www.hotelnetwork.com.au/conferences/conferences/rural_health)

Additional information can be obtained by contacting Anne Field on (02) 6841 2361.

### Welcome .....

IRCST welcomes four new Executive Committee members, recently appointed by the NSW Minister for Health:

- Mr Christopher Crawford, Chief Executive, North Coast Area Health Service
- Prof David Lyle, Head, Broken Hill University Department of Rural Health
- Ms Lee Simpson, Program Developer/Coordinator, Aboriginal Health, Greater Southern Area Health Service
- Dr Yogendra Narayan, General Manager, Murrumbidgee Health Service, Greater Southern Area Health Service.

We are also pleased to welcome Dianne Bartholomew (right) to the IRCST team. Dianne is the Executive Director's EA, and brings a wealth of experience, including many years in the health sector. Dianne works with us part-time, from 8.30 am to 3.00 pm, Monday to Friday, and can be contacted on (02) 6841 2271.

