

# IRCSTWHILE

## Tamworth to host 4th Rural Allied Health Conference



The 4th Rural Allied Health Conference: *Rural and Remote Allied Health – Beyond the Rhetoric* will be held in Tamworth on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

This conference is designed to attract rural and remote allied health clinicians, from new graduates to managers, and will offer something for everyone.

A range of pre-conference workshops will be held to suit all disciplines; and a variety of conference themes will suit all interests:



**Management and Leadership** - examines new allied health management roles and clinical team leadership effectiveness in creating change within Area Health Services. It will explore how information, data and technology have been applied to decision making and management competencies in the rural context.

**Primary and Community Care** - explores effective evaluated partnerships, community development and capacity building processes. Of particular interest will be the emerging trends for expansion of primary health services to include how models of acute care have been implemented utilising allied health in the Community setting.

**Acute Care** - looks at evaluated models of acute care service delivery and what changes have been made to rural allied health roles to expand networking, utilisation of information technology and access to services in rural acute care.

**Rehabilitation** - outlines new trends for allied health services in the rehabilitation and sub-acute care setting; how rehabilitation and transitional

care is being delivered and the value of a multidisciplinary team approach.

**Mental Health and Wellbeing** - explores innovative rural and remote partnerships, project initiatives and research which enhance mental health models of care; promotion, relapse prevention, early intervention, rehabilitation and recovery.

The conference presentations will identify how research and evidence have been put into practice to create models of care which have achieved positive patient journeys' including emerging models utilising Allied Health Assistants and Aboriginal Health Care Workers in a team approach to rural and remote practice.

The closing date for submission of abstracts is **15th June**.

For additional information, go to the conference website, which will be live Tuesday 31 March 09 [www.archi.net.au/events/upcoming/rural-allied09](http://www.archi.net.au/events/upcoming/rural-allied09)

## Something new - Clinical Team Leadership

Attention all GP VMOs and rural staff- the Clinical Team Leadership Initiative is commencing in mid 2009 and is modelled on a blend of the Clinical Excellence Commission's (CEC) various leadership programs. Both the distance education and face to face workshop days have been tailored specifically to suit rural and remote participants.

A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between IRCST and CEC as a collaborative agreement to undertake the program together and work is currently underway to accredit the program with RACGP and ACRRM for CPD points.

Opportunity exists for nine rural or remote GP VMOs to team with a staff member from their

local health service to undertake this structured, facilitated program which aims to develop team leadership, communication, critical thinking and self evaluation skills. 'Project pairs' will then work together on a clinical practice improvement project in the workplace with their team. Participants will be supported by IRCST to attend 6 workshop days in Sydney and will receive ongoing facilitation and coaching for leadership profiling and the distance education self paced action learning modules.

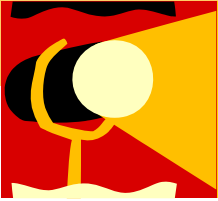
Recruitment for the Program Facilitator will occur in April 2009 and applications from participants will be sought in May 2009.



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## Putting the spotlight on: "Introduction to Rural Mental Health Practice"

During 2007 IRCST allocated almost \$2 million in funding for a range of research and service improvement projects.

The "Introduction to Rural Mental Health Practice" project was managed by Ms Tracy Robinson, Senior Lecturer (Education), Centre for Rural & Remote Mental Health; who has provided this article.

A state wide trial of an inter-professional education program (*Introduction to Rural Mental Health Practice*) was completed in December, 2008. The program was developed by the Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health (CRRMH) and the trial was funded by the NSW Institute of Rural Clinical Services and Teaching (IRCST). The trial involved participants from all four rural Area Health Services.

The Introduction to Rural Mental Health Practice targets recent graduates and staff who are new to working in rural mental health services. It is delivered by using a distance based learning platform (Black Board) at the University of Newcastle. The National Practice Standards for the Mental Health Workforce provided an overall framework for the development of this inter professional program. Inter professional education is an important strategy for enhancing collaborative care in rural practice because it improves participant's understanding of the roles and responsibilities of diverse health professionals.

We are currently analysing the pre and post evaluation data from this program but preliminary results demonstrate that a total of 75 people enrolled in the program. Of this number, however, 23 did not commence or else did not complete the introductory module. Of the 52 participants who commenced Module 2, there were 28 (54%) who completed all course activities, with a median age of 43. Participants achieved a final mean grade of 83%.

The pre evaluation surveys (n=61) demonstrate that there were few apparently significant differences between those who completed the program and those who withdrew in relation to professional discipline, computer / internet skills or perceived self efficacy in responding to challenging behaviours and rural practice issues. At present, we are conducting semi structured interviews with participants (including some who withdrew later in the course) to provide more formative feedback in terms of the program's future applications.

The CRRMH team would like to take this opportunity to thank all those clinicians who participated in the trial. We were impressed by the commitment and motivation of all those involved. The evaluation data will be used to inform the future development and delivery of this orientation program to rural mental health settings. We would also like to thank the NSW Institute of Rural Clinical Services and Teaching for providing us with the opportunity to trial this program across rural NSW.

For additional information, please contact Tracy Robinson on 02 63638448.



# Radiation Therapy

## NEW ELECTRONIC RESOURCE

FOR RURAL GPs, HEALTHCARE  
PROFESSIONALS & PATIENTS

AVAILABLE SOON

INFORMATION ON THE RELEASE DATE & ACCESS TO  
THIS PACKAGE WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN THE  
JUNE 2009



# Rural Researchers meet at Sydney University

Sydney University was the site of the Rural Research Capacity Building Program's annual face to face workshop. The event was held on 18th and 19th February, and saw 14 candidates from the 2007 intake and 14 candidates from the 2008 intake attend.



A/Prof Lyn Fragar with A/Prof Ngiare Brown

The group heard from Associate Professor Ngiare Brown on conducting research in Aboriginal communities. Ngiare spoke on correcting the power imbalance to create equal partnerships with Aboriginal communities and researchers including the power to say 'no' to research. Ngiare has considerable experience in this area and was able to draw on many of these experiences to illustrate key points in a challenging and interesting presentation.

Candidates then had a series of small group sessions on topics such as 'translating your research to policy or practise', 'presenting your data in graphs and tables' and 'writing for publication'.

Afternoon small group sessions allowed time for discussion of individual projects with a tutor and other candidates who are working on projects with similar methodology.

Candidates valued the networking and mixing with others

as well as the small group work and input from tutors.

Dinner at the Nepalese restaurant was also a hit! Next year we will incorporate some specific activities to enhance mixing between the two cohorts on day 1 to facilitate people getting to know each other better.

Tutors and presenters came from the Australian Rural Health Research Collaboration (ARHRC), the PHC Collaboration and from NSW IRCST. Thank you on behalf of all the candidates to David Lyle, David Perkins, Jeffery Fuller, Helen Stain, Lyn Fragar, Howard Edwards, Lynn Davies.

The Rural Research Capacity Building Program commenced in 2006 and aims to increase the number of rural and remote health workers with knowledge and skills in evaluation and research methods. It also aims to contribute to the literature on both innovation and evidence-based practice around rural and remote health care.

To learn more about the program and to see the current candidates' projects, log onto the IRCST website. You can also view some of the excellent final reports from those who have already completed the program.

Applications will soon be called for the 2009 intake. Anyone who is interested should join the IRCST Webgroup (off the website's home page) to receive emails about this and other opportunities for rural and remote health workers.



Candidates from the 2007 and 2008 intakes of the Rural Research Capacity Building Program at the University of Sydney, with mentors: Prof David Lyle and A/Prof David Perkins; 2006 graduate Lyn Davies; and Program Manager Emma Webster.

## NSW Rural & Remote Scholarship Program

IRCST has established the NSW Rural and Remote Scholarship Program to provide financial assistance to rural and remote health service staff to attend State, National or International Conferences / workshops / seminars, and to assist in writing up research.

The following categories of sponsorship are available:

- attendance at State, National or International conference

- attendance at workshop/seminar relevant to the applicant's role
- assistance to write up research

Closing date for the first quarterly scholarship period is **31<sup>st</sup> March 2009**. Selection criteria has been established and a panel is to be convened to review applications.

Additional information can be found on the IRCST website.

## Research Colloquium - Ballina

IRCST is pleased to be supporting the third NSW Rural Health Research Colloquium, which is an initiative of the Australian Rural Health Research Collaboration. It will take place in Ballina and is being hosted by the North Coast Area Health Service.

The theme for the Colloquium is '**Building a healthier future through research**' which will provide a forum for discussing research of relevance to improving rural health. The Organising Committee is inviting abstracts to be considered for inclusion in the program. Details for these submissions are available on the Colloquium website, [www.rhrc2009.com](http://www.rhrc2009.com). The deadline for abstract submission is Friday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2009.

Topics to be explored at the Colloquium are expected to follow the framework of the seven Strategic Directions of the NSW Health Plan. Other key topic areas include research highlighting Indigenous health and reducing health inequity.

Contact for further information: Jane Howorth (East Coast Conferences)  
[jane@eastcoastconferences.com.au](mailto:jane@eastcoastconferences.com.au) T 02 6650 9800  
 Colloquium website: [www.rhrc2009.com](http://www.rhrc2009.com)



**RURAL HEALTH  
RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM** 27 – 29 October 2009  
Ballina NSW  
*Building a healthier future through research*



### 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:

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## Rural and Remote Nursing Tele-grand Rounds

With increasing demands on workload and service delivery, and ever tightening budget purse strings, opportunities for education and training which do not require the professionals to leave the workplace are a much higher priority. Emphasis is now turning towards better utilisation of existing infrastructure to provide education and peer support for our rural and remote workforce.

IRCST is working with NCAHS to invite rural and remote nurses from the smaller sites and MPS's to participate in a Tele Grand Rounds (via videoconferencing) trial linking sites within the NCAHS for generalist case presentations, discussion of interesting or challenging patient journeys or even a review of a typical day in a small facility.

Case presentations may describe patient journeys which follow referral patterns to regional centres, retrieval team episodes and/or discharge to community support services. What

worked, what could have been done differently, what was the patient outcome?

A long term intended outcome is the generation of a mentoring network amongst the smaller facilities where triaging and initial emergency management of patients are often undertaken in the absence of a medical officer.

NCAHS will host the trial, to commence mid 2009, as the telehealth infrastructure can link 6 – 8 sites at no charge. During this trial an implementation toolkit will be developed for application in the other rural areas by the end of 2009.

In the areas where there is a cost to video conferencing links, the IRCST will fund the direct costs of the nursing grand rounds.

Put your thinking caps on and be ready for this opportunity when it comes to your health service.

## Office of Executive Director relocation

Early this year, the Office of the Executive Director was relocated from the GWAHS Area Office to a facility shared with NSW Ambulance Service, at 67 Bultje Street, Dubbo.

The email and postal addresses remain the same, however there are new telephone numbers:

- Dianne Bartholomew, Executive Assistant, (General Enquiries) (02) 6841 2650
- Linda Cutler, Executive Director, (02) 6841 2651
- Emma Webster, Rural Research & Executive Support Officer, (02) 6841 2652
- Anne Field, Rural Research & Executive Support Officer, (02) 6841 2653