

Capacity building in the rural workforce

Future Events—



18<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> October 2007  
Dubbo, NSW, Australia



Rural Health Research Colloquium  
6th, 7th, 8th May 2007  
Tamworth, NSW Aust

Our new website

[www.ircst.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ircst.health.nsw.gov.au)

For Further Information on the content of this newsletter please contact

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

P. O. Box 4061  
Hawthorne St.  
Dubbo, NSW, 2830

Phone: 02 68412252  
Fax: 02 68412225  
E-mail: [linda.cutler@gwahs.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:linda.cutler@gwahs.health.nsw.gov.au)

**OUR VISION**

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

**IRCST Executive Committee: keeping the Institute on track**

The Executive Committee of the NSW Institute of Rural Clinical Services and Teaching is the Governing Body for the IRCST. The committee has been established under Section 20 of the Health Administration Act. The Executive Committee and the Executive Director report to the NSW Minister for Health via the Deputy Director-General, Strategic Development in the NSW Department of Health. The Statewide Services Branch is the liaison branch in the Department of Health for the IRCST. The IRCST will work collaboratively with the NSW Rural Health Priority Taskforce to project an effective rural and remote health delivery system.

**Membership**

- Dr. Austin Curtin, (Chair) Surgeon, Lismore
- Dr. Hugh Burke, Public

Health Physician, Maari Ma AHC, Broken Hill/Queanbeyan

- Prof. Mark Burton, Dean Faculty of Health Studies, CSU, Wagga Wagga
- Dr. Peter Davis, GP, Queanbeyan
- Mrs. Janet Dent, Child & Family Services Coordinator, Goonellabah
- Ms. Patricia Doolan, Community Member, Dubbo
- Mrs. Marianne Gaul, CNC Emergency/Critical care, Hunter New England Area Health Service
- Dr. Craig Hore, Critical Care, Senior Lect. School of Rural Health UNSW
- Prof. Brian Kelly, Director

Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health, Orange

- Ms. Susan McAlpin, Senior Lect. Nutrition & Dietetics, CSU, Wagga Wagga
- Dr. Joe McGirr, Director Clinical Operations, Greater Southern Area Health Service
- Dr. Jeanne Madison, Head, School of Health, UNE
- Ms. Kathy Meleady, Director Statewide Services, NSW Department of Health
- Dr. Frank Moloney, Anaesthetist, Orange
- Ms. Helen Snodgrass, Area Oncology CNC, Greater Western Area Health Service

**NSW Institute of Rural Clinical Services & Teaching**



**IRCSTWHILE**

**FUNDING FOR RURAL RESEARCH**

**Inside this issue:**

GSAHS Research	2
Baxter Sponsorships	2
Working with GMCT	2
NSW Rural Stroke cont	3
Clinician Networks	3
Our Team—the Virtual Institute	3
Executive Committee—role and membership	6

**Special points of interest:**

- Building Rural Research Capacity
- Rural Stroke Project Update
- Allied Health Project Officer appointed Jan. 2007
- New website look for IRCST

The Institute has allocated \$840,000 to support 28 health workers across rural and remote NSW to undertake a formal research project over the next two years.

**THE PROGRAM AIMS:**

TO INCREASE THE NUMBER AND RANGE OF PEOPLE WITH KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS IN RURAL HEALTH CARE EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

The Institute through a partnership with the NSW Primary Health Care Research Capacity Building Program (also known as the NSW PHC Collaboration) in association with the Australian Rural Health Research Collaboration offered a research methods short course for all 28 candidates in late Sept 2006. The NSW PHC Collaboration is a commonwealth funded program that includes the USYD, Uni Newcastle, UNSW, ANU Departments of General Practice and the Broken Hill, Lis-

more (USYD) and Tamworth (Newcastle Uni) UDRH.

This short course introduces both quantitative and qualitative research methods and is focused on developing skills to critically appraise research literature and design a research project.

Acceptance into the program was

dependent on a candidates' readiness to propose a draft research topic which will be developed and applied over the 12 to 24 months duration of the program. The program will run for two years and will be formally evaluated in order to determine its value to rural and remote NSW.



**NSW RURAL STROKE PROJECT—GETTING STRONGER**

The NSW Rural Stroke Project has been funded for a period of two years through the NSW Institute of Rural Clinical Services and Teaching. The project commenced in March this year. There have been a number of exciting initiatives and achievements

occurring in rural stroke services in NSW. During 2006, 10 rural stroke education forums were hosted across NSW. Lismore, Coffs Harbour, Wagga Wagga, Broken Hill, Dubbo, Tamworth, Nowra, Cooma, Port Macquarie and Orange have benefited from both the local and metro Stroke Man-

agement experts sharing their knowledge with over 700 Clinicians and 150 GP's. The feedback from these forums has been extremely positive with comments such as "it's so rare to receive education in your local area, with experts from metropolitan units happy to share their knowledge— can't page 3 all

## Greater Southern's Future Researchers

Greater Southern promotes a research environment across their area which skirts the Victorian Border for most of the width of New South Wales. Margaret Dalmau Alison McTaggart-Lamb, Lesley Scroope, Melissa Keith, Tracy Vitucci, Annie Flint, Karla Calleja and Lisa Nichols come from a wide range of backgrounds including radiography, physiotherapy, nursing, health development, social work and occupational therapy to name a few. Many of these passionate individuals have always wanted to pursue research and were looking for the opportunity to do so which arrived in the form of the Building Rural Research Ca-

capacity Program launched by the NSW Institute of Rural Clinical Services and Teaching in July. Dr. Maggie Jamieson, the Greater Southern Director of Population Health Planning

In support of the initiative hosted an initial one day review group for the eight research candidates on November 3, 2006 followed up by ongoing support forums.



## Baxter's Sponsorship

The NSW IRCST sponsored 40 individuals from across rural and remote New South Wales to attend the two day Baxter Expo presentations in Sydney, October 2006.

The Baxter's celebrated eight years of excellent healthcare achievements. As a key event on the NSW Health calendar, it provides an enormous op-

portunity for sharing lessons learnt across our state. The Awards continue to acknowledge health professionals' invaluable contribution to the healthcare system by collaboratively working towards improved patient safety, clinical quality and health system performance.

The ability to attend the Expo

is limited for our rural and remote workforce and yet exposure to the presentations gives the potential for learning and new ideas to be cascaded through the state. Feedback from the staff and many managers has been extremely positive

## Working Together—GMCT

Dr. Austin Curtin, Chair of the NSW IRCST met with Dr. Peter Castaldi, Chair of the NSW Greater Metropolitan Clinical Taskforce in Lismore, late in December 2006. The organisations Executive Directors, Linda Cutler and Kate Needham, were party to very positive discussions identifying the way forward for the metro and rural bodies to work collaboratively in the

future on matters of common interest. Workforces matters, rural academic centers of excellence around chronic diseases, diabetes, and aboriginal health were several of the issues brought to the table during the discussion. Recognising that each organisation has different challenges and demands, networking is essential to future achievements for both rural and metro bodies

## Funding Round

**The Institute advertised a call for submissions in December 2006 in order to fund projects which will initiate work in the focus areas of the business plan and have the objective to evaluate service or workforce models currently in operation in rural and remote NSW. 88 submissions were received and are currently being evaluated.**

*Rural Health Care Workers from across the state came together under two Institute Initiatives—the Baxter Expo and the Rural Research Program*

**NEW WEBSITE**  
The IRCST will launch their new website in early 2007



## Rural Stroke Continued

free of charge!". The education component of the project is continuing with four two day forums planned for each rural area health service. These will be held in Ballina, Armidale, Griffith and Dubbo.

During the 2006 Stroke Week, the NSW Health Minister John Hatzistergos announced \$1million recurrent funding for rural stroke services in NSW. Information gained during the project will assist NSW Health in determining allocations of what is hoped to be a first round of stroke funding.

The project has seen the development of strong clinical networks in the area of stroke management as well as promoting the development of stroke clinical champions in rural areas. The Institute was also excited to support Felicity Perrin, from Hunter New England



Health to attend the Stroke Society of Australasia meeting in Adelaide in early October 2006. The IRCST has appreciated the assistance from the GMCT Stroke Project Manager, Mr. Mark Longworth and the

support from GMCT in running many of the forums in rural NSW.

For further information contact the project officer in Armidale [Melissa.gill@hnehealth.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Melissa.gill@hnehealth.nsw.gov.au).

*"it's so rare to receive education in your local area, with experts from metropolitan units, happy to share their knowledge all free of charge!".*

## Rural Clinician Network Project—focusing on Rehabilitation

The Rural Clinician Network Support Project aims to establish a structured framework for a rural clinician network for rehabilitation clinicians across rural NSW. A Project Officer was appointed for 12 months to engage rural clinicians (medical, nursing and allied health) and develop recommendations.

Currently four main areas of rural rehabilitation service delivery have been identified as operating in rural and remote NSW.

Ms. Jenny Preece, based in Dorrigo, conducted a series of interviews across rural and remote NSW speaking with 100 clinicians at over 20 sites during November 2006. Once the

data had been analysed, the clinicians were then canvassed to establish the priorities. A Steering Committee including IRCST representative and clinicians from across the state are currently developing implementation strategies for the priority areas. For more information contact

[JPreece@mncchs.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:JPreece@mncchs.health.nsw.gov.au)

## Our Team—the "Virtual Institute" and how it works.



L to R—Scott Wagner, Linda Cutler, Anne Field, Emma Webster, Jenny Preece and Melissa Gill.

Currently the IRCST funds four project officer positions across the state: The Rural Stroke Project — Ms. Melissa Gill, based in Armidale; the Rural Clinician Network Project—Ms. Jenny Preece; Rural Research Project — Ms. Emma Webster & Ms. Anne Field in

Dubbo; and the Rural Allied Health Project—Mr. Scott Wagner. The employees of various health services are seconded into the positions. Anyone who takes on a secondment with the Institute remains in their location of work; remains an employee of their Area Health Service; and reports to someone at local level for a range of day to day management needs. The Area Health Services have

been very supportive of the establishment of these positions, and the Institute appreciates the commitment from Mr. Chris Crawford, Mr. Terry Clout and Dr. Claire Blizard and their teams for working toward sorting out many of the processes which enables the IRCST to work toward their vision of contributing to an effective and sustainable rural and remote health system.