

COOEE!

April 2009



Website photo competition (November 2008) runner up photo
Photo: Courtesy of Mel Olding, ARMS

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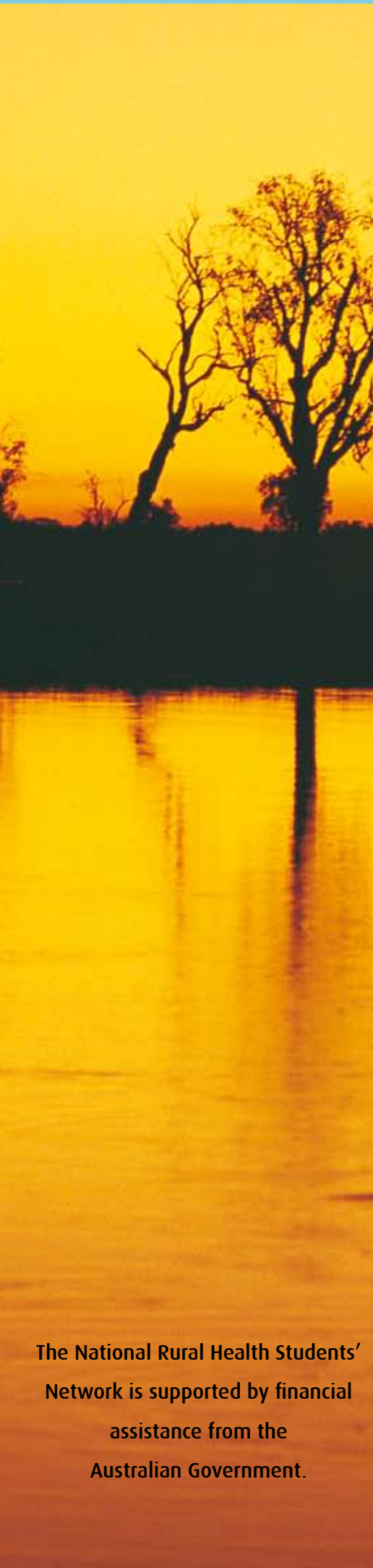
2009 Co-Chair Report

2009 is turning out to be a busy and exciting year for the NRHSN and we feel privileged to be involved with such an enthusiastic and dynamic group of students! Welcome to all of our new members from each of the Rural Health Clubs, we hope your time as a member both of your Rural Health Club and the NRHSN family turns out to be a fun and inspiring journey. We'd also like to welcome to the NRHSN Council, all of the new representatives, we're looking forward to working with you this year in furthering the Network's objectives.

The NRHSN has continued its growth with the recent addition of the BUSHFIRE Rural Health Club from Bond University in Queensland. We welcome the members of BUSHFIRE to the NRHSN and look forward to working with them this year and in the future.

This year, we've hit the ground running and we still can't believe we're already more than a quarter of the way through 2009. Executive Handover took place at the end of January and two days of planning, brainstorming and teamwork activities have set us up well to guide and support the Network through this busy year.

We have begun a process aimed at streamlining communication and direction within the NRHSN Council. A new Community Awareness and Advocacy Portfolio (which encompasses the NRHA Senior and Junior Liaison Officers, ARHEN Liaison Officer and REFA Liaison Officer) has come into



2009 Co-Chair Report Welcome to Cooee!

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being, allowing greater cooperation between these positions. This has been supported by a policy working group made up of all NRHSN Council Liaison Officers. This group has already suggested areas of development and advocacy for the NRHSN to consider and has really opened the floodgates of communication between our Liaison Officers.

The Indigenous Health portfolio has been expanded and our Liaison Officers within this portfolio have been working hard to promote Indigenous Health with their projects gaining momentum within Council.

Two Rural High School Visit Officers and two Indigenous Festival Officers have now taken up their positions, which has been a great step forward in terms of providing some structure and consistency for these key NRHSN projects. Other Network activities we are hoping to expand upon this year are in the areas of media, public relations, publications and sponsorship. We are currently seeking members to assist us in these areas.

Our first Face2Face meeting of the year took place in Melbourne in mid-March and was attended by the Senior NRHSN Representative and President (or equivalent) of each Club, as well as the Portfolio Liaison Officers, Executive and Staff. With over 70 students in attendance it was a dynamic couple of days and we



were very privileged to have some great presentations and workshops from external speakers.

The conference calendar is already looking quite busy this year and we have a number of students attending conferences across Australia including the NRHA Conference in Cairns in May. The NRHSN has also been busy planning and organising the National Universities Rural Health Conference which will be held in Cairns in July, it should be a fantastic three days with some inspiring speakers, energising workshops and fun social activities being lined up. This year's theme, 'Rural Health: Diverse Landscapes, Endless Opportunities' encompasses two of the most important aspects of rural health, the fact that it is so diverse and that there are so many opportunities out there for those who seek them, such as our members!



We're looking forward to the rest of 2009, and look forward to hopefully meeting some of you out there during the year!

Yours in rural health,
Luke Smith and Fiona Langelan
NRHSN Co-Chairs 2009

The National Rural Health Students' Network is supported by financial assistance from the Australian Government.

NRHSN & Rural Health Workforce Australia



Dr Kim Webber, CEO

National Policy News

The news is: there is no news...but watch this space! The future outcomes that will result from current evaluation (the National Health Workforce Taskforce, the National Primary Healthcare Strategy, the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission and the review of all rural health programs by the Office of Rural Health) are certainly exciting for students, particularly in regard to clinical training, but won't be clear until the second half of this year. The budget will be announced in May, which is likely to give us some indication about the future direction of health in Australia, so stay tuned!

Your Network

It has been fantastic to see the continued growth of the NRHSN, now with 29 Rural Health Clubs around the country and over 8000 members – there is no doubt that we have great potential for understanding what the future health professional of Australia are looking for to support them in forging a rural career pathway. In order to get your message

to the “powers that be”, it is important that we all work together to collect real data, that can be used to underpin the kind of research that will spark the interest and action of government and education bodies. This is what it will take to make a real difference to the health workforce in rural and remote Australia.

Your Conference

We very much look forward to attending your upcoming conference in Cairns in July! Following from the success of last years' conference, I am sure that you will make good use of the opportunity to demonstrate your passion and dedication to rural health, rural communities and the rural way of life. I encourage you to enjoy the networking and skill development, as well as communicating loud and clear about the environments, resources, and support you need in order to keep you on a rural pathway following graduation – we will be listening!

Your Future

There are many organisations and programs that are working towards increasing the rural health workforce and improving the health outcomes of people living in rural and remote areas. While it is difficult to draw direct conclusions about the impact of many of these programs, it is important for the future of your network that you continue to strengthen your key initiatives:- promoting all things “rural” among health students through your clubs; promoting rural clinical training

through placements and scholarships and working with training providers to improve them; ensuring that the student voice is heard through development of student policy and position statements; helping to increase the future number of tertiary health students by promoting rural health careers to younger students in rural areas; and maintaining links with your Alumni who are now part of the health workforce – we can learn a lot from their experiences. It is with the right data and information generated by your Council, that your National Program Manager, Amanda, can continue to co-ordinate external communications and build the profile of the network – this is what your network needs for the future.

Enjoy your year ahead and I'll see you in Cairns!

Rural Health Workforce Australia

Kim Webber - CEO

Litsa Kane - Operations Manager

Mandy Leveratt - Policy Officer

Jeremy Maddox - Data Analyst

Linda O'Meara - Finance Manager

Estilita Vaz - Administration & Executive Asst.

National Rural Health Students' Network

Aamnda Hall - National Program Manager

Linda Nink - Senior Project Officer

Kerryn Eccleston - Project Officer

Jane Jamieson - Project support Officer

Get Connected!

Editorial

As always, the year is off to a flying start by April and this issue of Cooee! proves it! The Executive report shows how well-entrenched the new team are in their roles for 2009 and they are using their experience in the Network to expand and develop Council to achieve great things this year.

This issue really showcases the many individuals and organisations that contribute to the work that the NRHSN is doing all over the country. Our Rural Health Clubs, individual members, Alumni and professional organisations are stretched from Townsville to Bega, from Broome to Wollongbar, from Port Augusta to Katherine, from Echuca to Derby. Reports from the portfolios (Medical, Allied

Health, Nursing, Indigenous Health and Community and Advocacy) make it clear that the Face2Face meeting in Melbourne in March has the NRHSN Council very focussed, motivated and inspired! They are an important link between our members and professional organisations and government and will put forward the student voice and help to shape your future workplace in rural and remote Australia.

The Co-Convenors of NURHC have been working hard and their update gives us a sneak peek at what we have in store for us in July – it seems the conference is shaping up to be the premier event on the NRHSN Calendar!

Reports from our 29 Clubs indicate that it's all in the planning! With many Clubs inducting new Executive teams and dazzling the new 1st year students to help boost membership, the stage seems set for another year of exciting rural health promotion and rural appreciation

experiences. Clubs that came on board last year are building strong foundations for growth and success in 2009, while our “older” Clubs are coming up with events and initiatives that get bigger and better every year! It is great to see so many Clubs with plans for inter-club involvement – networking at its finest!

Placement stories and Alumni experiences provide a sense of the realities of a rural life and career. At the same time challenging and rewarding, inspiring and eye opening – it seems the opportunities really are as endless as the landscape is diverse!

We hope you enjoy this edition of Cooee! and look forward to hearing about the many events, rural high school visits, indigenous festivals, national conferences and projects that will be happening throughout the N++etwork between now and October.

Linda, Kerryn, Jane and Amanda

Our Members

Marty Brester
HOPE4HEALTH Treasurer

Marty is in his fourth year of medicine at Griffith University on the Gold Coast, QLD and Treasurer of one of our newest recruits, HOPE4HEALTH. Originally from Melbourne, Marty has made his way up the east coast of Australia studying Science at Sydney University before arriving on the Gold Coast. Marty joined H4H with the intention of improving their Club and making it relevant for more students, which is certainly a big ambition with a membership base of over 400. And describes his best NRHSN experience as getting HOPE4HEALTH on board as the Networks 27th Club in 2008, while his favourite Rural Health Club experience has been The Midnight Muster in 2008 and again in 2009

(see photo of Marty at the Muster!). Outside of his interests in rural health and HOPE4HEALTH, Marty has a keen interest in producing films and making a movie titled 'Go You Good Thing' with his brother is on his 5 year plan! Fitting this in with his other plans of finishing uni, surviving internship & getting on the Psych training program will keep him busy. Marty's words of wisdom for students thinking about a rural career are 'Get involved in your Rural Health Club! You'll find out about all the best opportunities.' And for those Clubs that are looking at fundraising opportunities, Marty suggests the following: In 2006 when H4H was just starting our fundraising initiatives we ran a World Cup Soccer Sweep and it worked just like a Melbourne Cup Sweep. It cost \$50 to buy a ticket in the draw and PBL groups pooled their money to get a piece of the action. We asked a local pub to sponsor the Sweep with a \$200

bar/dinner tab for 1st prize. In return we held the Sweep at the same pub on the eve of the first World Cup match. By that stage, everyone had caught 'World Cup Fever' and it turned out to be a huge night! We sold two lots of teams and also ran a raffle and ended turning \$0 into \$3K so it was an awesome result... The World Cup is coming around again in 2010 so it is something we will definitely be keen to do again. It's something that could easily be replicated at other RHCs, get in touch with H4H if you want more details...



RHC Administrator

Kay Kent
SHARP

Favourite SHARP memory? At my age, who could remember !!! Actually seeing SHARP come back from the dead and become one of the strongest clubs at the University of Wollongong and also now one of the strongest clubs in the NRHSN.

What does your job involve? I've got the best job at the uni. I am the Administrator for SHARP which now has over 600 members but also I spend around 5 weeks every year going rural to recruit students into health degrees. I see SHARP as a little community within the university where students support each other and SHARP provides an integral part of activities that further enhance their student experience.

How long have you been involved with SHARP? Not long enough - hopefully SHARP will get another few good years out of me.

Best rural experience? Only one answer - the next one !!! Perhaps seeing Rural Appreciation Weekend grow from 2 universities to 11 universities over only a one year period. To see the feedback from students who have been on their very first rural experience.

Why are SHARP the best RHC? SHARP is part of the best student network in Australia - National Rural Health Students' Network. We are only one Club of 29 "bestest" Clubs in Australia. I believe that we need to all work together at a national level if we are going to make the difference in getting better health care out to rural and remote areas. SHARP continues to grow and grow, and this could not happen without the bestest, most active and fun Executive.

What keeps you occupied in your spare time? I actually have a husband and two beautiful grown up children....and a puppy!!

What's the one thing you want the world to know about you? My passion is to get more of our students not only going rural but staying rural. I forgot, the only thing came out of the

last NURHC - who else could make rural health sexy.

The thing you don't want the world know? I have a husband who will never go rural, but I am still working on it.

Words of wisdom for others thinking about a rural career or wanting to get involved in their RHC? JUST DO IT !!! Do not sit back and wait a year to join your RHC - do it now. There are so many opportunities that students have, once they become members, eg. Conferences, RHSV's, Indigenous festivals and the list goes on and on. These are all hands on and you will experience learning opportunities you will never gain in a classroom. You will have so many opportunities to network with other disciplines - medicine, nursing and allied health. Remember, you can't go rural alone - you will burn out - you need to all work together.



NRHSN Website

www.nrhsn.org.au



Thank you to everyone who submitted photos to update our website last year, we received some amazing photos and quite a few of them have been used for banners on the website, including the winning photo

submitted by Mel Olding from ARMS which is now on the homepage. Updates are occurring to the website almost daily from RHC pages, Portfolios, Indigenous Festivals, Events and information about NURHC

09. Make sure you continue to check it out for all the latest news from the NRHSN. We've had 200,000 page views since the last edition of Coeee! It's fantastic to see so many of you checking out www.nrhsn.org.au!

NURHC 09

Rural Health: Diverse Landscapes, Endless Opportunities

Cairns, QLD 23-25 July



A very big hello from sunny north Queensland! Preparations for NURHC are well underway and most clubs have submitted their abstracts and applications (of a very high standard – congratulations). For those of you thinking...what is this NURHC thing they keep talking about?? Here is some background.

NURHC is the annual conference of the National Rural Health Students' Network. Each year, the conference is held in a different regional area. (check out www.nrdsn.org.au/pastNURHC for info and photos from past conferences). This year, approx 300 students from all 29 of our rural health clubs will attend the conference. In addition, we will have numerous key stakeholders, sponsors, alumni and guest speakers/presenters. Delegates will participate in three days of keynote speakers, interactive panel sessions, skills sessions, tours of local services, student presentations, sight-seeing and fantastic social and networking events.

The theme of the conference, Rural Health: Diverse Landscapes, Endless Opportunities, encompasses the great diversity in rural and remote health in Australia. Much like the variety of landscapes, colours and natural beauties across this wide country, there is also a great variety of health care opportunities that exist in Australia - rural, remote, coastal, Indigenous, tropical, regional and visiting. This theme resonates with the multi-disciplinary nature of the NRDSN - one a small number of groups who are truly "Multi-D". This theme acknowledges that Rural Health has a different meaning for everyone and also that a rural career path holds

opportunities for all of us who want to lead Australia to better health!

The conference will be held at the Brothers League Club and all students will be accommodated at the Cairns Colonial Club. Already, the academic program is shaping up to include a range of speakers from all disciplines, different areas of Australia and a wide range of experience in clinical work, research and policy development. The social program is also looking very promising with a beach theme night, Golden Windmills and formal dinner at the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Centre.

NURHC is primarily funded by the Department of Health and Ageing, however, we are also seeking sponsorship from corporate organisations for the conference to boost the number of students able to attend. We are also encouraging clubs to think about other funding options. Have you thought about fundraising to send more members or seeking sponsorship through local organisations? Registrations will open shortly and it would be great to see additional members from each Club in attendance. Please contact us for more information on how to make it happen!

For more information and updates, keep an eye on the NURHC webpage on the NRDSN site; www.nrdsn.org.au/nurhc09. We're looking forward to seeing you in Cairns in July.

Heather Hanks and Sarah Farlow (NURHC Co-convenors 2009)



Conferences of National Significance (CoNS)

Members have been getting out and about to a wide variety of conferences during this financial year. Over 60 members (from 20 out of our 29 Rural Health Clubs) have attended conferences including: the SARRAH conference in Yeppoon QLD; WONCA Asia Pacific conference in Melbourne; the CRANA conference in Cairns QLD and Australian College of Ambulance Professionals conference in Melbourne VIC. 22 members are currently busy gearing up to attend the NRHA National Rural Health Conference in Cairns in May.

Many members attending conferences have given presentations further developing their

professional skills. Networking opportunities, both with other students and health professionals have been made the most of and experiences and knowledge of rural health have increased for members who have had conference funding applications approved. Feedback has been incredibly positive and the passion and enthusiasm shown by you is truly inspiring.

The number of members applying for CoNS funding has increased dramatically over the past 12 months which has meant that we have had to limit the number of conferences available to be funded so please check out the CoNS calendar and guidelines at www.nrhn.org.au/cons before applying for your funding. While you're on the website you should also read through some of the reports written by students highlighting their experiences at conferences!



"The SARRAH Conference was a fantastic opportunity to network with allied health professionals. As a student I was able to discuss the issues facing rural and remote allied health such as the retention, remoteness and a lack of resources in remote areas. I was able to seek advice on applying for jobs for the future and received some recommendations on where to work and how to go about starting my career."
Emily Jordan, LARHC

Our Alumni Chris Bryg, MIRAGE Occupational Therapist

A placement to Bega in his first year which was his first trip on his own outside of Sydney got Chris thinking about going rural. President of MIRAGE in 2000, Chris is now an occupational therapist working in the Technology Access Service of ILC Tas (Independent Living Centre) in Launceston. "I see people of all ages and with any impairment or disability and find solutions enabling them to perform computer-based tasks, operate appliances or other home features, and to communicate. A day might involve working with teachers in an early childhood intervention service helping a child with cerebral palsy to develop physical and cognitive skills which will enable them to access the curriculum using technology; setting up a case conference at a school to discuss the literacy support needs of a student using software; helping a person with motor neurone disease to keep in contact with family and friends via email, adapting their computer access technology as their needs change. In my spare time!!!! Well I have got myself involved in many ways in the community over the last 6 years... I have sung in local choirs, performed in a musical (Blood Brothers) with the Launceston Musical Society, I take singing lessons, performed in concerts and recitals, and will be performing in my first opera in July, Die Fledermaus. I am president of OT



AUSTRALIA Tasmania and have been involved since I moved here. I am currently the Elections Campaign Coordinator for the electorate of Bass for the Tasmanian Greens. Going out for breakfast, lunch, dinner, or coffee with friends is a favourite thing to do. I try to go bushwalking when I can. I'd love to spend more time in my garden but this just doesn't happen! Although, I'm happy I found my colchiums amongst the weeds. A favourite part of my job is that I get to travel around Tasmania and get out of the office. I really enjoy technology and the intricacies of making it work for someone. It's such a problem solving process and so many factors influence success that it's a never-ending learning curve. Technology itself is never THE answer. Launceston is a fantastically located and sized place. As a city it has what you need - amenities, arts/culture, opportunity to get involved in things. As a regional area it means you are 5 mins from out of town, within close proximity to world-class bushwalking and natural wonders, and fabulous local produce

- wineries, cheese, blueberry picking, yadda yadda... who could ask for more?!"
If you weren't doing what you're doing what would you be doing? "I'd be on stage, somewhere, singing. Or maybe atop a mountain, somewhere."
Best NRHSN experience? "Hard to say - all the National Undergraduate Rural Health Conferences I went to have some kind of fond memory. The 1999 Wagga conference must have been the best as I was on the conference committee."
Best RHC experience? "Rural High School Visits were always the best. My favourite was when we organized a trip with other NSW RHCs to Bega/Merimbula area. But most memorable RHC experience was spraining my ankle in the first minutes of a bush dance at a NSW RHC executive weekend. All the med students stood around what felt like forever arguing over who should 'treat' me first! It was probably a nursing student who actually did something ;-)
Couldn't help that jibe!"
Words of wisdom for others thinking about a rural career? "Think of a stint somewhere as an adventure. You might only intend to go for a year or so, that's fine. If you stay longer, that's even better. But it's your life and your career and individual circumstances are different. Don't feel guilty about working in the city for a while before moving away either. But the key is to find a place or places that offer things you might like to do, and get involved in the community."

Indigenous Festivals



Deadly Days 2008
Wollongbar, NSW



Vibe Alive 2008
Coonamble, NSW

NRHSN involvement in the fabulous Vibe Alive, Wakakirri and Deadly Days festivals is on again in 2009! We'd love to hear if there's a local community Festival that you can get involved in too, like the Kullarri NAIDOC Festival up in Broome or Ti-Tree Festival in Alice Springs. Remember the NRHSN requires each club to attend at least one festival, so it good to get organised nice and early.

Festivals are a fantastic opportunity for club members to get out to a rural or remote community and see an aspect that you might not get to on a placement or at uni. As well as passing on your enthusiasm for rural health to local kids in a entertaining way, running healthy lifestyle or health career workshops, you'll get to meet the members of other clubs and health disciplines. This year we're also working on getting members out to visit local health care facilities as well as the local attractions.

We're Frankie and Maria, the new NRHSN Indigenous Festivals Officers. Because this is a new

position, we really appreciate the clubs who have got



Wakakirri Festival,
Bloomfield River Region QLD 2008

back to us about the festivals they're planning on attending. We've met with up the Vibe Alive team and have been in contact with the other festivals organisers, so we're doing our best to make the process a bit more streamlined and ensure appropriate numbers are sent to each festival. We want to make sure a good range of experience is spread out between festivals too, to make attending less daunting for the newbies!

We will be in contact with you about the festivals coming up soon regarding numbers (some festivals are very limited in the number of members we can take, so please consider alternatives to ensure you get the most out of your attendance), transport, accommodation and other logistics, so look forward to hearing from us!

If you're a student who's interested to get involved, contact your Rural Health Club and check out the NRHSN website pack at www.nrhsn.org.au/indigenousfestivals for our tips on getting out there! Email us at festivals@nrhsn.org.au if you've got any questions or suggestions. We'd love to hear from you!

"The Indigenous Festivals are a great idea - a chance to change some preconceptions the kids had on school and university, such as the different pathways they could go through. It was a wonderful opportunity to listen to the kids knowledge and hopes for the future, and for NRHSN students to experience a rural trip."
Teena Downton, SHARP

Finally, make sure these dates are in your diary:

May

- Vibe Alive Coonamble, NSW, 27-28th

July

- Wakakirri Broken Hill, NSW, 10th
- Vibe Alive Mildura, VIC, 29-30th

August

- Vibe Alive Port Augusta, SA, 5-6th
- Wakakirri Katherine, NT, 7th
- Vibe Alive Kalgoorlie, WA, 12-13th

September

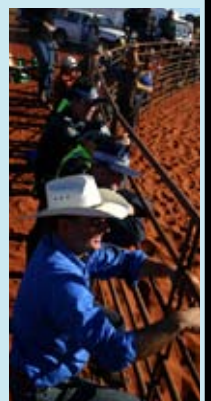
- Deadly Days Kingscliff, NSW, 1-2nd
- Deadly Days Grafton, NSW, 2-3rd
- Deadly Days Port Macquarie, NSW, 3-4th
- Wakakirri Ceduna SA, 11th
- Vibe Alive Weipa, QLD, 17-18th

Quiz! An open book exam

1. Where will NURHC be held this year?
2. What does RHSV stand for?
3. How many Rural Health Clubs start with the letter R?
4. Which 3 Rural Health Clubs organise "Campfire"?
5. Which Rural Health Club is hosting NURHC 09?

6. Which Club's name means rural in Latin?
7. Where is the 2009 South Australian Vibe Alive Festival being held?
8. Where was RAW (Rural Appreciation Weekend) held in 2008?
9. Which Club's logo includes a gecko?
10. Which Clubs do our three NRHSN Exec members belong to?
 - a) FURHS, RHINO & KRASH
 - b) ARMS, RUSTICA & SPINRPHEX
 - c) WAALHIIBE, AURHA & OUTLOOK

Answers on the back cover.



NRHSN/AMSA Bursaries



The NRHSN teamed up with AMSA in 2008 offering \$1,000 bursaries to Nursing, Allied Health and Medical students to undertake a rural elective and also \$1,000 prizes for an Indigenous Health essay. Joni Nissen, TROHPIQ (Allied Health/Nursing) and Jonathon Epstein (Medical) were awarded the Indigenous Health Essay Awards. Brooke Saunders, AURHA (Allied Health), Sally Grainger, StARRH (Nursing), Jodie Delanty, RUSTICA (Medical) and Geordan Shannon, BREATHHE (Medical) were awarded the elective bursaries. Here are some of their stories.

Brooke Saunders Allied Health Placement

During my final year of Oral Health at the University of Adelaide, I elected to go on a country placement to Port Augusta. Undertaking a Health Promotion Project with a classmate, Amelia Candy. Our project was named, "Katiti Pulya", when translated from Pitjantjatjara means "Good Teeth". The project aimed to help improve the oral health of Indigenous children. We visited local primary schools, young parenting groups, the local hospital and the special needs day care unit, providing targeted oral health education sessions to children, parents, carers and nurses. We shared our accommodation with medical, occupational therapist, podiatry and nursing students. It was great making friends with other rurally oriented health students. We spent our weekends enjoying the local community, watching the Grand Final Football game. We climbed the old Water Tower, perused the pubs and sampled some local 'Copley Wobbly', which as it suggests, causes blurry vision and wobbly legs! During the week days we rode our bikes to and from clinical sessions. I love working in the country. I came from the country and although the city has its enjoyments, nothing beats the view from The Dutchman's Stern or the passion of a local footy grand final. Even if you're not thinking about going rural after graduation, go on a country placement, broaden your horizons and at the least, it will make you a more rounded practitioner!...

Jodie Delanty Medical Placement

I was fortunate enough to complete my 5th year elective with the Royal Flying Doctor Service in Port Augusta under the supervision of Dr. Andy Killcross. I was with the RFDS for 4 weeks & spent time doing retrieval/evacuation flights & also clinic flights to outback Australia. Some towns we visited are very small, with populations of around 100, staffed by a registered nurse who does the majority of the consults, with the RFDS visiting every 1-4 weeks to do a clinic. Any serious conditions in-between clinics are retrieved by the RFDS and transported to Port Augusta or Adelaide Hospitals. One of the best learning experiences of this elective was my exposure to Indigenous health. This was a real eye-opener for me & not an area I had previously experienced. Indigenous health in outback Australia creates a real challenge to the treating practitioner, mostly because of the burden of chronic disease, communication barriers, lifestyle factors & cultural differences. I had a fantastic time flying around the countryside gaining an appreciation of rural health and seeing some interesting medical conditions. It certainly is a job that's different every day and you never know where you will be flying next, with my biggest day having 8 flights. This was a highlight of my time at medical school so far, and I have a much better understanding of rural health and what it means in Australia having experienced it first hand...

Jonathon Epstein Medical Indigenous Essay

"You have to make a choice", Dr L was telling Henry, an Aboriginal man in his late-20s, sitting on the hospital bed in dusty brown jeans and shirt. "You have to tell me how you want me to do this operation. I can do it either way; it's your choice. You just have to let me know". In January 2007 I completed an elective at Katherine, a flat and humid town 3 hours south of Darwin, where I spent most of my time in the Emergency Department of the local hospital. About 75% of patients were Aboriginal, & they came in with problems largely related to drinking, fighting & to just poorly looking after themselves. Henry was admitted because of a fight a few days back where he'd cut one of his fingers. By the time we saw him it was infected. Dr L had to cut it open to release the pus, but he'd given Henry the choice: should he inject local anaesthetic into the hand or should he block the nerves in the arm? He explained the risks and benefits to Henry, and then waited for a response, urging the patient to "just tell me which way you'd prefer"...

Joni Nissen Allied Health/Nursing Indigenous Essay

The inaccessibility of dental care for many communities constitutes a strong need for a preventative approach to oral health. Good oral hygiene should be taught to children from an early age, to ensure appropriate habits are maintained throughout life. This may be implemented by developing programs in the schools curriculum, so students are aware of the aspects involved with disease prevention & thus the importance of basic oral hygiene, as well as introducing the protective benefits of fluoride to the community either through water fluoridation or a program implemented in schools. Having travelled extensively throughout Northern and Central Australia, seeing the expansive disposition of this wide brown land and the isolation in which some communities exist, it is no wonder Aboriginal dental health is in such a poor condition. So come on Australia! Let's focus on the future and preventative dentistry and try to stop kids like Jambin becoming edentulous at thirty!...

Photos: Brooke Saunders with Amelia Candy on her rural placement in Port Augusta

You can read the full reports & essays on the NRHSN website www.nrhsn.org.au/bursary.



RHSVs

www.nrhsn-rhsv.org.au



The Rural High School Visit (RHSV) program is an NRHSN initiative run nationally by every Rural Health Club. Clubs visit rural and remote high schools in their state or territory to promote health careers to the students of these schools. RHSVs are a significant contribution to the future of Australia's rural health workforce since it is hoped that some of these school students will go on to become future health-students and RHC/NRHSN members before eventually becoming the next generation of rural health professionals. This concept is based on research that indicates that rural origin students are more likely to return to a rural setting to practice after graduating.

Although individual RHSVs are tailored to suit the needs of each school, generally visits



entail groups of Rural Health Club members talking to small groups of high school students about health careers, pathways to such careers, and scholarships available as well as more general topics like time management, stress reduction techniques and tips for moving away from home in order to study.

Besides helping to promote rural health careers to the next generation of students, the visits are also a lot of fun since most visits also include skills sessions involving such activities as plastering or blood pressure measuring amongst others which are enjoyed by the high school students and their teachers, as well as the RHC members.

RHSVs are easy to organise and a lot of fun to be involved with. There are many resources



available to help RHCs and individual students organise and run RHSVs. A great starting point is the website (www.nrhsn-rhsv.org.au) as well as the RHSV Kit that all RHCs should have access to. In addition, the 2009 RHSV Officers, Lana Prout (WILDFIRE) and Amanda Francis (SHARP), along with Kerry Eccleston in the NRHSN Office, are also available to assist students with any RHSV-related issues including RHSV reporting requirements and helping to organise RHSVs involving multiple RHCs. Throughout this year, the RHSV Officers will be contacting each RHC in order to assist them with their RHSV activities for 2009. RHCs are also strongly encouraged to submit details of any planned RHSVs to rhsv@nrhsn.org.au so that they can be promoted on the RHSV website.

NRHSN members have fantastic experiences while participating in RHSVs – so make sure to get involved! Contact the RHSV Rep at your club, email rhsv@nrhsn.org.au or visit the website www.nrhsn-rhsv.org.au.



A Rural Placement

Marianne Dowsett, MIRAGE

In February 2009 I was welcomed into the home of Dr Tilak Dissanayake, his wife Donna, and two children, Hamish (4) and Eromi (2) as part of the Rural Medical Family Network's Working HUGS program. I learnt that as well as being Coolah's only GP Tilak was also the VMO for the Coolah Hospital, for which he was on call for many evenings and weekends. As I accompanied him around the next day I saw what a full and varied day he has as a rural practitioner. I enjoyed how people weren't so rushed and I found all the patients very welcoming. However I was also exposed to the challenges of rural practice which mainly involved lack of resources, which meant



having to rely more on signs and symptoms as opposed to investigations to decide a course of treatment for a patient.

As Dr Tilak had considerable surgical experience I was also lucky enough to assist for a day in his 'lumps and bumps' clinic where he took biopsies of suspicious moles, froze precancerous lesions and removed more sinister moles. This again emphasised the breadth of services rural practitioners can provide without which people may have to travel well over an hour away to receive. As well as spending time at the hospital and GP surgery I got a taste of country life. I



spent some very enjoyable afternoons in the community pool with the children as one thing I never quite adjusted to was how high the temperatures were! I ate out at the local bowling club, went to the Binnaway Races, visited the Dissanayake's farm and had a lovely evening out at a vineyard in Mudgee! I had a fantastic time and cannot thank Tilak and Donna enough for hosting me, the town of Coolah for welcoming me or Liz Wragge for organising the placement.

Medical

Matthew Van Zetten,
Medical Representative

The Medical Portfolio has completed several projects since the last edition of Coeee. Most notable of these were the National Health and Hospitals Reform Committee (NHHRC) submission in late 2008 and the recent signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Australian Medical Students Association. We hope this leads to a strong working relationship between our two organisations as we continue with and expand upon existing joint projects such as the NRHSN/AMSA rural bursaries.

The medical team for 2009 was elected at our recent Face to Face meeting in Melbourne, and I congratulate our new Liaison Officers: Teena Downton (Junior Medical LO), Jasmine Banner (Medical Rural Bonded Scholarships LO), Jordan Whicker (John Flynn Placement Program LO), Robyn Silcock (Medical Deans of Australia and New Zealand LO), Soo Yee Naidoo (Bonded Medical Places Scheme LO), Andrew Tierney (Australian Medical Students Association LO). Our seven member team represents 5 universities from 4 different states, and we hope to be on the pulse when it comes to issues affecting medical students and rural health issues all around the country.

LO's represent the NRHSN on national advisory committees, and in some cases are the only student voice that these stakeholders have direct access to. As such they are a fantastic avenue for providing feedback to these organisations. If you have any suggestions for improving scholarships, or complaints regarding your own experiences, please feel free to contact the relevant LO. Email addresses can be found on the Medical Portfolio page on the NRHSN website.

In addition to our regular liaising with stakeholders, this year we plan to work closely with the other portfolios to create position statements on pressing issues, such as the NHHRC interim and final reports, as well as revising dated NRHSN policies.

Our report in the current edition of the RACGP's rural faculty newsletter 'Bush Alert' was written by Steven Peterson from the ANU about GP term in Tumbarumba, NSW. The article can be read at racgp.org.au/bushalert. If you have your own story about a rural placement experience that you would like published, email it to medical@nrhsn.org.au for consideration.

NRHSN Portfolios

Allied Health

Cristen Fleming & Ashley Willock,
Co-Allied Health representatives

Organisation and stakeholder relations has been the major focus of 2009 so far for the AH team. Along with the exec, we have been making a concerted effort to improve our stakeholder numbers and active communication. SARRAH and NAPSA are two well established and supportive stakeholders with whom which the portfolio has a good working rapport, to these we hope to add stakeholders from OT, physio, optometry, Allied Health Australia and radiography just to name a few. Along with increasing our professional stakeholder communication, we are carrying on the AH student rep working party started last year to allow for more informed and accurate representation of our peers. With this professional/student input we hope to optimise what allied health has to offer as well as highlighting the difficulties we face as rural/remote clinicians.

Along with most of you, we attended F2F earlier in March held in Melbourne. It was a very productive and thought provoking weekend (accompanied by some truly fabulous food!) that not only inspired most to do better but also equipped us with the essential skills to do so. F2F also saw two new juniors elected Daniel Mahoney and Clarissa Rentsch whom we warmly (and gratefully) welcome and a slight restructuring of the portfolio positions. Co-senior and co-juniors remain however the SARRAH liaison will (as of the end of '09) be a separate position (previously held by a senior) and the NAPSA rep will now be a Pharmacy Liaison Rep, acting as the link between us, NAPSA and the Pharmacy Guild of Australia. With a full team, 2009 looks set to be a busy year.

With NURHC approaching a recent TC saw a collaborative effort made by all portfolios, facilitated by the exec, in order to develop some common goals and objectives to achieve them, again with better communication and representation in mind. We are also in the process of discussing and preparing for NURHC as an individual portfolio.

All in all, a very productive 2009 so far with some solid ground work to ensure a very productive 2009!

Indigenous Health

Dianne Thorp & Mitch Sharrock
Co-Indigenous Health reps

The Indigenous Portfolio is alive and kicking! We're excited about this year and look forward to making a firm foundation via baby steps to get this portfolio back in action. Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander health issues are currently at the forefront of public discussion, decisions are being made about future health reform and ways of "Closing the Gap" in the life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. As the upcoming health professionals of Australia we need to become involved in ensuring future equity of health outcomes for all Australians.

Indigenous Health Main objectives:

1. Recruitment of Indigenous students into all tertiary health science courses
2. Retention of Indigenous students by means of ongoing support throughout the duration of their degrees
3. Development of Indigenous health and cultural awareness as core curriculum in all tertiary health courses

Our overall goal is to increase the Indigenous health workforce, made up of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous health professionals, which will ultimately improve health outcomes for Indigenous Australians.

It is important for a firm foundation for this Portfolio to be laid, therefore we are in the process of recruiting and involving our RHC 'Indigenous Health Representatives' we need people power to get things done. We are encouraging applications for these positions in clubs both in a senior and junior capacity.

Indigenous Health Portfolio has a huge task ahead and we need the help of like minded health students all over Australia to make a difference in "Closing the Gap", please consider applying on a local level as an 'Indigenous Health Representative' for your RHC, or on a national level as a 'Junior Indigenous Health Portfolio Representative'. If you have any questions or comments please do not hesitate to contact us on indigenous_health@nrhsn.org.au. Hope to hear from you! Indigenous Health Portfolio Senior Representatives, Mitch Sharrock and Dianne Thorp

Nursing

Sally Grainger
Nursing Representative

The Nursing Portfolio team for 2009, consisting of Sally Grainger (Senior) and Katherine Radosevich (Junior), has continued work in various areas and contributed to several NRHSN projects already in 2009.

Nursing Portfolio Activities since the last edition in October '08 have included: Attending the NRHSN Face 2 Face in March '09; Creating a comprehensive nursing contact list for all of the Rural Health Clubs around Australia; Contributing to the first "Liaison Group" teleconference in March '09 comprising all the Senior, Junior and Specialist advisors who form the NRHSN Council Portfolios: Allied Health, Medicine, Nursing, Indigenous, Community



and Advocacy; Assisting the "Liaison Group" to begin the creation of key position statements for the NRHSN on behalf of RHC students, which will facilitate a standardised NRHSN response to all manner of health issues and represent a united health student voice to health and government bodies; Re-connecting with CRANaplus (peak rural & remote nursing body) has confirmed a willingness of this organisation to have student representation at the CRANaplus Conference in '09 and give voice to student placement experiences in rural and remote health settings via the "Outback Flyer" newsletter each quarter; "Winnows" the Nursing-sub group has had a face lift & moved over to Facebook - join up now! It is hoped this new platform will form the basis for presentation of student nursing opinions on all manner of current nursing issues (note: thanks to James Bonello, 2008 Nursing Senior, for creating the Facebook site); Submission of an



article on the NRHSN and the importance of multi-disciplinary team work from a nursing perspective to the Australian Nursing Journal (ANJ).

The Nursing Portfolio team plan to keep charging ahead in '09. Here is a preview where we want to head next: Explore expressions of interest in creating Student Nursing Representatives for the peak Nursing Bodies/Stakeholders; Approaching stakeholders to fund more student nurses to attend their conferences as Rural Health Club (RHC) members; Negotiate discounts for RHC members when joining/becoming members of stakeholder organisations; Publish student placement stories/experiences in a variety of publications, especially those of peak Nursing Bodies, (send in your placement stories so we can create a "nursing placement experience library"); Continue to review RHC members' applications for conference sponsorship (CoNS).



Community & Advocacy

Rachel Bourke

'What rural health issue are you passionate about? Is it the shortage of rural health professionals in your home town? or the lack of support you get on rural placement? What factors are going to influence your decision to choose a rural career? and why is the health of rural Australians poorer than Australians that live in the city?

Rural health politics and policy might sound like fancy terms but they really come down to discussing issues such as these.

The establishment of the Community and Advocacy Portfolio within the NRHSN will mean that we will be able to put a greater focus on developing student policy and advocating that policy to stakeholder organisations including the National Rural Health Alliance (NRHA), Australian Rural Health Education Network (ARHEN) and Rural Education Foundation Australia (REFA).

The NRHA www.ruralhealth.org.au is the peak body working to improve the health of Australians in rural and remote areas. It is comprised of 28 Member Bodies including the NRHSN, representing health consumers, service providers and other organisations in non-metropolitan areas.

One of the major functions of the NRHA is find a consensus amongst its member bodies on rural health issues and put these ideas to government in the form of position statements and media releases. It is hoped that the NRHA's policy work will influence government decisions regarding rural health. The NRHA is one pathway for student advocacy to occur and also an important source of information for rural health students about the latest news in rural health. An important upcoming event hosted by the National Rural Health Alliance is the 10th National Rural Health Conference, the major Australian multidisciplinary rural health conference.

This biannual event will be held in Cairns in May this year and will bring experts from many health disciplines together to discuss

rural health policy and the latest evidence based nursing, allied health and medicine in the context of rural health. There are also great networking opportunities so this conference is a must for the future rural health professional. Having an awareness of the rural health industry in a broader sense is worthwhile as it prepares rural health students for entry into the workforce. Having an informed opinion about rural health issues allows students to better navigate early in their professional careers, will also allow students to be more confident with networking. Having an understanding of the rural health industry and the politics of rural health will also make you sound knowledgeable in a job interview! There are many opportunities for you to contribute to the student vision for the future of rural health via your involvement in the NRHSN. Check out the Community and Advocacy Portfolio page on our website www.nrhsn.org.au/community. There may be an upcoming opportunity to join the Portfolio as an ARHEN representative. For more information or to get involved email nrha@nrhsn.org.au.

ARMS: Australian National University, ACT



Yu-Ting
Huang

ARMS members have been busy providing health education and health checks taking blood pressures and blood sugars at shows in

surrounding rural areas including Delegate & Dalgety shows, Cooma show, Bombala show, Goulburn show and of course Canberra Show. These days, apart from being a lot of fun, provide students with good practice refining their skills whilst giving community members a checkup of their health. Tremendous fun was also had by many ARMS members at the Bungendore rural skills day, held on Sat 28th March. This day was run by the local doctors and rural fire

brigade teaching students first aid and emergency skills. This year ARMS also has 21 of its members placed in long term rural stream positions in rural nodes in Goulburn, Young, Cooma, Eurobodalla and Bega. These students integrate into the community of their rural town and are frequently visited by students based in Canberra. This is a great opportunity for medical students to experience the pleasures of rural living.

On Friday the 13th of March ARMS held its annual bushdance. This event, which was also attended by CRANC, is the social highlight of the year with a lot of boot scooting fun had by all. This year ARMS has participated in RHSVs to Goulburn High, Mulwaree High and Goulburn Trinity College. ARMS members shared their stories of how they came to study medicine at ANU and by doing so hope to inspire students to consider a career in health.



AURHA: Adelaide University, SA



Philippa
Baker

This year is looking to be a blinder with events left, right and centre for AURHA and more members than you can shake a stick at!

We kicked the year off in great style with our welcome BBQ for all our new members, plenty of old ones and most importantly, an encouraging contingent of allied

health members. It was a fantastic way for us all to relax with a couple of cold beverages and bond with our newest recruits and also take in the serenity and stench of the mudflats of the river Torrens.

The year looks set to include lots of touring around the beautiful state of South Australia recruiting health students with our High School visits, a trip to Port Augusta for VibeAlive and our now well-known, mini-NURHC, CAMPFIRE.

Other highlights on our calendar include Dinner Under the Stars – a fantastic night out at a mystery location with inspirational guest speakers.

And we haven't even got to NURHC yet! We will be sending a strong contingent up north to Cairns to battle it out at the Golden Windmills and enjoy the hospitality and amazing conference that is lined up for us.

Hopefully 2009 will see a continued improvement in our relationship with the other SA-based clubs of ROUSTAH and FURHS and greater success of our combined ventures - RHSV's and CAMPFIRE.

We have a fresh committee who are excited about the year ahead & we hope to see you somewhere along the way - whether it's in our backyard or yours!



AWAIRH: La Trobe Uni, Wodonga VIC

Jacqui Pettingill



AWAIRH are gearing up for a big 2009. Our new executive team formed at a general meeting on Tuesday 24 March 2009. We're hoping to organise a visit for members to the Albury Base Hospital and tour of the Rural Medical School sometime in April. This is intended

to be a multi-disciplinary learning experience. We'll be attending Vibe Alive in Mildura in July 2009, and we're also working on having representation at a local High School Expo in Wodonga on 20 May 2009. Co-ordinating with LaTrobe Uni to tag along with

them, its in the early stages of the organising process.

We'd love to hear from other Rural Health Clubs about how they established themselves in early days as well so please drop us a line any time awairh@nrhsn.org.au!



BREAATHHE: University of Newcastle, NSW



Greer Stevens

Breaathhe has had an exciting start to 2009 and things are shaping up to get even better!!

We started the year, like every other, by taking our place amongst the O'Week stands. This year we enticed new members with apple slinkies and a range of BREAATHHE merchandise- a huge hit!! We recruited just over 100 new enthusiastic members over the duration of 4 days and hope to see more forms flood in as we visit allied health orientation sessions over the coming weeks. We hope this fresh insurgence into our club brings with it many wonderful opportunities this year.

These new and existing members welcomed in 2009 - Vegas style!! A fun-filled night of costumes and dancing allowed our members to let their hair down and enjoy some networking opportunities.

Breaathhe has experienced an image overhaul throughout the duration of the summer break. We have spruced up nicely with the addition of a Facebook site, blackboard page, new logo and new website (www.breaathhe.com.au)... and this is just the beginning!! We are currently finalising a newsletter for our members and executive which we hope to distribute very soon.

We are very much looking forward to hosting our annual skills night in May which will allow our members to have some interaction with medical professionals and offer students the opportunity to engage in plastering, suturing, venipuncture and cannulation.

Breaathhe will round out our semester with a rural high school visit, an interstate adventure and will catch our breath with a night of lawn bowls and a good old fashioned BBQ- can't wait!!



BUSHFIRE: Bond University, QLD



Emma Hogan

The New Year has brought a new name, new exec, new logo and a new energy for the rural health club at Bond University. Although only in its infancy, BUSHFIRE has gained considerable support and encouragement and will be able to offer its members fantastic rural experiences and opportunities now and well into the future.

Already in the works for this year are several hands on skills nights and a joint rural health trip in collaboration with TROPIQ, RHINO and HOPE4HEALTH. All of our current exec members were present on a similar rural health trip to Stanthorpe last year and were all intrigued by the professional and personal opportunities of rural health careers. We look forward to sharing that awareness and enthusiasm with our new members on this upcoming trip.

At the moment, the team is focused on recruiting new enthusiastic members from Bond's May intake of Medicine and Allied Health students. O week activities and promotional packs are planned to spark their curiosity and hopefully entice them to become active members of BUSHFIRE.

We have members heading off to NURHC and RDAQ conferences and plan to organise a Rural High School Visit as soon as the stress of barrier exams has passed! With all of that on the horizon, as well as the approaching Vibe Alive Indigenous festival & all the other challenges of establishing & maintaining a well-run club, BUSHFIRE is in for a busy year. Stay tuned! Of course, none of that would be possible without the help from NRHSN and our other major supporter Health Workforce Queensland. Thank you everyone for welcoming us to the NRHSN family!



CARAH: Charles Darwin University, NT with Flinders Uni, SA



Anna Huigen

CARAH had a quiet finish to 2008 after a busy year. The 2008 committee had their last formal meeting in November at a local café combining breakfast with business.

On March 23rd this year, CARAH had a combined Meet'n'Greet night and AGM. Students and staff from Charles Darwin Uni, Henge Education, Batchelor Institute, Alice Springs Hospital and Centre for Remote Health were invited. Approximately 15 people gathered for pizzas (after our pre-arranged gourmet food failed to materialise!), and members of the old committee declared all positions vacant. A new committee of six people was elected which was a great result. Angela Titmuss has agreed to continue in her role as CARAH mentor - she was a fantastic support to the 2008 committee and the 2009 committee are very fortunate to have Ange on board this year. The new committee will be meeting shortly to decide upon committee roles, the 2009 CARAH events calendar, and the 2009 budgets.

I'd like to thank the 2008 committee: Kellyanne Coyle (Co-President), Heidi Kurovec (Vice-President), Dianne Thorp (NRHSN Senior Rep) and Ben Williams (Publicity Officer) for all their input and support. A big thank you to Centre for Remote Health for their role as administrators and Sabina's time and input has been a fantastic resource for CARAH. Thanks to the NRHSN staff and 2008 council members also for their wonderful support. Last of all, thank you to the CARAH members who supported CARAH by attending the 2008 events - CARAH is run by students for students!



CRANC: University of Canberra, ACT



Erica Collins



We had a number of executive members graduating at the end of 2008, and have managed to recruit a good number of students from across the University this year! We had a busy close to 2008 with a number of students attending RAW and the Deadly Days activities. Our contingent attending RAW came back with smiles and enthusiasm as big as Dunedoo! The girls who attended Deadly Days said that "It was a fantastic day and I have learnt a lot. Being able to interact with other clubs enables me to enhance my ability to contribute to our club." We awarded a clinical placement scholarship to Two Master of Physiotherapy students. They

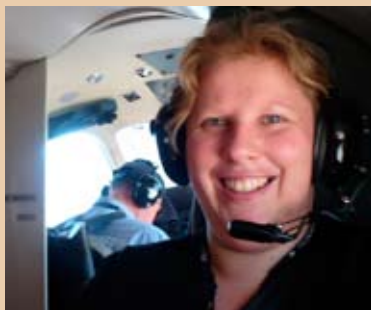
headed off to Darwin in January for a two-week clinical placement at Robertson Barracks. "Darwin was a great placement both for professional development and experiencing life in the top end. We visited Kakadu, barramundi fishing, croc watching on Adelaide river, watched an international rugby 7s tournament, got caught in some massive thunder storms and enjoyed some beverages with the locals...During our time at the barracks we were able to get our hands dirty with dry needling, plastering, real-time ultrasound, observed surgery, sporting activities within the barracks and general private practice

physiotherapy. It was a great opportunity to view physiotherapy techniques outside the scope of Canberra practices." 2009 promises to be a busy year for CRANC. We currently have students away on clinical placements in Broken Hill and in Alice Springs. We are planning on working with the Southern Region RHC's for more RHSV's, a Mid-Winter ball in Wagga and we hope to work with ARMS to get a 4x4 driving course going. In the mean time we are still working on getting as many students 'out bush' as possible and are looking forward to sending a sizeable contingent to NURHC in August!

FURHS: Flinders University, SA



Robert Carey



FURHS has had a flying start to 2009, with about 100 new members signing up at our sign up days. We tried something different from the usual lunch time barbecue and instead opted for ice-creams. These made for a refreshing change on the warm Adelaide days. Our aims for 2009 are to increase our members as well as the wider community's awareness of issues surrounding rural health in Australia. We're trying to organise activities that promote participation across all the health disciplines both through educational and social activities (hopefully at the same time).

We're planning on working closely as part of the 'Triclub', with the other SA clubs AURHA & ROUSTAH. We're planning on combining our RHSVs so we have a representation of all disciplines & all universities on each trip. The other major 'Triclub' event will be the annual Campfire weekend, towards the end of the year. Our first social event was Shindig, which saw members come along and nominate for remaining 2009 committee positions & also meet fellow members over a delicious lunch. Our photo competition comprising student's photos of a

rural scene was extremely popular. Another event held was the first Royal Flying Doctor Service orientation session which was organised by the Rural Doctors Workforce Agency. This aims to facilitate student placements for a day with the service. This was once again extremely popular with tickets selling out fast. With planning in progress, FURHS is looking forward to a successful year ahead with activities such as Rural First aid night and 'Christmas in July' as well as many other exciting activities to help keep our members enthused about rural health.

HOPE4HEALTH: Griffith University, WA



Lucy Barnett



HOPE4HEALTH got off to a great start in 2009 with well over 100 new members joining up. To celebrate we kicked off with an 80's Prom Night launch party, over 450 people raid the local Op Shops for some horrendous outfits! It set the scene for an exciting year ahead... On the fundraising side of things, HOPE4HEALTH is working on integrating an initiative called AIME (Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience) into Griffith University. The AIME project was started by students at the University of Sydney who had the goal of improving education outcomes in Indigenous high school students. We're working for the AIME project to begin on the

Gold Coast next year providing a fantastic opportunity for students and members of our local Indigenous population. There are also plenty of opportunities for HOPE4HEALTH members to get a taste for all things rural. Our Joint Rural Health Club weekend in combination with BUSHFIRE, TROHPIQ and RHINO is fast approaching along with RHSVs and the Rural Doctors Association of Queensland Conference, on the Gold Coast. Our first Indigenous art exhibition 'Heartlands' is running in April with all funds raised going to the AIME project. Our members will be making the most of bimonthly

trips to the Cherbourg Specialist Clinic to observe and participate in consultations. Later in 09 we'll be running and expanding the Cherbourg Teddy Bear Hospital program to include a health careers expo for the older primary school students. Our major rural health fundraising event 'The Midnight Muster' was held on March 14 at the Beaudesert Racecourse. The Midnight Muster is in its 3rd year & we hope it will be a big part of our calendar in years to come. Several hundred students from Northern NSW and SE Queensland attended with all proceeds going to the RFDS. www.hope4health.org.au

KRASH: Notre Dame University, WA



Cathy Pickering

We started 2009 with a huge movement to encourage members and also to promote KRASH to existing members. We had a great response from this membership drive but are still looking into recruiting Aboriginal Health Worker Students studying in the Kimberly. 2009 already has involved a visit to Broome Senior High School, for Career Development Day for year 10 students. Third year nursing students talked to students in a speed dating format about what they wanted to do after they

concluded their studies and what careers were available in health. We had a great response from students and teachers about KRASH, which was really encouraging. On the horizon is a RHSV to Derby District High School in August. KRASH will also be involved in the 38th Shinju-Matsuri Festival (Festival of the Pearl) in Broome this year. This is the social calendar event of the year in Broome running over 10 days with multicultural events and activities showcasing the history, cultural diversity and talent of Broome. Some of the events include waking Sammy the Dragon, float parade, Mardi Gras concert, a food festival and Dragon Boat Races. We'll be entering a Dragon Boat team and may be putting a float in the Grand Parade. Dragon boating is a great sport with fierce competition. It's a great day in the sun on the lovely Broome beaches to be enjoyed by all and

hopefully a win will come out of it too. We've also had great interest for NURHC, and hope to send students from all years & disciplines. We're excited about 2009 & the many events occurring. Although we still have a lot of challenges to overcome, more members to recruit & many events to organize and attend, we are on our way to developing a great RHC.



LARHC: La Trobe University, VIC



Alison Sahhar

0 week preparations started at the end of 2008, with plans to take our stall to a new high. We organised a lucky dip for new members. Prizes included gift vouchers from around the local area willing to support our rural health club. Our Secretary did a fabulous slide-show on the Laptop to show our recent activities, and a colourful brochure was designed. LARHC balloons, table cloths, posters and wrist bands all made the stall more unique! We now have

about 380 members. Shortly following the stall was a BBQ that gained the interest of more new members.

In mid March LARHC joined with the pharmacy club to hold a social pub crawl event. Tickets were sold out within the first few days and the event attracted about 150 keen students. Preparations for the LARHC Ball in May are well underway. The Ball will be held in Bendigo and have an exciting Masquerade theme. Tickets will be on sale soon and we look forward to a fun-filled, exciting night.

Relay For Life is soon approaching and LARHC has been involved in organising our own team. Fundraising has begun and we've recruited dedicated members to take part in the event. We look forward to sending eager participants to the 2009 NURHC in Cairns and Vibe Alive held in Mildura coming up in July this year.

LARHC scholarships will soon be open, these are aimed at promoting and funding health related students undertaking placements in rural areas. LARHC has had a fantastic start to the year and we are excited to see the year's events through.



MARHS: Charles Sturt Uni, Albury, NSW



Jenny Barr

What do bucking bulls, flannelette and folk bands have to do with addressing the health concerns of rural Australia? Well, this year MARHS is 'stepping it up' for the cause of rural health and using all these things and more to boost the interest of our rurally based students in the bigger picture of rural health. 2009 is shaping up to be a great year with more

registrations than ever and an exciting calendar planned. Our recently elected executive are busy planning our first social events of the year, including our kick off 'bull riding night' followed by our annual 'Bush bash ball' where we showcase the bush dancing talents of our country campus as we heel and toe-it up on a shearing shed floor.

Following on from the success of last year, MARHS is again hoping to run a repeat of the highly successful mental health first aid course, raising awareness and providing practical skills for students dealing with mental health. We also hope to run a repeat of the eating disorders panel night, and an ATSI night, raising awareness of local community groups and showcasing some of our student involvement



in various events such as the Broome NAIDOC festival attended late last year. This and much more should keep the Allied Health members of MARHS busy through the year.. Good times to come!

MIRAGE: University of Sydney, NSW



Robyn Billing

2009 is set to be another exciting year for MIRAGE with a number of events already planned, an unprecedented number of new members signing up and most encouragingly a great proportion of those new members were from the allied health disciplines. Sign up during the initial weeks back at campus were great but the annual Welcome drinks proved again to be a fantastic forum for acquiring new members and generating interest in participating in the club. The Welcome Drinks were as per last year held at the Marly in Newton, and for \$5 (or \$10 if you were joining the club) saw students getting two drinks and nibbles and an awesome party! We also had door prizes and a short presentation about what MIRAGE stands for, does and what opportunities it offers members.

Looking forward for the year, in May we are again in conjunction with MedSoc organising the Annual Indigenous Health Forum. An excellent selection of speakers has been sought and the night looks like it's destined to be a highlight in the MIRAGE calendar year yet again. RHSV's are still in the planning stages but already there are an encouraging amount of students interested in going to represent MIRAGE, with the most likely destination to be up in the Northern Rivers region of NSW, no doubt a great 3-4 day trip will be organised with school visits and of course some time allocated to local sight seeing. Indigenous Festivals are also coming up and with the students out at Dubbo Rural Clinical School on board for the Coonamble Vibe Alive Festival we are off to good start. Also with lots of interest already in the Deadly Days Festivals to be held later on this year, Indigenous Festivals look to be a great opportunity for MIRAGE members to become involved in the club and in the rural and indigenous communities.



NERCHA: University of New England, NSW



Alex Rack

The good people of NERCHA love being in bed with all health disciplines and have welcomed another degree under the blankets- Social Work. With the start of the new social work degree, NERCHA now has four health disciplines in its ranks including Nursing, Medicine and Psychology.

NERCHA kicked off the semester by holding a barbecue for Nursing and medical students in hope of increasing membership numbers post Orientation. The barbecue was a great success which saw Armidale serve up heavy rain showers and 19 degrees. In spite of optimal New England weather, the event moved indoors where many people signed up, especially Nursing students. A big thankyou must be awarded to all those who helped under adverse conditions, especially Yoni Luxford, our club administrator and Shannon Townsend, NERCHA president.

NERCHA had its first official meeting of the year recently and has a number of plans for the coming year. These great events include establishing a relationship/mentor program with the local Aboriginal primary school, holding a combined ball with the UNE Medical Students Association, two Rural High School Visits and a whole heap of other minor social events.

Also in the near future, a general meeting will be called to elect a junior executive to fill places in the NERCHA council. The Newly appointed junior executive will hold these positions until later in the year when all executive positions will come up for nomination and election.



photo: RAHMS

NOMAD: Deakin University, VIC



Cam Hart

I would like to start by thanking all that have been involved in getting NOMAD over the massive hurdle of the year that has passed. Since the initial steering committee meeting, now NOMAD has evolved from an idea to a functioning club. The second year NOMAD brings a new logo. The new logo represents the youth and enthusiasm of NOMAD, travel in rural health and colours of the country. A logo competition was run to gain designs that reflect the ideas of what NOMAD means to students.

With a new logo comes lots of exciting projects NOMAD are looking to undertake in 2009. Our inaugural AGM is fast approaching and calls are being put out for nominations. The current committee are looking forward to a breath of fresh air in new committee members. Our RHSV calendar is underway with the idea of running a RHSV within the month. In collaboration with MedSoc's Global Health Team we are currently planning Deakin's first Teddy Bear Hospital. As a club we are excited to get this up and running as it adds another aspect of what NOMAD is trying to achieve through educating the younger folk on health and the nuts and bolts of careers, hospital and healthcare professionals.

Our recruitment drive has proved fruitful during 'O'week, having recruited new members and renewing old memberships we are looking forward to getting the new faces of the club involved in all that is NOMAD.



OUTLOOK: University of Melbourne, VIC



Joshua Crase

The Annual Victorian Rural Careers Weekend was held in Wangaratta in March. The event, coordinated by Melbourne Uni, also involved members from WILDFIRE, NOMAD & RAHMS. Approximately 60 medical students attended the two days, which involved numerous presentations from all general practice and specialty colleges. A social winery lunch



and dinner sponsored by Bowlers Reaching Out For Others (BROTO). Over several Weekends in March, Outlook coordinated groups of 60 medical students to tour and hear from doctors and students at the Rural Clinical Schools (Ballarat, Shepparton and Wangaratta). The events provided an opportunity for BMP/ERC/MRBS students to see the RCS facilities and staff

where they will be for the majority of their clinical years, and to encourage CSP students to consider the RCS as a clinical school option. The Oxfam Close the Gap campaign

bake sale fundraiser was held to increase awareness of the many health issues facing Indigenous Australians, and for students and staff to sign a pledge to decrease the 17 year life expectancy gap between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australians. Approximately 300 Outlook members attended from multidisciplinary backgrounds

raising nearly \$2000. Other events included an Indigenous Walking Tour, Film Night, Indigenous Health Forum, Cultural Communications Seminar, and a BBQ and footy match. The Moovin Health Ball, following last year's successful masquerade event, saw the students dressed up in Hollywood style for an exciting and fun-filled evening! Vibe Alive was held in Mildura in November and we sent 11 students. Everyone had a good time and mixed with kids from across north western Victoria and parts of SA from Indigenous and non-Indigenous backgrounds. We ran a careers and health eating tent in conjunction with Wildfire.

RAHMS: Uni of NSW, NSW



Jinny Gill

This year, we have RAHMed right into the swing of things, wasting no time in expanding our horizons; the RAHMS team was out in force in UNSW O-Week trying to recruit a variety of disciplines, making various presentations during orientations for various allied health courses...Another year, another impressive haul... To kick off the year the Start of Year meet and greet provided an opportunity for all the new and old RAHMITes to knock back a schooner or two at The Royal. An impressive



turnout, great weather, delicious assortment of food; guaranteed to be a hit.

Very recently, RAHMS had a strong representation in the joint Medsoc/RAHMS Pubcrawl, distinguishable by our charming blue and orange t-shirts and flannies. And general good looks. The night provided another opportunity to foster the formation and strengthening of intra and inter-club bonds, and of course to 'get loose' as most accounts confirm.

Back to business, another action-packed year is in the works. In the near future, plans for Mental Health Night and Clinical Skills Night are underway. These functions always attract a significant amount of numbers, often demand exceeding capacity. The Rural High School Visit is another current priority, location and collaboration with other RHCs yet to be confirmed.

This year has seen the RAHMS Executive expand, with the integration of Allied Health Rep to increase the representation of and advocacy for this group of our members. We've also implemented General Executive positions in the Executive, members help out in large

projects and general organization/functions, and foster their own 'daughter project'. Speaking of large projects; planning is already underway and excitement is brewing for the infamous RAW, which will no doubt be an October long weekend to remember. We are hoping this will be another valuable opportunity for our various RHCs to become familiarized and work together... Stay tuned!



RHINO: James Cook Uni, QLD



Mitch Sharrock

It's rare to find a health student that will not give their left arm for a free sausage, hay bale, live music and a couple of drinks with their mates! RHINO's first event for the year went off with a bang, reflected by our 130 new RHINO members who signed

up on the night. A great mix of people attended the BBQ; allied health, nursing, medical students and RHINO alumni alike! It was a prime opportunity to talk to a plethora of buzzing "freshers" who were unfamiliar about Club RHINO and our 2009 events, rural health or the opportunities that NRHSN offers health students. A number of current Club RHINO members expressed interest in attending a variety of national, rural conferences and were

attracted by the prospect of abstract and poster presentations at such events.

Not only does the annual "Keepin' it Rural" party provide a rare opportunity for multiple year levels and disciplines to mingle, but it also gives the RHINO committee members a chance to let our hair down (underneath the akubra) whilst promoting our 2009 calendar. Hearing about interactive guest speaker nights, raging cocktail parties, hosting

National Universities Rural Health Conference, Joint University Rural Health Trips got the RHINO hormones raging! The "Keepin' it Rural" sign on BBQ is an event that goes down in all health students' diaries. Every year we not only gain an exceptional amount of new, active members, but a large proportion of avid supporters who help maintain the outstanding reputation of fun times in the bush.

RHUUWS: University of Western Sydney, NSW



Sarah Galloway



RHUUWS has begun 2009 with a tremendous bang and are rolling into a new era of the second-ever elected exec with all sorts of enthusiasm! With more than a hundred new members joining our ranks within these first five weeks of UWS semester, RHUUWS has definitely created a stir both on campus and beyond. We kicked off the year with the club's inaugural "Get Plastered" event, drawing students from all over Campbelltown campus to the sizzling sausages and plentiful plaster.

The afternoon was kept busy with lots of "who are you and how can I join?" chatter over backslabs as well as some less conventional plaster-limb creations. A follow-up BBQ on campus the very next week (great way to use up extra sausages!) saw sparking interest from hungry and even not so hungry passers-by, and served to maintain RHUUWS momentum on campus. The final week of March saw ten RHUUWS members venture off campus and down the south coast of NSW for a busy couple of days visiting rural high schools and a combined high schools health careers expo, as well as spending a delightful evening chatting to doctors from a GP practice in Nowra over tea. All in all, a fantastic start to the year for RHUUWS and a great atmosphere in which we welcome in new leadership to drive the next exciting chapter!

ROUNDS: Notre Dame University, NSW



Annalyse Crane

In February, a group of ROUNDS & RAHMS members travelled to Milton on the NSW South Coast to attend an Indigenous Health Weekend workshop hosted by the fantastic Budawang man; Noel Butler.

Noel gave us a talk on the structure of Aboriginal tribes throughout Australia. His daughter and son-in-law also spoke on dealing with Indigenous people in the medical and legal context and specifically about their work in Nowra. Later that day we went on a hot and

challenging 6 hour bushwalk, jumping from one rock to another. We had close encounters with sharp plants & some tasty bush tucker plants. Noel led us to a sacred place that was amazing pointing out some Aboriginal rock art which he estimates has been there for at least 10,000 years. It was a very humbling moment. On the way back we stopped on a rocky outcrop while Noel told us a traditional story about his land. The effect of the breath taking views was heightened by his story telling and I think we all felt extremely privileged to have shared this experience.

During the weekend we also had a chance to taste our national fauna, such as the emu, kangaroo and crocodile. We ate our own damper, learnt how to throw a boomerang and spear, and make fire using rubbing sticks.

It was a great opportunity to be outside of Sydney and not have to think about our written curriculum as we were apart of a grander learning experience.

We were all taken with Noel's humour, knowledge and passion, and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Jamanee Gunya is especially great for those students who want an introduction to Aboriginal culture and our beautiful landscape.



ROUSTAH: University of South Australia, SA



Matt Hayman

With a solid foundation after the AGM at the end of last year ROUSTAH's new executive committee is looking forward to a very productive 2009. ROUSTAH has started off the year with a recruitment drive and the numbers are good! We attended UniSA's O week and several of the very well attended course barbeques and signed up many interested new students.

We are also working closely with the Rural Clinical Placements Unit at UniSA to provide

students heading out on their rural placements with as much support as possible.

One aim from the end of last year was to increase the amount of nursing students and with the help of our wonderful administrator from the Rural Doctors Workforce Agency this is coming along very well.

After attending F2F in Melbourne early last month Tahlia Heath and I have come back Adelaide enthusiastic to continue our close ties with FURHS and AURHA to advance rural health awareness in SA. We look forward to being involved in Tri-club events and rural high school visits during the year.

Some of our members were lucky enough to be funded to go to conferences over summer, this included the National Physiotherapy Students Symposium where 3 of our members

got the chance to spread the word about ROUSTAH and the NRHSN to physiotherapy students from around Australia. There are several social and educational events planned for our members in the coming months so the ROUSTAH executive has a busy time ahead and looks forward to continuing the development of the club.



Rustica: University of Tasmania, TAS



Matthew Van Zetten

It's been a pretty hectic start to Rustica's year. We've run orientation programs for all the new fresh-eyed health students and signed a lot of them up as members at the Oweek celebrations – over 400 members for the year already. We changed up our annual welcome dinner this year in light of the tragic bushfires in Victoria and made the night a fundraising appeal for the Bushfire victims. Red Cross



blood services were involved aiming to get extra donors and we appreciate the National Geographic for coming on board as one of the night's major sponsors. We are getting ready to hold an electives night in the not too distant future and are looking into the AIMED database to see if we can continue to help run this great website. Behind the scenes the committee has been hard at work arranging this year's Rural High Schools visits program and our annual



trip over to the mainland for the indigenous festivals. We are also running a number of skills night sessions where everyone can come along and learn the fine arts of venepuncture, plastering and suturing. And everybody down here is getting very excited about this year's NURHC. The producer, choreographer and artistic director have all been appointed for our golden windmills performance so hopefully we can improve on last year's wooden spoon performance.

SHARP: University of Wollongong, NSW



Teena Downton

Last year was a huge year for SHARP and we came to a consensus that reaching 500 members last October was the perfect reason to hold a SHARP at the Brewery to celebrate. One of our members, Amanda Francis gave SHARP members an idea of the many experiences she has gained from being a SHARP member which has inspired her interest in remote area nursing. We would also like to thank Shannon Nott (2008 Co-Chair) who joined us on the night on behalf of the NRHSN.

SHARP members are so keen to go rural and

remote, that straight after exams in November last year, 4 of them headed north to join members of RUSTICA in Rocky for the VibeAlive festival. SHARP members also represented the club at the Coffs Harbour/Taree Deadly Days Festivals earlier in the year. At both activities, members had a great time introducing Gutsy Gus to the local kids and running positive and interactive sessions on health and health careers. 2009 is shaping up to be even bigger for the Club! Our membership drive during O-week was a massive success with 96



new students signing up, and SHARP hosted a workshop at the 2009 MedCamp to share with the new medical students some of the activities we do at Indigenous Festivals & Rural High School Visits. We recently held our AGM & would like to welcome our new committee for 2009. Coming up we have our Annual Bush Dance, Close the Gap Day, more Hills Hoists with WUHOW, NURHC09, and SHARP is entering an inaugural team in the University's Clubs & Societies' UniCentre Cup.



SPINRPHEX: Combined WA Universities, WA



Philippa Gray

SPINRPHEX has had a good start to the year, with big sign-ups at the O-Days and our first meeting, totaling around 500 members so far with more joining each day! The first activity for the exec this year was our exec planning day combined with WAALHIIBE. The morning saw a bit of friendly rivalry in small team challenges. There's nothing like crawling around on the ground trying to build a rope 'house' with six others, all blind-folded, to improve communication and team-working skills – entertaining to watch

too! We combined efforts for the low ropes course then challenged ourselves with the high ropes. The afternoon was time for letting the ideas flow as the two clubs each planned their events and aims for the year. The challenge for SPINRPHEX this year will be providing for ever-growing member numbers without compromising the quality or number of events. Overall the planning day was a great day for the committee to get to know each other, including our great new administrator Lisa, and start prepping ourselves for another big year. The first SPINRPHEX meeting for general members this year was the 'Get Plastered' night, where members came to sign up, have some food and drink, and try their style at plaster-casting. The event was well received



– we even had one person leaving in full torso and arm cast! There were 237 members at the meeting, a strong start to the year and hopefully a sign of things to come. Preparations are underway for the next SPINRPHEX events: a multi-D night combined with WAALHIIBE, with speakers from the RFDS and allied health disciplines coming to talk about their experiences working in the bush, our annual camp at Nanga in May, and Close the Gap Day.

StARRH: Charles Darwin University, NT



Ian Vickers

Far out! Nearly the end of semester one already! Time flies when you're having fun and fun it has been for StARRH (the club formerly known as TEHC). Name changes, a new presidency and virtually a brand spanking new committee. We are fired up and ready to roll.



So far we have had stalls at CDU for club sign up day and O'day signing up many new StARRH's. We have had our first guest speaker/meeting in which RAN Sally Wakeling shared her stories of life as a young woman working in remote communities throughout the NT (thanks Sal). We have recently had a meeting



with CDU's new Vice Chancellor Professor Barney Glover, and are looking forward to his support over the coming year. In August we will be attending the Wakakirri festival in Katherine and will be spending a couple of nights (free of charge) thanks to "Connections Safaris" at their luxury permanent camp

site at Springvale Homestead, "bonding" around the camp fire and hunting Cane Toads. After the festival we will be canoeing down Nitmiluk (Katherine) Gorge and camping under the stars with the resident fresh water crocs (sounds good hey?). More recently StARRH hosted Dianne Thorp from CARAH who attended the "Bridging the Gap" seminar. This culminated in a club get together at the Beachfront Hotel in which many new talents were revealed both on the dance floor and in the pool room! Looking forward to the next one.

TROHPIQ: University of Queensland, QLD



Marguerite Tyson

Life at TROHPIQ has been busy but fun so far this year. We are proud to present our revamped website and our new logo. We will miss the friendly Gus but feel our new look is more professional keeps us 'up with the times'. We began the year with our Welcome Back BBQ where we had

many new members sign up. Our annual trip to the Fraser Coast gave us a chance to tour hospitals in Bundaberg and Hervey Bay and of course, check out the local drinking holes. We also welcomed our new allied health members at our First Semester Allied Health BBQ. We have continued our popular regular events: our Rural Clinical Skills Workshop was again a sell out and our rural high school visit to Gympie was very well received. We look forward to the upcoming joint rural health weekend with Bond and Griffith Universities in April. Although in previous years we have gone to Rockhampton, we've decided to make it a little

closer to home allowing more students to come. We'll be heading to Beaudesert in SE QLD where we'll enjoy some fun times with other rural health clubs. We have already begun the inter-club liaison with TROHPIQ's strong attendance at the ever crazy Midnight Muster held by Hope4Health and hope to continue the tradition attending this event in the future.



WAALHIIBE: Combined WA Universities, WA



Ashley Willock

With half a new exec and a brand new year WAALHIIBE are off to rip roaring start! February saw us visiting Curtin, Edith Cowan and Notre Dame universities over two weeks for the semester one O-days. This proved a great success with record membership numbers! Membership is still major focus as

we continue to lecture bash and promote WAALHIIBE and the NRHSN. March saw the annual WAALHIIBE & SPINRPHEX camp take a slightly different turn. Instead of a weekend camp, this year it was decided that we would have a team building and planning day. Early Saturday morning we found ourselves at the ropes course at Challenge Stadium in Claremont. Lulled into a false sense of security with some gentle get-to-know-you, ice-breakers & competitive team challenges we were then faced with the low ropes course which saw us all put our vanity aside to weave our way around trees and each other to get to the other side without

falling off. We then proceeded to the business end of the high ropes course, the 'flying fox' and the 'leap of faith'. The brave and vertigo challenged alike were put to the test with much encouragement from spectators. After a well deserved lunch it was time to get down to business with a joint planning session. Both clubs nipped through their yearly calendars and appointed many duties to willing and able exec members. WAALHIIBE is now looking forward to our first joint event with SPINRPHEX, a multi-disciplinary night with many interesting speakers eager to share their knowledge.



WARRIAHS: Charles Sturt University, NSW



Bronwyn Phillips

The beginning of the first semester has seen WARRIAHS have a great start to the year. The new board took the reins and put in place some slight changes to the club structure to enhance organisation and flow of ideas. Clubs Day saw a great number of new members and re-signing members alike offer

their support and enthusiasm, with many new members volunteering to help with upcoming events. Not long after, Commencement Dinner at The Farrer had close to 200 attendees enjoying a meal and a few laughs. The new board and committee structure has worked well to put heaps of events on the calendar including Health Expo and visits to local high schools, two paintball trips, a cadaver and bush party trip in Albury, and the winter ball. And all this is outside of

the National Undergraduate Rural Health Conference and all the other rural health student network events WARRIAHS is linked to so you can stay in touch with rural health student issues. President Kyle, REFA rep Lauren and Senior NRHSN rep Bronwyn attended the first Face to Face in Melbourne in early March making some great connections over the couple of days. Joint club events are high on the agenda of things to do for 2009! It looks like it's going to be a great year!



WILDFIRE: Monash University, VIC



Samantha
Buchholz

WILDFIRE has hit the ground running in 2009! With a new Council elected at the end of 2008, we have welcomed new members on board and enjoyed having old members back for more good times. Our membership numbers have climbed steadily and we currently have approximately 400, with this number rising rapidly.

Most of our events and signing of members occurred during O-Week, with various events held across our different sites and campuses. From plaster casts to ice-creams, sausages to merchandise plastered with the mighty WILDFIRE name, our members were kept well fed, watered, adorned and most of all, enthused! – throughout their initial few weeks of the university year. The second intake of the new Monash postgraduate medicine course was introduced to WILDFIRE and rural health with the help of WILDFIRE's age-old 'Get Plastered' evening. Amid much laughter, socialisation, and gunky plaster

cast-offs, all enjoyed a fun (if messy!) night. Following on from the NRHSN Council meeting in March, the ball is rolling for a combined Victorian Rural Health Clubs activity later in the year. Ideas currently in the pipeline include a giant camping trip, ski trip, or pub crawl throughout one of Victoria's regional towns, so Victorians, stayed tuned! Also discussed at the Council meeting was reinvigoration of RHSVs amongst the Victorian clubs and we look forward to getting these firing in the near future. The Matthew Campbell Memorial Evening (MCME), arguably

WILDFIRE's premier event, will be held on April 3, the day after National Close the Gap Day. This will be our 15th annual MCME and it will continue in its thought-provoking and inspiring manner, with the theme "Closing the Gap 1994-2009: The story so far in Indigenous Health". As always, the MCME promises to be a highly successful and stimulating evening. WILDFIRE is looking forward to NURHC with great anticipation, with high interest from members to both attend and present. We can't wait to see everyone in Cairns!

A Rural Placement

Laura & Mooska, OUTLOOK

Echuca is a town of 12,400, nestled on the banks of the Murray River. Once being the state's largest river port, it is otherwise known to tourists as the steamboat capital of Australia. However, this summer, through Melbourne University's Rural Early Elective Program (REEP), we travelled to Echuca less for the steamboats and more to discover the workings of General Practice in Northern Victoria. REEP is a program that The University of Melbourne runs every summer

in late January/early February that enables students to experience medicine in a rural setting. For one week, students are placed in a medical practice or hospital in Victoria's countryside. Experiences are varied, and can include anything from geriatrics to theatre. We were placed with Nish Street Medical Practice-one of two medical practices in Echuca. Doctors not only have admitting rights to the Echuca hospital, but also oversee its day-day workings. Our experience was kick-started with an invitation to watch a caesarean being performed. This

was not only an exciting first, but was unique in that the operation would be completed by a team of GPs with specialities in obstetrics and anaesthetics. We both held our breath as a new life emerged into the crowded theatre room. We were able to gain a feel for different doctoring styles by sitting in on a number of GP consultations throughout the week, and we also attended a snake bite management tutorial. Our experience was capped off with an early morning ward round where, thanks to a young man that got bitten by one of his 36 pet snakes, we were able to see how a real life case was

handled. Overall, our experience was invaluable, not only in preparing us for upcoming clinical years, but for the insight it gave us into the workings of and the challenges inherent in rural practice. It is an encounter we would highly recommend to anyone wanting to expand their future options within the field of medicine.



A JFPP Placement

Matthew Ingram, NERCHA



I arrived in burning hot Yeppoon from high-altitude Armidale in northern New South Wales very excited, but lacking any knowledge of what lay ahead. I was extremely fortunate to spend a lot of time with various doctors & allied health professionals over the next 2 weeks, during my John Flynn Placement Program (JFPP). My time in Yeppoon included many social events with staff of Yeppoon Family Practice(YFP), as well as locals.

My accommodation had the most amazing outlook over the entire beach and Keppel Island Group. The practice itself was far larger than I was expecting with 11 doctors, many nurses and numerous administrators. They also recently opened a satellite practice with just one doctor and a few nurses, at nearby Zilzie. I spent time with almost every doctor in the practice, mostly sitting in on, or assisting with consults, or minor operations. I saw a massive variety of patients ranging from facial trauma to depression to vaccinations. I was fortunate enough to assist and even perform some suturing myself - after practice on non-human material of course.

I also worked alongside the nursing staff learning how to give various injections and familiarising myself with the Australian Children's Vaccination Schedule. This involved dealing with parents that did not want their

children to receive vaccinations, which was very challenging and interesting to see how the doctor dealt with the situation. I was also instructed on how to syringe patient's ears before doing so. All of these were firsts for me, and very exciting.

I accompanied Dr Wong to the local retirement village and carrying out a psychological exam on some of the residents. One of these was very interesting as the patient did not say anything for approximately 15 minutes, but once we left, she spoke to her husband who rushed after us and told Dr Wong the situation, and this eventuated in solving the problem. Part of my time was also spent familiarising myself with Medical Director, (the computer program used to run the practice). I learnt a lot about the health system in Queensland and how it varies from my home state of NSW, as well as gaining an education in how national programs work and affect GPs in daily practice. I was very fortunate as I made close friends with many of the staff at YFP. Alana (another JFPP student with me) and I were also invited to one of the nurse's homes to have dinner with her extended family and we really enjoyed a great roast.

We also made good friends with a local, Macca, at the pub. He was wonderful, adopting us into his group of friends going out on boats on

weekends, tubing and sitting on the superb beaches together. He also took us out to dinner with his friends, a local tradition. We really felt like we fit in.

I also spent half a day with Bruce the Pharmacist learning about how doctor's prescribing habits are monitored and potential problems dealt with as well as the local Methadone program. I was even allowed to assist with making Webster Packs.

I toured each hospital (one private, one public) which was very interesting to see the interactions they had with the GPs to which I was attached. I learnt a lot about the realities of the problems they face in the current political climate & what this means for patients. It was extremely interesting to see the facilities available in a rural/remote area.

Overall, going to Yeppoon for my John Flynn Placement was one of the best experiences of my life, and I cannot wait to go back. We were totally accepted into the practice professionally and personally, and into the community by generous locals that I hope to meet up with again next year. I sincerely thank them all for providing me with such an interesting and enjoyable experience.



A word from ACRRM

Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine



BMP and MRB Support Schemes – what it's all about....

The Bonded Medical Places (BMP) Student Support Scheme Pilot and the Medical Rural Bonded (MRB) Support Scheme are both funded by the Department of Health and Ageing and managed by the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM). The schemes aim to provide support, communication and networking mechanisms for BMP and MRB participants whilst at university and during their ongoing training. Participants can access a wide

range of activities including funding to attend national medical conferences, networking

opportunities at university, access to online learning including e-Mentoring sessions, a regular newsletter and dedicated websites. Access to these support schemes provides the BMP and MRB participants with valuable learning experiences, access to current medical professionals and specialists, access to educational and medical organisations, as well as a support network of other BMP



and MRB participants at their university and Australia wide. Many long term friendships and relationships are formed, as well as opportunities for further education and career choices.

If you are a current BMP or MRB participant and not signed up for the Support Scheme, contact our staff at bondedsupport@acrrm.org.au or phone 1800 223 226.

Snakes Creek, Dr James Fitzpatrick



Dr James Fitzpatrick is an NRHSN alumni member and former Chair of the Network (2000). He is, in no particular order a poet, paediatrician, pirate philosopher and rural health advocate.

James was the Young Australian of the Year in 2001, being recognised for his longstanding enthusiasm and dedication to addressing rural and indigenous health issues. James is a director of 'True Blue' Dreaming, an organisation which establishes mentoring programs for young people in outback communities.

James was a very popular speaker at the 2007 NRHSN conference, and we are very excited to have him back as MC for NURHC 09. We are certain that delegates will feel his passion and enthusiasm for remote Australia and guarantee that you will be inspired.

Currently in Derby, WA, James has penned the following ditty about Snake Creek which is found just outside Derby.

Snake Creek's so named so the crocs can't be blamed
for the puddles of blood that lie foaming.
It's where old ghosts, they dies, where the blind lose their eyes
and where fear's too damned scared to go roaming

It smells like the dead, turbid murky and red
and it flows slow like vomit, or turds
And it's steamy as well, hot and humid as hell
and the banks are awash with dead birds

A snake wouldn't dare leave his old scales there
and cockroaches retch at the fumes
Canetoads expire when exposed to that mire
and groin fungus spores will not bloom

The horror's so great in that cesspit of hate
that corpses can't lie in the mud
They twitch and they squirms but there's no flamin' worms
to suck on their flesh and their blood

So it's bad. You can see that a fella like me
content as a man could be wishin'
Has no business there with a weekend to spare
and an Inlaw who wants to go fishin'

My wife's horrid mum has decided to come
and check on her sweet, only daughter
Who married this bum from the Kimberley run
who makes his ends meet carting water

Now my wife's a good sort but her mother was brought
up in 'Poshville', by Swan River
Her husband he passed, screwed out of his last
brass razoo by this ungodly heifer

So she calls on the phone and I cringe at the tone
of her "darling" and "charming" and "is it?"
And she states with aplomb that it's high time
she come
and pay her sweet snookums a visit

For the full poem please go to
www.nrhsn.org.au/snakecreek.



A word from SARRAH Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health



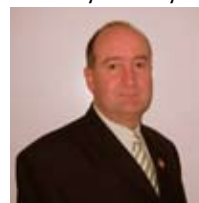
WHETHER you are studying to be a Physiotherapist, Psychologist, Occupational Therapist or Dietician, working in the bush gives you a recession-proof job while giving you a chance to wear your heart on your sleeve and make a difference to needy communities. Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health (SARRAH), is nationally recognised as a peak body representing rural and remote allied health professionals. SARRAH provides support for allied health practitioners working in all sectors and advocates for rural and remote allied health professionals, allied health

workers and students on local, state and national levels. Established in 1995, SARRAH is a grassroots organisation able to address the very particular needs of the individual rural and remote allied health professional. SARRAH

has an extensive regional, state and national network of allied health professionals living and working in rural and remote Australia. SARRAH has been lobbying the federal Government on a number of issues confronting students and its current advocacy platform includes:

- Address the clinical education requirements for allied health students and raise the level of funding to provide parity with other health students.
- Support for rural clinical education & placements.

- Provide HECS credits in return for rural and remote practice.
- SARRAH administers three scholarship programs on behalf of the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. These programs target allied health professionals who are either working or prepared to work in rural or remote Australia. One of the programs administered by SARRAH is the Allied Health Clinical Placement Scholarship (AHPCS) Scheme which provides financial assistance for students undertaking a clinical placement in a rural or remote community. Applications for AHPCS close at 5.00pm Tuesday 26 May 2009. Further details on SARRAH and in particular how to become a member is available at www.sarrah.org.au.

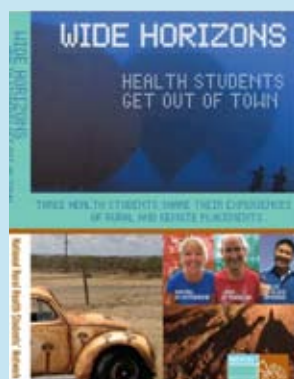
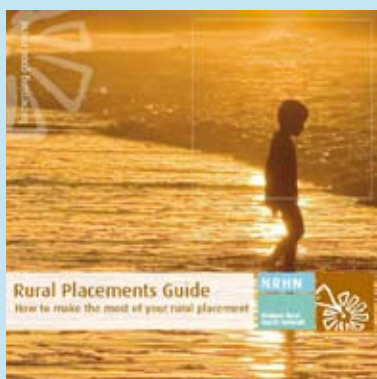
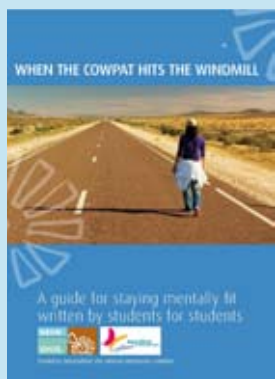


Rod Wellington, SARRAH CEO



NRHSN Rural Health Clubs

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 1 ARMS | Australian National University, ACT |
| 2 AURHA | Adelaide University, SA |
| 3 AWAIRH | La Trobe University, Wodonga, VIC |
| 4 BREAATHHE | University of Newcastle, NSW |
| 5 BUSHFIRE | Bond University, QLD |
| 6 CARAH | Charles Darwin University, NT in association with Flinders University, SA |
| 7 CRANC | University of Canberra, ACT |
| 8 FURHS | Flinders University, SA |
| 9 HOPE4HEALTH | Griffith University, QLD |
| 10 KRASH | Notre Dame University, Broome, WA |
| 11 LARHC | La Trobe University, Bendigo, VIC |
| 12 MARHS | Charles Sturt University, Albury, NSW |
| 13 MIRAGE | University of Sydney, NSW |
| 14 NERCHA | University of New England, NSW |
| 15 NOMAD | Deakin University, VIC |
| 16 Outlook | University of Melbourne, VIC |
| 17 RAHMS | University of New South Wales, NSW |
| 18 RHINO | James Cook University, QLD |
| 19 RHUWS | University of Western Sydney, NSW |
| 20 ROUNDS | University of Notre Dame, Sydney campus, NSW |
| 21 ROUSTAH | University of South Australia, SA |
| 22 Rustica | University of Tasmania, TAS |
| 23 SHARP | University of Wollongong, NSW |
| 24 SPINRPHEX | Combined Western Australian Universities, WA |
| 25 STARRH | Charles Darwin University, Darwin, NT |
| 26 TROHPIQ | University of Queensland, QLD |
| 27 WAALHIIBE | Combined Western Australian Universities, WA |
| 28 WARRIAHS | Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, NSW |
| 29 WILDFIRE | Monash University, VIC |



If you would like to receive additional copies of the Cowpat, the Rural Placements Guide or the Wide Horizons DVD please email us at info@nrhsn.org.au



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- Quiz Answers
1. Cairns, QLD
 2. Rural High school Visits
 3. 6 - RAHMS, RHINO, RHUWS, ROUNDS, ROUSTAH, RUSTICA
 4. AURHA, FURHS & ROUSTAH
 5. RHINO
 6. rustica
 7. Port Augusta
 8. Dunedoo, NSW
 9. KRASH
 10. b) ARMS, RUSTICA & SPINRPHEX