



**NORTHERN RIVERS**  
University Department of Rural Health

PO Box 3074 Lismore NSW 2480  
www.nrudrh.edu.au

# NRUDRH news

E D U C A T I O N   R E S E A R C H   C O M M U N I T Y

## in this issue....

- > Student immersion in regional industry
- > Explain Pain Seminar
- > Isolated Practitioner Training
- > Students returning to Murwillumbah
- > Student Accommodation Opening
- > New Research Clinicians
- > Seminar Series

## Student immersion in regional industry

Given the rural/urban disparity in university entrance, many of our future health professionals come from metropolitan backgrounds. University medical faculties have 5-25% of their intake reported as students of rural origin against a background population demographic of 36% Australians as rural or remote. This is despite being able to access financial supports for students of rural origin that were not available to allied health or nursing students until very recently.

While the students attending University Departments of Rural Health and Rural Clinical Schools are more likely to be those from the rural origin cohort, they remain predominantly metropolitan. To maximise the opportunities for future recruitment their orientation to a rural education site should not just focus on the different clinical presentations and health care resources, but also on the social and cultural aspects of the rural environment. With an increasing percentage of students now being post-graduate entry and therefore older and more likely to be partnered, it is also important to give students information about the variety of employment opportunities offered in the rural

setting and how regional industry in turn impacts on the overall viability of the town.

For some time the NRUDRH has arranged workplace visits to local agricultural sites, allowing many students their first opportunity to see beef cattle production, however this month has seen the first of our field trips focussing on tourism, and the surfing industry in particular. Twelve students travelled to Byron Bay where they commenced with breakfast at one of the local cafes and a discourse on the history of surfing and the associated growth in retail and tourism activities (complemented by a visit to one of the many surfing retail outlets in the local area). Before moving to a guided tour through the Maddog factory, the students were given education about the occupational health and safety aspects of this industry and workplace assessments.

The surfboard manufacturing industry is highly hazardous and requires strict adherence to risk management plans. The main chemical hazards are fibreglass and resins, but workers may also be exposed to paints, solvents, and wood dust resulting in conditions ranging from asthma to liver, kidney or brain injury.

...continued next page



# David Butler 'Explain Pain'

Two Day Seminar hosted by NRUDRH for  
NCAHS Allied Health Staff




Thirty Allied Health delegates, mostly physiotherapists, attended a two day seminar hosted by NRUDRH Murwillumbah Campus at Kingscliff on 1st & 2nd April 2006. Delegates came to the conclusion that Neuroscience can be fun!!! Appraisals were very positive.

The course was based on David Butler and Lorimer Moseley's book 'Explain Pain'. Delegates increased their understanding about how the pain system works when there are injured tissues and nerves and what happens in the brain in relation to pain experiences. Also discussed at the seminar:

- The impact of stress in relation to pain
- New knowledge about pain 'neurotags'
- 'Brain ignition nodes'

- Zinging and zapping nerves
- Smudging in the brain
- Backfiring nerves
- How the immune, sympathetic and cortisol systems can be critical in pain experiences.
- Patients understand far more than most health professionals realise.

David Butler is from the Neuro Orthopaedic Institute Australasia and is an internationally recognised author, lecturer and instructor. David's texts include "Mobilisation of the Nervous System", "The Sensitive Nervous System" and "Explain Pain" co-authored with Lorimer Moseley. He has taught concepts of clinical reasoning, physical health of the nervous system and pain sciences for many years and in many countries.


The seminar was organised by:  
Naree Hancock (Student/Education Coordinator NRUDRH Murwillumbah),  
Liz Rowland (Murwillumbah District Hospital Chief Physiotherapist),  
Dr John Moran (GP VMO, Assoc Lecturer/Education Consultant NRUDRH) 

## Student immersion in regional industry

...continued from page 1

Students observed the adherence to protective clothing, including earmuffs against the noise of machinery, and gumboots against the spills of polishing residues.

The best protection against workplace stress is the ability to have flexible hours, and Maddog have developed innovative agreements that match production targets, with free time for workers to take advantage of the waves. But ocean stingers, rips and even the concept of surfing can be stressful without education and so the next stop for our students was a surf safety and etiquette briefing before learning to ride the waves.

We are pleased to report that all 12 previously naïve students and our intrepid IT support/cameraman were able to stand at least once before retiring from the surf to enjoy lunch at Lennox Head. Needless to say, all students can also report a greater understanding of the interplay of industry and community, the concepts of OH&S, and the joys of living in a rural area – with half of them choosing to remain in the surf rather than head home! 

## Isolated Practitioner Peer Support Scheme (IPPSS)

One of the Murwillumbah Campus projects is moving towards the commencement of a pilot study.


As a result of cooperation between NRUDRH and North Coast GP Training (funding provided by NCGPT) together with the support of North Coast Area Health Service and ACCRRM, Dr John Moran (GP Murwillumbah) is establishing a program that will allow isolated practitioners to spend time in a large group practice for peer support. The plan entails a GP from a larger practice going to an isolated practice

to maintain continuity of care. The 1st pilot is planned to commence between Murwillumbah and Bingara in July 2006.

Dr Louise Fisher is bringing her family to Murwillumbah and will exchange practices and houses. Her daughter will attend Tweed Valley College where she will get to know local children while enjoying class activities. Dr Fisher's GP work load in Murwillumbah will be moderate, allowing her and the family time to explore the beautiful Tweed Valley and Gold Coast. The aim of the program is to improve the likelihood of GPs

continuing to practice in their isolated location.

An evaluation of the pilot study will be conducted in August and we hope that the program will be implemented in other areas.

There has been great support for this program by Tweed Valley College and Mt Saint Patrick's College Murwillumbah. Support has also been received from Murwillumbah District Hospital, Tweed Valley Division of General Practice and the Rural Doctors Association of Australia. 



# Medical students returning to Murwillumbah

Katie Williamson (pictured 2nd left) came to Murwillumbah in 3rd year for a rehabilitation hospital placement and returned the following year in 4th year for her GP & community term. She enjoyed the area so much that she purchased a house in Kingscliff before commencing her internship at Gold Coast Hospital. She hopes to work in Murwillumbah as a GP or Obstetrician/Gynaecologist.

Michael Facek (pictured 3rd left) came to Murwillumbah in 3rd year for a critical care hospital placement and returned to Tweed Hospital for a psychology placement last month. He will return to Murwillumbah again in August for his GP & Community term. His girlfriend Amy Harkness (pictured 4th left) has just completed her 3rd year critical care hospital placement and hopes to return next year. Michael and Amy are interested in settling in the area after they graduate. Sogol Kachooie has just completed

her 3rd year general medicine hospital placement and plans on returning next year for her GP & Community term. She had never considered working rural postgrad, however she has changed her mind due to her positive experience in rural Murwillumbah.

All students appreciated the support received from their GP and Specialist Supervisors, NRUDRH and the hospital staff in all areas. They also found the town community to be extremely welcoming. 🇺🇸



*Students (past & present) and staff enjoying a social night out at the Moran's home at the end of placement*

## Student accommodation officially opened



*Hon. Tony Abbott with Assoc. Prof. Jeff Fuller at the opening*

The Federal Minister for Health and Ageing Tony Abbott officially opened the new student accommodation in Lismore on the 3rd April. He did this while in the Northern Rivers raising money for charity with the annual 'Pollie Pedal'. The refurbishment of two four bedroom houses is completed with landscaping and carpark being finished over the next month.

The minister who had just completed a 170km bike ride from Kyogle to Lismore, observed that the accommodation will enable an extra 70 students per year to

undertake rural medical placements. The opening was attended by politicians and invited guests from the local community, NCAHS, Southern Cross University and University of Sydney.

"This accommodation will add to the learning environment of our campus and encourage more graduates to come and practice in the region when they complete their studies" said Acting Head of Department, Assoc. Prof. Jeff Fuller. Mr Abbott agreed, stating that "if you train in the country you tend to stay in the country."

One medical student who was at the opening, who recently completed a 3rd year placement in Lismore, can't wait to come back with his wife and baby when he graduates. He has already booked in to undertake his 4th year elective in Lismore, saying he had never considered working rurally before but he can now see the opportunities. 🇺🇸

# New Research Clinicians

We have successfully recruited three new Research Clinicians (RCs) as part of the PHC RED team. NRUDRH receives funding from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing under the Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation & Development Strategy (PHC RED).

The new RCs will be supported to develop and complete research projects related to primary health care. Their positions, which run until December, will include mentoring and supervision from senior UDRH staff and others, access to the general resources of the University, attendance at the NSW research methods workshop in June and the General Practice & Primary Health Care Research Conference in July.

**The new research clinicians are:**

### **BERNADETTE BASSET**

For the past ten years, Bernadette has been a Dental Therapist and Coordinator of the Dental Department at Bulgarr Ngaru Aboriginal Medical Services in Grafton. She has extensive experience in program planning and delivery, and is interested in Aboriginal Health research with the UDRH. She holds a diploma in Dental Therapy and a Bachelor of Indigenous Studies.

### **DEANNA BOWEN**

Deanna is a Youth and Family Mental Health Worker with NCAHS, and has conducted research in the area of body image and Anorexia Nervosa. She is interested in doing research around alternative health care preferences in clients of mainstream mental health services. She holds a Bachelors Degree in Psychology (Honours) and a Masters Degree in Social Work from the University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada.

### **MICHAEL DU SAUTOY**

Michael has been employed as a Clinical Psychologist in the Tweed/Byron Network and at Casino Community Health Centre, as well as maintaining a private practice in psychology. His research interest is in mental health, particularly issues of ageing workforce and retention of staff in mental health service delivery. He holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) and Master of Arts (Clinical Psychology) from the University of Natal, Durban, South Africa.

# free NRUDRH

Wednesday afternoon seminars (4th Wednesday, 4 - 5pm)

## research seminars semester 2, 2006

All health professionals, including private practitioners, are invited to attend

**WHERE:** NRUDRH

61 Uralba Street Lismore

Seminars can also be video conferenced to Broken Hill, Grafton, Moree and Murwillumbah.

**CONTACT:** Shianne Ford

on 02 6620 7570 or email:

shiannef@nrahs.nsw.gov.au

to confirm your attendance to a particular seminar, numbers are limited.

DATE	TOPIC	PRESENTER
28 Jun	Competency based education on drug and alcohol	Michelle Daly, Area Clinical Nurse Consultant, Drug & Alcohol, NCAHS
26 Jul	Evaluation of the Aboriginal Reconnecting Families Program	Eric Van Beurden
23 Aug	Results from the baseline data of a preschool obesity prevention project	Avigdor Zask

### bits & pieces

>Hudson Birden presented two seminars on Pandemic Influenza Outbreak Preparedness at the University of Sydney, School of Public Health Seminar on the 16th March and the second for the United Nations Society on the 27th April.

>Some interesting stats from 2005 on the NRUDRH:

- NRUDRH was involved in over 50 publications and over 40 of these were peer re-veiwed!
- NRUDRH held 19 free seminars on a range of health related topics with over 350 people attending and 9 workshops with 187 participants.

>Dr Geoff Morgan was on the panel of experts for an on-line forum on the 4th May after the screening of the ABC Catalyst special on air pollution 'Dirty Little Secrets'. Geoff has completed extensive research into the health effects of air pollution.

>The first of our Academic Forums for 2006 was held on Tuesday

30th May at Invercauld House, Lismore. The forum focus was on Interprofessional Learning: Development of Healthcare Teams for the Future. Participants from across the region gained contemporary knowledge of interprofessional healthcare teams, learning models, and skill ecosystems.

## NRUDRH Contacts

[www.nrudrh.edu.au](http://www.nrudrh.edu.au)

61 Uralba Street, Lismore, 2480. Phone: 02 6620 7570 Fax: 02 6620 7270. Email: [nrudrh@med.usyd.edu.au](mailto:nrudrh@med.usyd.edu.au)

**ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM**

- Professor John Beard  
Head of Department
- Mrs Wendy Byron  
Admin & Finance Officer
- Mr Rod Hart  
Information & Technology Officer
- Ms Linda Pike  
Executive Assistant
- Ms Jacqueline Hudson  
Admin Officer
- Mrs Shianne Ford  
Admin Officer
- Mr Wayne Walker  
Maintenance Officer
- Mrs Catherine Rosenbaum  
Executive Assistant

**EDUCATION TEAM**

- Dr Sue Page  
Director of Education
- Dr Jeffrey Fuller  
Associate Professor
- Dr Angela Bettess  
GP Academic
- Mr Hudson Birden  
Senior Lecturer, Public Health
- Ms Naree Hancock  
Student Coordinator  
Tweed Valley
- Ms Jane Nichols  
Student Coordinator  
Clarence Valley
- Ms Vanessa O'Rourke  
Student Coordinator  
Richmond Valley
- Dr Carol Stevenson  
GP Lecturer
- Dr John Moran  
Education Consultant/GP Lecturer

- Mr Neil Johnson  
Pharmacy Academic
- Ms Gloria Carter  
Project Officer
- Mrs Suzanne Peasley  
Admin Assistant  
Murwillumbah
- Mr Paul Ishiguchi  
Lecturer (Indigenous Health)

**RESEARCH TEAM**

- Dr Deborah Schofield  
Associate Professor (ARHRC)
- Dr Megan Passey  
Director Clinical & Health Services  
Research
- Dr Geoff Morgan  
Environmental Epidemiologist
- Ms Wendy Hermeston  
Research Fellow (Aboriginal Health)
- Mr Arul Earnest  
Biostatistician (ARHRC)

- Ms Therese Dunn  
Manager Health Information
- Mr Richard Summerhayes  
PhD Scholar
- Ms Deborah Donoghue  
PhD Scholar
- Ms Lisa Barnett  
PhD Scholar
- Ms Deanna Bowen  
Research Clinician
- Mr Michael du Sautoy  
Research Clinician
- Ms Bernadette Basset  
Research Clinician
- Ms Susie Fletcher  
Research Officer (CHIRTS)



The University  
of Sydney