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UDRH Contact Details

University Department of Rural Health

Locked Bag 1372, Launceston, 7250

Telephone: 03 6324 4000

Facsimile: 03 6324 4040

Email: rural.health@utas.edu.au

Website: www.utas.edu.au

An electronic copy can be viewed at:
www.ruralhealth.utas.edu.au/news

UDRH Researchers win prestigious NHMRC grant

UDRH Senior Research Fellows **Dr Peter Orpin** and **Kim Boyer** are members of a team recently awarded a prestigious NHMRC Partnership grant to continue their work in rural healthy ageing.

The research team is led by Prof Judi Walker, former Professor of Rural Health at UTAS, and now Professor of Rural Health at Monash University.

The project, Aged Support and Aged Care: program and policy structures to support ageing well in rural and regional Australia, continues the work undertaken by Judi, Peter, Kim and other team members in their ARC Linkage grant on community engagement for productive ageing.

The project aims to support older Australians to remain fully active, engaged and contributing citizens by broadening the focus of aged care and support systems to better support ageing well. The project will build on the understandings emerging from our earlier work, especially the ARC Linkage study, and seek to translate those understandings into improved and better focussed policies and practice in aged care. The future economic implications of an ageing population has stimulated a growing interest in supporting older people to age 'well' or 'productively' or 'healthily'.

Two researchers from Monash, Prof John Humphreys and Prof Helen Bartlett, join the team for this project.

The project partners are the Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Premier and Cabinet, and the majority of the research will be undertaken in Tasmania.

The project is not only a collaboration between Monash and UTAS and the partner organisations; it will also be a joint effort from UDRH and the Rural Clinical School.

The study will formally commence in March 2012 and run for three years.

Further information is available from either Dr Peter Orpin (Peter.Orpin@utas.edu.au) or Kim Boyer (Kim.Boyer@utas.edu.au)



Kim Boyer & Dr Peter Orpin

Rural Exercise Research collaboration

UDRH Senior Research Fellow **Dr Clarissa Hughes** has teamed up with Dr Verity Cleland from the Menzies Research Institute and colleagues from the Centre for Physical Activity & Nutrition Research at Deakin University in Melbourne, to undertake research investigating ways in which features of the local environment influence the physical activity choices of rural Tasmanians.

According to Dr Hughes, "The research evidence indicates that things like footpaths, cycleways, greenspaces and close access to recreational facilities (such as gyms and sports centres) encourage more physical activity. However, most of the research has been undertaken in cities, so we aren't sure whether the same things apply in rural communities. Given that physical activity levels tend to be lower in rural areas, it's vital that we gain a better understanding of what helps or hinders rural people getting regular exercise".

Two separate qualitative research projects are currently underway. The Women and Rural Areas and Physical Activity (WRAPA) study is funded by the UTAS Institutional Research Grants Scheme, while the Rural Areas, Men and Physical Activity (RAMPA) Study is funded by a Faculty of Health Science Strategic Seed funding grant. Both projects involve adults between the ages of 18 and 55 in the Bothwell/Hamilton/Ouse, Ulverstone/Penguin and Geeveston areas of Tasmania.

WRAPA and RAMPA will improve understanding of what affects physical activity choices, and inform the development of programs to support rural Tasmanians to improve their health and wellbeing by becoming more active.

For more information on either of these projects, contact Dr Clarissa Hughes at Clarissa.Hughes@utas.edu.au or on 03 6226 7797.

Building Research Services for Policy Makers

On October 15 - 16 **Associate Professor Erica Bell** was an invited speaker on health impact and risk assessment at the Creating Healthy Sustainable Conference 2011 in Melbourne.

The conference brought together leading thinkers and researchers from the fields of health and sustainability to discuss future priorities for research. Erica's invitation to speak was a testament to the growing profile of the UDRH's climate change and health program and national interest in its work.

The conference, hosted by the Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute at the University of Melbourne, "was a great place to bring together researchers interested in all aspects of sustainable living and identify linkages and opportunities for collaboration," A/Prof Bell said. "It is encouraging to see how many people really care and are dedicated to working towards more sustainable societies, a critical issue for rural communities."



Dr Erica Bell

Other speakers included; Prof Kate Auty, Victorian Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability, Prof Tony Capon from the Australian National University, Prof Sir Andy Haines from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Prof Sue Atkinson from the UK's Climate and Health Council.

A/Prof Bell said she "was also thrilled to be able to promote the program's other recent achievements at the conference which I'm really proud of; including our recent Tasmanian Government ClimateConnect Community Grant, as well as our book Climate Change and Rural Child Health which brought together 19 papers by 46 authors from across 10 different countries around the world to tackle this difficult topic. People were really receptive!".

"I've come away with a number of new ideas for the UDRH's climate change and health research program and newfound connections with other researchers in the field which might lead to some exciting collaborations in the near future." A/Prof Bell added.

For further information please contact A/Prof Erica Bell, Deputy Director, on Erica.Bell@utas.edu.au or 6226 7377.

Nine new UDRH practitioner-researchers showcase their work at PHCRED Symposium

Nerves were on edge as primary health care practitioners took to the floor to present research findings as part of the 8th and final Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation and Development program (PHCRED) Symposium on the 11th November in Hobart. For many, this was the first opportunity to present in an academic forum to an audience of their early-researcher peers as well as leading primary health care professionals. Nine presenters on the day were associated specifically with the UDRH's PHCRED activities including our researcher development program (RDP), research 'apprenticeships' scheme and mentoring program. The UDRH is proud of the skill and professionalism that they demonstrated in the content and delivery of their presentations – remarkable for beginner researchers.

A/Prof Erica Bell, the UDRH's PHCRED Coordinator, said of the day, "it was clear to me just how important it is to provide research opportunities for our health practitioners. They have unique 'real world' insights which the academic community and ultimately the health of our rural communities can really benefit from. They all did such a wonderful job!"

"The symposium was also a chance to thank those organisations and their people who have supported the PHCRED so strongly in 2011: the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, The Department of Health and Human Services, National Disability Services, and many others. Without them the program simply wouldn't happen."

Rosemary Hetherington, one of the UDRH's research apprentices for 2011, found the Symposium "a fantastic opportunity to hear about current research happening in Tasmanian and a good personal opportunity to develop skills in presenting research!" She also noted that "it is really important to provide a forum to share research into more local issues; otherwise you just don't hear about them."

UDRH led sessions were as follows:

- Lorraine Davies: Plain cigarette packaging: can Australia stay ahead of the pack? Implications for primary health care.
- Nicole Randriamahefa: Aboriginal Women, Pregnancy and Smoking Research Project.
- Penny Allen: How and when do bodily sensations become symptoms requiring GP assessment?
- Jane Brodie: Developing Interprofessional Practice in an Allied Health Outpatient Team.
- Daniel Terry: Asian migrants' lived experience and acculturation to western health care in rural Tasmania.
- Rosemary Hetherington: Data about disabilities.



Rosemary Hetherington presenting at the 2011 PHCRED Symposium in Hobart

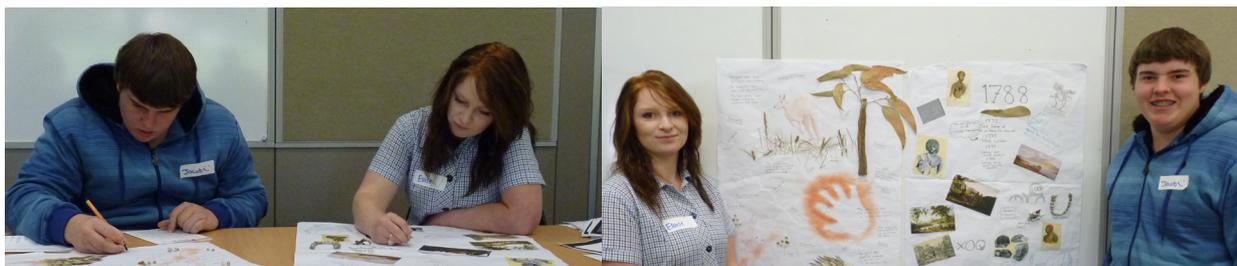
- Nick Towle: Climate change and rural primary healthcare: How research by and for medical practitioners could contribute to regional health impact and risk assessments.
- Annabelle Bond: Can Interprofessional Practice (IPP) improve discharge planning for patients with complex medical histories in the acute setting at the Launceston General Hospital?
- Anna Spinaze: Gender: an elephant in the rural health workforce room?

Many people who have participated in PHCRED activities over the past 8 years have gone on to higher research degrees or other research work. Cecile McKeown, one of the UDRH's RDPs, said that "I really enjoyed being involved with PHCRED and preparing an academic paper for submission with the guidance of senior academics. My experiences with the PHCRED program along with my PhD candidature with the School of Government have provided opportunities to explore different future pathways for academic and professional development."

Although 2011 is the last year in which the PHCRED program will run; the UDRH hopes to continue to provide primary health care practitioners with opportunities to pursue research and contribute their unique skill-set to help better rural health outcomes.

For further information please contact A/Prof Erica Bell, Deputy Director, on Erica.Bell@utas.edu.au or 6226 7377.

Aboriginal Leader Program Success



Participants of the 2011 Aboriginal leader "Bunguna Pathways Program"

Sharon Dennis and Krystelle Jordan from the Cradle Coast Campus had the idea of developing a project that would engage Aboriginal High School students to consider University as part of their educational life journey. They created the "Bunguna Pathways Program", a joint project with UDRH and Riawunna at the University of Tasmania. The word "Bunguna" is identified as a Tasmanian Aboriginal word meaning "leader" and fits the objective of the program, which is to provide information to Aboriginal high school students in year 9 and 10 about the pathways to University study in an engaging, interactive and fun way. An important part of the project was to include Tasmanian Aboriginal information and Aboriginal Community speakers. Aboriginal students from four high schools on the North West Coast participated in Bunguna Pathways. The students created some wonderful posters of information about Tasmanian Aborigines that are currently being displayed in the high schools involved.

Bunguna Pathways began with the identification of difficulties in accessing high school students to provide them with information and support so that University could be included in their future ambitions for higher education. The previous programs; Tunapri Nursing and University campus visits, were not being accessed by Aboriginal students. Programs run by the University generally capture students wanting to visit the campus so there was a duplication of services. However, the programs only captured the high school students who had achieved high grades.

Bunguna Pathways is a way of engaging all Aboriginal students in year 9 and 10 and to offer them a variety of information to demonstrate that University can be achievable.

The negotiation began with the engagement of Penguin High School's Pathway Officer followed by a meeting with teachers and the Principal. From discussion, other Principals were showing interest and other schools were invited to engage with students to ensure good student attendance. Letters were sent to four schools inviting them to participate in the program. The high schools were Penguin, Ulverstone, Parklands and Reece. Other high schools on the North West Coast were not engaged as the capacity of the program was 30 students. The program was run over four half days at fortnightly intervals.

The venue for the program was the Penguin Community Hall which Penguin High School has access to for their programs. The location of the hall is between the Penguin High School and the Penguin Primary School. The hall is large and the room sizes can be changed via a partition wall. An afterhours access card and security pass meant set up could be done over the weekend ready for the delivery of the program on Monday mornings.

Each school had a Pathways Officer who also attended the length of the program offering support with transport and assistance to the students to complete their tasks such as the Aboriginal Time Line Project. Their participation was appreciated and extremely valued, contributing to the success of the program.

The student attendance fluctuated slightly in the first week but was consistent over the next three sessions, with twenty students awarded a certificate. The certificate was only awarded to students who attend at least two of the four sessions. All students who attended the cultural program on the first session received a separate

certificate. There were also some guests from the Education Department who asked to sit in for one of the sessions

The final day of the program had to be slightly altered as it became difficult to organise a display of the students work. After discussion with the students it was decided that their Aboriginal Time Line Project would be displayed in each school that had participated. This was agreed to by each school Principal.

The Aboriginal Time Line posters that the students completed were outstanding and one student continued the idea of the poster in her school art project. This also involved a public display and a presentation which included public speaking. The overall feed back for the project was positive and the Pathway Officers have requested that the project continue next year. A change of the program will need to be considered so that the grade 9 students who participated are not doing the same format as a grade 10 student next year.

Bunguna Pathways was designed to be adaptable so that it can be delivered in any school in Tasmania. However, it was noted that there needs to be more than one school involved in each area to ensure a good level of participation. Transport was the major issue and without the Pathway Officers there would need to be more staff to pick up students. One addition to the program that could be considered is an invitation to parents to also attend.

For further information please contact Sharon Dennis on Sharon.Dennis@utas.edu.au or telephone 6430 4506.

UDRH staff present at National Food Futures Conference

Researcher [Karen Herne](#) and PhD student [Alexandra King](#) presented a paper on older people and food insecurity at the recent Public Health Association of Australian Food Futures Conference in Hobart.

The paper was selected for a workshop presentation from a large number of peer-reviewed abstracts, and gave Karen and Alexandra the opportunity to discuss the work being undertaken on the broad theme of Healthy Eating for Healthy Ageing in rural communities with UDRH senior research fellows Dr Peter Orpin and Kim Boyer. It also gave Alexandra the opportunity to introduce her PhD research topic on household food security among older adults in rural Tasmania, including her methodological framework, proposed methods and draft research questions.

There was a significant level of interest in the paper, which introduced different approaches to the consideration of what food insecurity entails for older people.

For further information, please contact UDRH on telephone 6324 4000.

UDRH wins key climate and health grants

Workshops with local government stakeholders have commenced as part of an exciting project being led by [A/Prof Erica Bell](#). Funded by a \$31,892 grant from the Tasmanian Government through the ClimateConnect Community Grants Program and a UTAS Research Enhancement Grant, this project will ultimately develop and implement an IT-based tool for assessing health-related climate change impacts and risks at the whole-of-community level. It will identify proactive health adaptation and (to a lesser extent) health service mitigation actions that can be taken by communities, local governments, and state and regional policy-makers.

The pilot tool will be a local-government-led health impacts and risks assessment exercise that involves local communities and health stakeholders. The outcomes of the pilot tool will be written online impact statements that identify health impacts to date and foreseeable risks, as well as key health service adaptation and (to a lesser extent) mitigation options

To further this important work A/Prof Erica Bell is working in collaboration with Assoc Prof Paul Turner, School of Computing and Information Systems, and Frank Sainsbury, ITSOL Pty Ltd. Prof Holger Meinke, Head of the School of Agricultural Science and A/Prof Neil Holbrook of the School of Geography and Environmental Studies' are also part of the UTAS Research Enhancement Grant for a further \$25,000 awarded to this program of research.

"Many people don't realise that Tasmanian farmers have led the nation in loss of farm income in recent years, partly because of drought. Climate effects on health are very real to rural Tasmanians and their local governments are in need of practical solutions to cope with the changing environment. They are very supportive of the work that the UDRH is leading on the health impacts of this environmental change. The workshops so far have delivered some fantastic insights which will be of interest nationally and internationally as other local governments struggle with these same challenges," A/Prof Bell said.

This work will go a long way to building the Department's research base in the climate change and health stream and strengthening partnerships with key stakeholders and other world class researchers at UTas. "Local governments around the world need simple IT-based tools with sophisticated capabilities to help their communities face climate change and we're thrilled to be working towards providing such a tool," added A/Prof Bell. "I am delighted to have an opportunity to work across the university with such great researchers to deliver this kind of tool and indebted to the Tasmanian government for giving us this terrific support."

PhD opportunities are available in climate change and health through the UDRH.

For further information please contact A/Prof Erica Bell, Deputy Director, on Erica.Bell@utas.edu.au or 6226 7377.

Rural Health Week 2011 - Collaborating for Rural Health

During the week of November 13 - 20 rural communities across Tasmania came together to celebrate Rural Health Week 2011. Rural Health Week (RHW) is a major State-wide health promotion activity which began in 2007 through a partnership between the UDRH and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The convening agencies have partnered with the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) and the Department of Education (DoE) to stage this third Rural Health Week event.

Held every two years, the event is designed to provide a window of opportunity for rural communities to come together to address local health issues through innovative health promotion activities. RHW highlights the importance of a preventative approach to health and wellbeing.

With the support of the DHHS and the DoHA, regional planning groups are able to access seeding grants to assist with the planning and delivery of activities within their communities. Since the first event in 2007 funding for regional planning has increased enabling more events to be staged across the State. During this year's RHW seeding grants were made available to nineteen regional planning groups with over 40 separate events staged during the week. The diversity of events reflected the different ways in which communities interpreted health and wellbeing. For example in the central highlands government, non-government and community organised a school garden and a sustainable living expo. In Kentish the local regional planning group organised a "big day out under the Mountain" event which included a range of family friendly healthy activities such as a circus performance. Some regional planning groups opted to stage events that addressed topical issues, such as the successful 'Bridges out of poverty' workshop staged in Burnie, which attracted over 100 delegates.

A new feature of RHW 2011 was the staging of the RHW workshop series. Ms Sandra Murray, Lecturer at the School of Human Life Sciences presented two community workshops on Food Security.

As with previous RHW events the week culminates with the staging of the Rural Health Week Awards. This year's award ceremony was staged at the Boathouse in Launceston. The Minister of Health presented the awards and prizes to finalists in each of the three categories. Congratulations must be extended to all nominees including the following finalists and their respective nominators;

The Rural Health Worker Award co-winners Mr Wayne Turale, Rural Alive and Well Inc and Helen Jappe, Day Centre Coordinator, Central Highlands Community Health Centre; Runner-up Libby Beyerle, Social Worker from the Meander Valley;

The Rural Health Community Award winner Diane Swan, Midlands Initiative for Local Enterprise; Runner-up Ms Dianne Coon and Lynden Russell; and

The Rural Health Group Award winner Rural Alive and Well (RAW) Outreach Team.

These local champions were part of the 14 individuals and groups nominated by their respective colleagues and friends in recognition of their significant contribution to enhancing the health and wellbeing of rural and regional Tasmanians.



Award recipients (Clockwise from left) - Wayne Turale, Ms Jappe (on behalf of Helen Jappe), Libby Beyerle, Diane Swan, Dianne Coon, Lynden Russell and Rural Alive & Well (RAW) Outreach Team representative. Also pictured is Minister for Health, Michelle O'Byrne and Federal Member for Bass, Geoff Lyon.

Life Member Award for contribution to suicide prevention



Suicide Prevention Australia (SPA) recognised the service of Dr Martin Harris at a recent ceremony by presenting him with Life Membership to their organisation. Dr Harris has served as a Board member since 2002, both as a State representative and independent board member. He has been instrumental in the development of SPA as a peak body for suicide prevention and has contributed more directly through leadership in the communications portfolio. Dr Harris' most indelible legacy will be the National LiFE Awards. Together with Brad Farmer and Prof Des Graham, Dr Harris conceived and designed the awards to celebrate the good work that is provided to the community in suicide prevention across a range of activities. Dr Harris has chaired the LiFE Award committee since its inception. SPA continues to contribute to suicide prevention in a broad spectrum of activities (for more information see: <http://www.suicidepreventionaust.org/>)

Dr Harris continues to carry out leading Mental Health research with the UDRH and can be contacted on email Martin.Harris@utas.edu.au or telephone 6324 4029.

Dr Martin Harris delivering his acceptance speech at the Suicide Prevention Australia award ceremony

UDRH research leads to national award

Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Award has been awarded to a community project led by The Salvation Army for which UDRH Deputy Director **A/Prof Erica Bell** provided the foundational research. The annual Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards are sponsored by the heads of Australian governments and members of the Ministerial Council for Police and Emergency Management- Police as a joint Australian Government, state and territory initiative. This is the 2nd award for this innovative project which also received a Tasmanian Child Protection award in 2010 from Tasmania's Department of Justice.

The research done by A/Prof Bell, and subsequently published in international journals, showed exposure to violence in the early years can have severe effects on many aspects of a child's development and made a number of key recommendations for community-based responses. This informed the evidence base for Swinburne University's Dr Angela Spinney to design the "Safe from the Start" training program and resource kit providing therapeutic ways of working with young children aged 0-5 who have been affected by family violence. This intervention was subsequently evaluated by A/Professor Bell and Dr John Guenther in ways that further informed development of the training program and resource kit.

better understand how children experience violence and listen to the voices of children in a positive way. There is much we can do to improve the future of such children and break the cycle of disadvantage."

The Salvation Army's Development and Research Manager, Ms Nell Kuilenberg explained that "the project aims to make a positive difference to the effects of witnessing domestic violence in children aged 0-5 years. It educates and trains workers in children's and family services to better understand how children experience violence and listen to the voices of children in a positive way. There is much we can do to improve the future of such children and break the cycle of disadvantage."

Over 700 practitioners in early childhood services across Australia and internationally have been trained in use of this innovative Tasmanian intervention.

Funded by the Commonwealth Office for Women and Tasmanian Early Years Foundation, the action research project was developed in partnership with the two universities (UTAS & Swinburne). The Train the Trainer program has been conducted in all states and resource kits have been distributed nationally and overseas. The project has been presented at national conferences and an Aboriginal and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) project is being developed.

For further information please contact A/Prof Erica Bell, Deputy Director, on Erica.Bell@utas.edu.au or 6226 7377.



Welcome to new receptionist

UDRH welcomes **Jade Robinson** to our professional staff team.

Jade has taken on the reception and administration tasks of the organisation as well as providing executive services to our Community Health and Development area.

Jade works five days a week and is proving to be a very welcome addition to our team.

UTAS competitive grant success

Judy Spencer & **Dr Jessica Woodroffe** have been successful in receiving a grant through the UTAS Research Enhancement Grant Scheme (REGS).

The project "Exploring Interprofessional Practice (IPP) and learning (IPL) in Rural Clinical Settings" aims to investigate and identify enabling factors that promote IPP and IPL and extend our knowledge of how and the conditions under which IPP and IPL occurs in rural clinical settings. A further aim of the project is to develop strategies to promote IPP and IPL to students from a variety of health professional courses who are on clinical placement in rural hospitals. Two rural Tasmanian hospital sites will be selected for this pilot study. Participants will include clinicians, managers, preceptors and students representing a range of health care professions at each study site. The study will employ a mixed methods approach, including semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and the use of critical incident techniques and application of an "IPP readiness" checklist. Please contact Judy Spencer on email J.Spencer@utas.edu.au or telephone 6324 4064 for further information about this project.



Dr Woodroffe has also been successful in obtaining funding under UTAS 2011 Community Engagement grant scheme. Together with UDRH's **Dr Quynh Le**, Dr Woodroffe's project titled "Development and delivery of a Pilot Health Education Literacy Program for Older Tasmanians" will look at literacy needs of an older community.

The grant, for the amount of \$7,397, impressed the selection committee because of its strong community impact in a very competitive round. Congratulations to Dr Woodroffe on this wonderful achievement.

For further information about this grant, contact either Dr Woodroffe on email Jessica.Woodroffe@utas.edu.au; telephone 6324 4020 or Dr Le on email Quynh.Le@utas.edu.au; telephone 6324



Location of UDRH's teaching sites across Tasmania

Teaching site roadshow

UDRH Director **Associate Professor Tony Barnett** and **Judy Spencer** visited a number of Rural Health Teaching Sites (RHTS) over the past 4 months. These visits have included Campbelltown, Oatlands, Queenstown, Swansea, St Mary's, Smithton, Dover and Nubeena with plans to visit the remaining sites by the end of the year.

The purpose of these visits is to meet managers and relevant staff face-to-face to share information on the role of UDRH in providing support for student placements at RHTS; to provide an overview of current UDRH projects, research and educational activities; to discuss potential workforce continuing professional development and support needs as well as explore areas for potential future collaborative research; and to deliver and install new computers at a number of sites.

These visits have also enabled us to gain a better understanding of specific issues relevant to each site.

For further information about UDRH's network of RHTS please contact Judy Spencer on telephone 03 6324 4064 or email J.Spencer@utas.edu.au

Clinical placement partnership welcomed

The Tasmanian Clinical Placement Partnership Project (TCPPP) sits under the umbrella of Partners in Health which is an initiative of the Council of Australian Governments (CoAG). It was designed to meet the future challenges of providing a health workforce that meets the needs of the Australian Community. The TCPPP includes representatives from the disciplines of Nursing, Medicine, Psychology, Pharmacy and Physiotherapy. The goals of the project are to work together to: develop an educated and skilled health workforce; strengthen relationships between UTAS, DHHS, Dept of Education, NGOs, and private providers including privately practicing psychologists; design a clinical partnership model for Tasmanian placements; expand clinical placements; develop clinical supervision capacity and; build and strengthen networks with, and value

add to rural and remote communities. The TCPPP team from the School of Psychology at UTAS includes Roseanne Brumby, Academic Clinical Leader, Tracey Dean, Academic Clinician (South) and Samantha Splatt, Academic Clinician (North). A major component of this work is the development and implementation of a survey of current psychologists to gather information on what their experiences of conducting placements has been, if they would like to conduct placements and in what ways the University may be able to help them. An example of some of the other work being undertaken within the scope of this project, is a beginning clinical psychology practitioners group, which meets on a fortnightly basis to discuss clinical issues, review current best practice and support the students in providing services to clients that

may not have been able to access such specialist services. The role also aims to support the psychologists who provide the placements and organisations who generously provide placement opportunities. If you would like any further information, please contact us on the following contact details:

Roseanne Brumby, Academic Clinical Leader (Mon-Tues & every second Friday) at roseanne.brumby@utas.edu.au;

Tracey Dean, Academic Clinician-South (Mondays) on tracey.dean@utas.edu.au or 0438 880 773; and

Samantha Splatt, Academic Clinician - North (Fridays) on samantha.splatt@utas.edu.au or 0419 319 370

Write Up Scholarships awarded

A new initiative has just been introduced in the UDRH Graduate Research program to promote research productivity to graduate research students after they have submitted their theses and are waiting for the examination results. The UDRH provides a number of **Write-up Scholarships** every year which aims to support:

- Timely completion of domestic and international graduate research by funding candidates who have submitted theses for examination, or during the writing up of revisions, prior to the submission of their final bound theses to a Higher Degree in Research (HDR) Committee.

- Preparation and submission of refereed publications (minimum of 2 outputs) by domestic and international postgraduate research students after the submission of their thesis for external examination.

Funding will support up to a three month period of full-time writing. These scholarships may be tax exempted for full time enrolled students.

This year, the UDRH awarded two Write-up Scholarships to PhD students Chona Hannah and Maria Yue. They have submitted their theses recently.

The write-up scholarship provides students financial support to write research articles for publication in academic journals. The scholarship enables them to focus on publication output based on their research insights and findings. Their application includes information about their write-up publication plan, identified topics and expected results. We would like to congratulate Chona and Maria and look forward to another exciting and creative part of their productive research journey.

For further information about the scholarships please contact Dr Quynh Le on email Quynh.Le@utas.edu.au or telephone 6324 4053.

Successful statewide Seminar Series

Once again, UDRH held a number of state wide seminars to support rural health professionals and local practitioners. Workshops were well attended in all three locations (Launceston, Burnie and Hobart). The UDRH Seminar Series utilises, and is supported through, the Tasmanian Governments' Department of Health and Human Services Telehealth (video-conference) network. Over the last few months, the following workshops were held:

- "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly", presented by Prof Timothy Skinner from the University's Rural Clinical School on 17 August and attended by 39 people.

- "Research as a Journey", presented by UDRH's **Dr Peter Orpin** on 18 August and attended by 44 health professionals.

- "Tasmanian Food Access Research Coalition Project" presented on 19 October by **Stuart Auckland** from the UDRH and UTAS's Sandra Murray. This workshop was attended by 28 people.

- Associate Professor **Erica Bell** presented a workshop on "Climate Change & Rural Health" on 16 November and attracted 29 attendees.

The seminar series will be offered again in 2012 and further details about the series and workshops will be available soon via our website at <http://www.ruralhealth.utas.edu.au/>

2011 Rural Health Graduate Research Symposium: A Time to Think and a Time to Feel!

Every year at the end of spring and the arrival of summer, young flowers are competing to show their fragrance to the land, to win the hearts and minds of humanity. This year is no exception. However, the only treasured exception is our rural health graduate research symposium, which not only provided an interactive and dynamic research forum for students, supervisors and interested others to share their views, but also created a wonderful and harmonious social atmosphere of mutual understanding and sharing!

The symposium was well attended, approximately 51 participants, including graduate research students, supervisors, staff, colleagues from the University Graduate Research Office, Honorary guests and friends of the UDRH and the Rural Clinical School. We were particularly encouraged by the presence of the Professor Raymond Playford, Dean of Health Science.

The symposium had a number of distinctive features:

- Informal and interactive program: The program was conducted in an informal and interactive format. Students shared their work in progress, reflecting on their research journeys. Supervisors conducted informal and informative sessions helping students in research development and research writing. Associate Professor Tony Barnett in his keynote speech informed the participants of useful statistical data and trends on rural health which open insightful windows for current and future research. Associate Professor Erica Bell gave a very informative and inspiring practical workshop on thesis writing and it was greatly appreciated by our graduate research students.

- Student-centredness: As the symposium was primarily for students, they were encouraged to take an active role in program organisation and social interaction. Many thanks to our students, particularly to Daniel, Ha, Chona and Maria, who did a great job behind the scene and on the stage!

- Multicultural fragrance: Research is too serious to be taken seriously. It is important to have thoughts and feelings, a source of creativity, in a research discourse. While the symposium day was full of intellectual discussions to satisfy the mind, the symposium night was for the heart to be filled with joy and happiness, particularly with multicultural fragrance. Harmoniously and graciously on the stage, we were entertained with multicultural songs and national traditional attire from Vietnam, Saudi Arabia, China, The Philippines, Korea, Malaysia, South Africa, USA and other Western fashions.

The symposium has gone, but its intellectual and emotional impacts are still here in the minds and the hearts of the participants. We look forward to the next Rural Health Symposium.

For further information please contact our Graduate Research Co-ordinator [Dr Quynh Le](mailto:Dr.Quynh.Le@utas.edu.au) on email Quynh.Le@utas.edu.au or telephone



Participants of the 2011 Graduate Research Symposium, from top, Graduate Research student Thuy Le, Dean of the Faculty of Health Science Professor Raymond Playford and Graduate Research Co-ordinator Dr Quynh Le, UDRH Director Tony Barnett presenting; UDRH supervisors Dr Peter Orpin, Dr Jess Woodroffe, Kim Boyer and UDRH Executive Officer Ms Lindie Lupo; UDRH graduate research students Ha Hoang, Maria Yue, Frances Fan and Thuy Le.



Pharmacy News

Recently, funding was changed for the four Rural Pharmacy Workforce Programs, namely the Rural Pharmacy Continuing Professional Education Allowance (CPD), the Rural Pharmacy Scholarship Scheme, the Intern Incentive Allowance for Rural Pharmacies (formerly the Rural Pharmacists Pre-registration Incentive Allowance) and the Rural Pharmacy Student Placement Allowance.

These changes will have some effect on funding pharmacy student placements in the Launceston and Devonport/Latrobe areas and hospital placements for undergraduate students in Hobart, Launceston, Latrobe and Burnie. Funding cuts will present challenges in providing cost effective face-to-face professional development opportunities for rural pharmacists and therefore more on-line options will be preferred.

In mid-October applications were sought for funding under the Commonwealth's Rural Pharmacy Liaison Officer Program. This funding is aimed at providing local strategies to support practicing Tasmanian rural community pharmacists and pharmacy students who undertake placements in rural and remote areas of Tasmania. The outcome of our submission will be known very shortly and will determine the program's future into 2012.



UDRH Pharmacy Academic,
Helen Howarth

Statewide Mental Health specialist workshop

Every clinician regularly encounters patients who present with an array of complex issues including not only the initial presenting symptoms, but also comorbid difficulties such as substance abuse, mood disorders and relationship problems, as well as an often slowly emerging history of traumatic experiences and/or early attachment wounds. There are now numerous theoretical and associated treatment models available to assist with treatment planning but it can be confusing and daunting when deciding which models to follow and how to integrate different models and techniques into a coherent treatment approach. Furthermore, complex clients present with constantly shifting inner and external needs and clinicians need to be able to draw flexibly from a range of theoretical models and treatment techniques in order to respond to these shifts in an attuned but controlled manner.

During November a series of workshops in Burnie and Launceston were presented by leading clinical neuropsychologist, Dr Jan Ewing. Dr Ewing holds a PhD in clinical neuropsychology and an M.A. in clinical psychology. She is a member of the Australian Psychological Society, a founding member of the APS College of Clinical Neuropsychologists (CCN), a member of the APS College of Clinical



Dr Jan Ewing

Psychologists (CCP), the International Neuropsychological Society (INS), the International Society of the Study of Dissociative Disorders (ISDD), the Australian Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ASSTS), the Cnaan Institute, associate member of the Australian Society for Hypnosis (ASH), Chair of the Publication Committee of Brain Impairment and Fellow of the Australian Society for the Study of Brain Impairment (ASSBI).

Dr Ewing's presentation integrated a number of theoretical models that can assist with case formulation that underpins treatment approaches, including neurobiological, attachment, trauma and structural dissociation models, as well as discussion around

concepts and techniques that are useful. The workshops also included an overview of the treatment models and strategies that are appropriate at different phases of treatment and for different treatment goals and examples of specific techniques such as arousal and affect regulation, mindfulness-based core process therapy, EMDR, hypnosis and guided imagery were given.

The workshop provided participants with:

- An understanding of advantages of taking a flexible approach to the treatment process without losing a theory- and evidence-based approach.
- A deeper understanding of the theoretical and treatment models from which their techniques are drawn.
- Greater confidence in setting short term and longer term goals and prioritisation of treatment targets.
- An increased confidence about the timing and appropriateness of treatment strategies within the treatment process.
- An expanded range of clinical tools for use with their clients.

For further information about Dr Ewing's workshop, please contact **Dr Martin Harris** on email Martin.Harris@utas.edu.au or telephone 6324 4029.

From the Director's desk



A/Prof Tony Barnett

At this time of the year, we reflect on activities over the past 12 months and take stock before launching into the New Year. This Bulletin outlines some of the achievements and range of activities undertaken by staff over the last six months. It is wonderful to see the national and international recognition given to **Associate Professor Erica Bell** for some of her work funded through the Salvation Army and also, the lifetime award bestowed upon **Dr Martin Harris** for his extensive work in suicide prevention.

We have been thrilled with the success of **Dr Peter Orpin** and **Kim Boyer** who, in collaboration with Monash University, were awarded a highly prestigious partnership grant from the NH&MRC for policy work that will build upon findings from their earlier ARC-funded research on healthy ageing here in Tasmania. As detailed in this Bulletin, a number of other staff have also been very successful in attracting competitive grants to help progress the rural health agenda and I congratulate them all.

We congratulate those research students who have recently submitted their work for examination and look forward to them graduating at some time in the New Year. A number of them will progress to publish and disseminate their work with support from the newly introduced "write-up" (publication) scholarship scheme – a great opportunity for our research students to crown all their hard work and report their findings to the broader community.

The Department has farewelled **Lyell Wilson**, **Karen Herne** and the PHC RED program. We have also said farewell to **Jo Osborne**, who whilst not a staff member

with the UDRH, has co-located with us in our Launceston office for many years and has contributed greatly to the development of postgraduate programs across the Faculty. Jo has accepted a position in the UTAS Learning and Teaching unit. We are very pleased to welcome **Jade Robertson** to the team in the reception/administration area. Part of Jade's role will be to support staff across the community health and development area.

Whilst we have all been delighted that a Deed of Agreement and Schedule has been signed by UTAS and DoHA for a further 3-year funding cycle for our department, we are still awaiting advice on our submission to deliver support and services through the new Rural Pharmacy Liaison Officer (RPLO) program next year. This program replaces the PAUDRH (Pharmacy) program and is now subject to a competitive tender process.

The roll-out of various health care reform initiatives has generated much interest and discussion for the state. Decisions have been made that Tasmania will have three regional hospital networks ("Tasmanian Health Organisations") and one Medicare Local (though with three branches). Such arrangements have the potential to offer many benefits (such a greater say by locals in health care decision-making) though our concern is to ensure that smaller rural communities have input into the governance of these organisations and that their voice is not lost with these new arrangements.

The recent establishment of the "Tasmanian Clinical Education Network" to build capacity for the placement of health care student's (doctors, nurses, allied health professionals) marks an important recognition of the need to better plan, coordinate and support students undergoing clinical placements across the state. It also recognises that students come from many other universities and RTOs apart from UTAS and are placed in both the public and private sector for valuable "hands-on" clinical experience. Notwithstanding the many benefits of simulated training in health professional courses, the practice environment remains a cornerstone to producing safe, competent and skilled practitioners who are able to deliver quality care. From a UDRH perspective, this new network (the TCEN) will

experience a placement in rural health care facilities and consider a career in rural health.

Over the last few months, it has been my pleasure to represent the ARHEN Board at an Indigenous Staff Network (ISN) meeting held in Adelaide. The ISN invites Aboriginal staff from all 11 UDRHs to discuss issues, challenges and opportunities to support and promote the health of Indigenous communities. It was also a pleasure to meet and share some thoughts with the "Advisory Panel on the Economic Potential of Senior Australians" with **Dr Peter Orpin** and Prof James Vickers. Given the aging of our population, especially in rural and regional areas, critical to ageing well (and "productively") is the health of older persons. Planning and making provision for the health needs of older persons in rural areas must be a priority for all governments.

Rural Health Week was a highlight in November with many worthwhile projects and highly deserving award winners. The RHW program has been a stand-out success for the Department and we believe it has made a difference to many rural communities across the State. Given that this is the third time this program has been conducted (2007, 2009, 2011), the RHW team has engaged a systematic program of research to investigate the sustainability and longer term impact of these (health-related) projects and activities in each community. This work will contribute to our understanding of community development and how projects can engage with the broader community for long term benefit.

As we head rapidly toward the festive season, I would like to thank each and every member of staff at the UDRH for their work and many achievements over the last 12 months and also extend my thanks to our supporters and partners who have all been critical to this effort. I wish you, your family and friends a happy and safe Christmas.

Tony

