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From the Director's Desk

The August issue of the Rural Health Bulletin highlights some of the many excellent things happening at the University Department of Rural Health (UDRH).

I am delighted to announce that Theme Leaders and Coordinators have been appointed to progress the University Department of Rural Health's strategic direction of integrated and collaborative rural health within the Faculty of Health Science's Academic Rural Health Portfolio. More detail on these positions is given on page two. This strategic direction will be a focus for research and education and support activities.

In the pages that follow you will read about research into a range of topics relevant to rural health including skill shortages in health and building the capacity of health professionals to work across the divide between hospitals and community care provided by GPs.

Though we sometimes bemoan the fact that we live in a 'measurement culture' it is nice to see growth reflected quantitatively in areas that UDRH has identified as 'high priority' – research grant activity and consultancies. More detail on progress in these fields is given on page two.

Our growing graduate research student body met at the recent Research School to exchange reports of their research. It is worth noting that many of these graduate research students are practicing clinicians, who are combining a busy professional and family life with study. I was delighted to listen to their quality presentations on subjects such as rural radiography, volunteering and rural health education of professionals.

International recognition of work through publication in high status journals is a significant benchmark for academic institutions. The high standing of the UDRH's research on assessment for rural practice and self-management of chronic conditions has been recognised in this way. The appointment of distinguished rural sociology researcher Associate Professor Joan Abbott-Chapman as Honorary Fellow further strengthens our research capacity.

UDRH recognises that keeping up to date is important for health professionals, and more challenging for those practicing outside the cities. We are working



Associate Professor Sue Kilpatrick

Courtesy of The Examiner

with a range of providers and organisers of rural health training events to put together a Website which will list seminars, workshops and courses of interest to rural health professionals. The site will also help organisers to avoid clashes of event dates. Watch out for publicity about this site.

The UDRH's professional development and Primary Health Care – Research, Evaluation and Development workshop series gives Tasmanian rural health professionals the chance to develop their skills and puts them in touch with the latest research and its application. There has been excellent, positive feedback from workshop attendees.

Attracting people to rural health careers is an important part of the UDRH's activities. Rural Health Careers Camps for year 10 students have been more popular than ever this year, with many more applicants than places.

On the teaching and learning front we have run an inter-professional rural placement program in the Tamar Valley, and contributed to the new medical curriculum and the Australian Medical Council's review visit.

The UDRH values and seeks out opportunities to work with our many stakeholder groups. I draw your attention to articles on the recently completed Falls Prevention Project, which was collaboration with the state and Australian health departments and the Tasmanian Divisions of General Practice, our growing partnership with the Department of Health and Human Service's Aged, Rural and Community Health section, and the University Community Place and Change seminar on priority research issues for Rural Tasmania.

I commend the contents of the August Rural Health Bulletin to you and trust that you will read the articles that follow with interest.

Sue Kilpatrick
 Associate Professor and Director

New Positions and Responsibilities Announced

Director Sue Kilpatrick announced the Theme Leaders and Coordinators who have been appointed to progress the University Department of Rural Health's strategic direction of integrated and collaborative rural health.

The Theme Leaders are:

Rural Workforce:

Dr Rosalind Bull

Community Health and Wellbeing:

Stuart Auckland

Health Service Systems:

Dr Erica Bell

The Coordinators are:

Graduate Research:

Dr Rosalind Bull

Academic Research:

Dr Erica Bell; Deputy, Dr Quynh Le

Graduate Coursework:

Sue Whetton

Professional Development and Community Education:

Susan Rasmussen, who will continue to coordinate this area, working with the Theme Leaders.



Dr Rosalind Bull



Dr Quynh Le



Stuart Auckland



Sue Whetton



Dr Erica Bell



Susan Rasmussen

Surge in Research Grants, Consultancies in 2005

Jason Fello, UDRH Executive Officer, has prepared a report on 'Research Management Activity for Rural Health'. It relates to the period from January 2004 to July 2005 and shows a significant increase in activity in the priority areas of research and consultancy identified by Associate Professor Sue Kilpatrick when she arrived at UDRH in early 2005.

'During the period January-July 2005 UDRH staff submitted five grant applications, as compared to four for the whole of 2004,' said Jason.

'The UDRH has increased its research grant funding four-fold when compared to 2004, with six months still remaining of the reporting year!' he added.

In 2004 two consultancy contracts were secured, and in 2005 (to date) five have been signed. The value of consultancies for 2004 was \$35,000 as compared to \$249,000 for the first part of 2005.



Jason Fello

An Overview from the Professor of Rural Health Judi Walker

Enhancing Excellence in Academic Rural Health

A focus on rural health

The Faculty of Health Science at the University of Tasmania has always had a strong focus on rural health, in recognition of the particular needs of the Tasmanian population. We have the greatest proportion of our population living outside the capital city, in rural and regional settings, of any Australian State or Territory; and Tasmania has indices of health, social disadvantage, and health service provision, which make our population amongst the most disadvantaged in Australia.

Tasmania provides an excellent environment for learning, teaching, research and engagement for rural health because it has areas within the State which model the characteristics of regional, rural and remote Australia; it is compact providing relative ease of access to its rural and remote areas; and it has a coherent Statewide approach to the planning and management of rural health care delivery and rural professional education and research.

Rural health education and support Programs

Over the past ten years the University has been very successful in attracting major funding for rural health academic initiatives, including three major Programs funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Health and Ageing. These are:

- The Rural Undergraduate Support and Coordination (**RUSC**) Program – since 1994/5
- The University Department of Rural Health (**UDRH**) Program – since 1997
- The Rural Clinical School (**RCS**) Program – since 2001/2

Roles of the three Programs

Distinguishing between and working out how the three Programs relate can be confusing for people both within and external to the University.

Initially, each Program was implemented primarily to encourage students undertaking studies in health disciplines to consider a career in rural practice. However, the scope

of all three Programs is now much wider and at the University of Tasmania the RCS, RUSC and UDRH Programs have different but complementary roles.

The broad objective of the **RUSC** Program is to assist efforts to increase the number of medical graduates adopting a career in rural practice with emphasis on the selection of higher numbers of students with rural origin for entry into medical school, increased exposure to rural medicine during the early years of the medical course and enhanced support for students and rural educators. It has been pivotal in the development of the new MBBS course.

The **UDRH** has responsibility to develop a focused statewide multidisciplinary network of rural health education, support and research programs and career development opportunities. There is a focus on innovation in education, research and service development through collaborations. In Tasmania the UDRH Program is underpinned by a network of Rural Health Teaching Sites, which provide the Faculty's Schools with opportunities for short term rural experiences for undergraduates.

Both the **RUSC** and the **UDRH** Programs have an emphasis on Indigenous health aimed at both increasing the numbers of Indigenous Australian doctors and health care workers and ensuring that Indigenous issues are appropriately incorporated into the delivery of university health professional education and research.

The **RCS** has responsibility for long-term rural clinical education, vertically integrated with postgraduate and vocational training. The RCS is one of three clinical schools at the University and serves the rural and remote north west region of Tasmania. Its primary focus is delivery of the last two clinical undergraduate years of the University's MBBS course to at least 25% of the medical student intake, with an ongoing commitment to pharmacy, nursing and allied health undergraduate education.

A move towards better integration and management

In July 2003, following consultation with the Department of Health and Ageing, the Faculty created an academic rural health portfolio to provide a focus for its rural health education, health professional support and research activities. This is



Professor Judi Walker

encouraging better integration between the three Programs and with Schools-based teaching, learning and research core business.

Recently, the Australian Government reviewed all three Programs and in its 2004 May budget committed to a further four year funding cycle. Currently the Department of Health and Ageing is consulting with Universities to identify linkages, overlaps and gaps across rural health education programs. This process is based on a need for more effective outcomes from these Programs through an integrated approach to their management and administration. An overarching, integrated Funding Agreement between the Australian Government and the University of Tasmania is being developed, to take effect from 1 January 2006.

At our University, each of the three Programs now has a Management Group and from this month (August 2005) the Program Heads will meet regularly as an Executive, with representation on the Faculty Executive Committee. There is already an overarching Academic Rural Health Advisory Group, which represents appropriate University, professional and community interests and provides strategic advice and policy direction.

We have come a long way in academic rural health since the inception of the original RUSC Program at the University of Tasmania in 1994/5. With a new overarching Funding Agreement, a new medical undergraduate medical course, extensions to the RHTS network, and dedicated RCS facilities at Burnie and LaTrobe, the opportunity to enhance excellence in academic rural health in Tasmania could not be better.

**Professor Judi Walker
Inaugural Professor of Rural Health
University of Tasmania**

Continued Page 4

An Overview from the Professor of Rural Health, Judi Walker *Continued from Page 3*

Accolades for the School of Medicine and the Rural Clinical School

The Preliminary Statement of Findings of the accreditation of the University of Tasmania's new five- year undergraduate medical course and re-accreditation of the current six-year course presented a very positive view of the School of Medicine, the current course and the new curriculum. The Australian Medical Council's Accreditation Visit Team regarded a number of aspects of the new curriculum as being at the "cutting edge" internationally. Also, the commitment and enthusiasm of staff across the School was noted on a number of occasions.

Members of the Accreditation Team spent a day at the Rural Clinical School visiting the North West Regional Hospital (Burnie and Mersey sites), the North West Private Hospital and two rural General Practice teaching sites.

In their preliminary report, the Team made a number of commendations including the prominence of behavioural and social sciences and medical ethics in the new course. They

commented in particular on the effective use of interactions with social workers at the Rural Clinical School to assist medical students to develop a holistic approach to patient care. They noted opportunities for interprofessional learning at the Rural Clinical School and the Launceston Clinical School as being of particular importance for preparing doctors for the future team-centred health workforce. They commended the Rural Clinical School for its links with pre-vocational training where the Associate Head is also the Director of Clinical Training for junior doctors and the Medical Education Officer is a conjoint position with the Postgraduate Medical Institute Tasmania, which is responsible for intern training. These appointments were commended for helping to integrate undergraduate and junior doctor education.

The Report stated that the strong endorsement and support of the course by clinicians at the Rural Clinical School and the Launceston Clinical

School was "particularly noteworthy" and noted the progress of building works for the new Rural Clinical School at Burnie.

In a letter to all Medical School staff and students, the Dean thanked and congratulated all involved in what was considered to be an outstanding and sustained effort to improve the current course and develop the new curriculum. While the University will not know the final recommendations from the Australian Medical Council for some time, these findings to date do present as very positive outlook.

Concurrently, a proposal for the new MBBS course has been endorsed by Academic Senate and approved by University Council.

The Rural Clinical School's new teaching, research and administration facility at Burnie is scheduled for occupancy in early October and refurbishment of space at Latrobe should be completed at the same time.



Classrooms with a million dollar view - the Rural Clinical School's new teaching facility at Burnie, with Bass Strait at right



The north face of the Rural Clinical Schools faculty, scheduled for occupancy in October, 2005

Graduate Research Grabs the Limelight

The Hobart Function and Conference Centre on Elizabeth St Pier provided a stimulating backdrop for the first Graduate Research School for 2005.

Convened by Graduate Research Coordinator Dr Rosalind Bull, with support from Dr Peter Orpin, the two day workshop brought together 20 research students and supervisors for a series of student presentations, project 'snapshots', a Master Class delivered by Professor of Rural Health, Judi Walker and a staff development session for research supervisors presented by Dean of Graduate Research, Professor Carey Denholm.

Student presentations covered a range of topics under the broad aegis of academic rural health. Topics addressed at some length included:

- volunteering in health services;
- rural community development: discourses, processes and their impact upon community members;
- a critical examination of rural health education in Tasmania as heard through undergraduate medical, pharmacy and nursing students' voice during rural placement;
- resilience in geographically dislocating transitions as seen in young men;
- the policy, practice and politics of community participation in health services; and
- what is reality? – multidisciplinary team practice in rural and remote Australia.

These topics were presented as 'snapshots' by commencing graduate research students:

- rural radiography: life in a small town;
- aggression, dysfunction and mobility in rural youth;
- the plight of the medical whistle blower;
- an expanded scope of practice for rural ambulance professionals; and
- generic skills of volunteering to meet the multi-dimensional needs of a community.

Students and supervisors alike relished the opportunity to exchange ideas in a nurturing yet challenging environment. In particular students found it worthwhile to examine these basic questions posed by Professor Walker in her Master Class:

- what do we mean by rural and remote?
- what are the major health challenges?
- what is rural health research and where does it fit into the research continuum and the research categories?
- what does your research project contribute to rural health?

A plenary session provided an opportunity to discuss the areas in which the Research School had succeeded and the ways in which it could be improved. In particular participants felt that:

- opportunities to gather in an informal collegial way were much enjoyed and 'to be encouraged';
- there could be more of a focus on 'big picture' issues such as 'branding' and 'strategic alliances' as they apply to research;



The scene outside the Graduate Research School venue on the Elizabeth Street Pier

- outside speakers were seen as a good way of getting a broader perspective;
- there is a need for both academic and peer feedback on student presentations;
- interdisciplinary and interdepartmental forums were suggested for future Research Schools;
- though a flexible approach to graduate research study is acknowledged the need to meet a presentation deadline was seen as 'healthy' and 'a good discipline';
- the sustaining of a culture of nurturing and 'safety' at Research Schools was seen as vital to their continued success.



Dr Peter Orpin, Program Head, Research and Evaluation (standing), assists Peter Morgan, Masters By Research Student with his presentation

Research Students Supported by Seminar Program



Dr Rosalind Bull

The UDRH recognises the need to support graduate research students as they undertake the difficult yet rewarding journey towards a higher degree. Breaking down feelings of isolation and inadequacy, and fostering a sense of collegiality and mutual support are seen by Coordinator Dr Rosalind Bull as vital elements of the Graduate Research program.

'We have a robust support program with monthly student activities and twice yearly research retreats or schools. Additional sessions are arranged as different needs emerge,' said Dr Bull.

In mid April Associate Professor Sue Kilpatrick delivered a session on the topic 'Using theory as a framework for research.' The group was augmented by a number of Dr Kilpatrick's co-supervised students from the School of Education.

The late April session was on the subject of 'Writing Skills' and was delivered in Launceston by Margaret Falk, an experienced freelance editor.

In May Dr Tania Winzenberg and Dr Emily Hansen presented on the subject of 'Data Handling- the key principles of data handling; using quantitative and qualitative data for maximum impact'. UDRH Graduate Research students were joined by Honours students from the School of Nursing and Midwifery for this seminar, delivered at the University's Sandy Bay campus.

The scheduled July 5 session on 'Developing Research Questions', to be presented by Dr Clarissa Cook, was moved to August 16. It was delivered at the Anne O'Byrne Centre following Dr Rosalind Bull's seminar 'Developing an audit decision making trail' and a luncheon get-together.

In response to student demand an EndNote session was added to the student support seminar program. This was delivered by Cindy in the University Library at Newnham on July 28.

Graduate Research Website Unveiled

Dr Rosalind Bull, Coordinator of the Graduate Research Program was delighted to pronounce the Graduate Research website 'live' in June.

'I would like the site to be dynamic - so your input is welcome. If you find that your biography or research topic is not on there, please contact Caryl or me and we will get your name in lights,' said Dr Bull.

'Also, if you find any useful sites, papers or other resources that you would like us to include in the resources section then please send them along as well. Any other suggestions are welcome.

'I want to extend my sincere thanks to Aaron Theodore, Caryl McQuestin, Lauren Hoban and Amanda Feely who have done a superb job on the site,' she concluded.

Clinicians, Capacity Building, Collaboration and Critical Reflection

Associate Professor Sue Kilpatrick and Research Fellow Shandell Elmer made a presentation at the General Practice and Primary Health Care conference in Adelaide on 26th July. The presentation was entitled 'Capacity building for health care integration at the local level'. It was based on the capacity building approach taken by the UDRH to evaluate the GP-Hospital Integration Demonstration Site (Launceston). The presentation described the process of capacity building that involved providing clinicians with opportunities to:

- identify shared clinical issues;
- critically reflect on the changes required at a 'systems' level;
- attend inter-professional workshops focusing on skill development to address the required changes;
- collaborate to implement the changes; and
- jointly evaluate the results.

The presentation emphasised the importance of a capacity building approach to:

- mediate tensions between top-down initiatives and on-the-ground practitioners;

- engage the participants and foster the development of solutions for locally identified clinical issues; and
- develop networks to sustain integration efforts.

The implications for future evaluation practice are that:

- education sessions such as the workshops held within this project ensure that integration remains on the agenda of the relevant organisations;
- these workshops foster a continuous quality improvement approach whilst focusing on the skills required and the systemic barriers to achieving health care integration; and
- the success of these workshops is evidence that the need and desire for shared education opportunities exists and the inter-professional focus is a powerful tool for developing an appreciation of professional cultures as well as linkage.



Associate Professor Sue Kilpatrick



Shandell Elmer, Research Fellow

Success for Skill Shortage Submission

Associate Professor Sue Kilpatrick and Dr Quynh Le, UDRH Lecturer in Quantitative Research Methodology, have been successful in obtaining National VET Research and Evaluation Program (NCVER) funding of just under \$50,000 for a research project relating to health skills shortages. Junior Research Fellow Susan Johns will also be working on the project.

The project submission identified the fact that of the 16 professions on the National Skill Shortage List 2004, 11 are in health. It drew on evidence presented at the 2005 National Rural Health Conference in Alice Springs highlighting the shortage of health professionals in rural and remote areas.

Such factors as poor access to training and lack of role clarity are seen by Drs Kilpatrick and Le as 'adding to the complexity for rural and remote health'. The submission continues:

'In response, rural and remote areas have become home to a set of innovative service delivery models. These stem from sparse populations with the same

range of health care service needs as those found in metropolitan centres. Multi-skilling solutions may see one person performing therapy assistant roles in several areas, as described in the rural WA projects. In the Northern Territory, a framework has been developed that sees health providers working in partnership with communities to serve health needs in remote areas.

'The project will concentrate on VET trained workers in the health sector of the Health and Community Services industry, including allied health workers. Skill shortages are conceived broadly to include task shifting from health professional roles and issues related to the age and gender participation of the health workforce.

'The purpose of the research is to locate, analyse and make accessible models of health training and service delivery that have been developed in response to a shortage of skill. The characteristics of and demand for health workers will be mapped to establish the current and projected skill shortage contexts to which the models could be applied or adapted.

'The project has support from the Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council, the Australian Rural Health Education Network and the Senior Allied Health Adviser, Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services members of the National Allied Health Advisory Committee.'



Susan Johns, Junior Research Fellow

Quynh Le a Queenly Figure at Elite Course

In June Dr Quynh Le, Program Head ICT and UDRH Lecturer in Quantitative Research Methodology, was accepted into the five-day course on social epidemiology and research methods hosted by the Key Centre for Women's Health in Society at the University of Melbourne. It explored some of the key theories and methods underpinning the discipline of social epidemiology.

Dr Quynh Le was successful in gaining one of only six subsidy packages awarded by the Australian Research Council Research Network in Spatially Integrated Social Science (ARCRN-SISS) to early career and graduate student researchers.

The course was taught by 'one of the world's most eminent social epidemiologists', Professor Ichiro Kawachi from Harvard School. He provided the groundwork to the subject of social epidemiology so that participants can partner with local and international experts to progress future research endeavours.

Quynh Le also had the opportunity to participate in a session on multilevel research methods using mLWin delivered by Assistant Professor Subramanian, also from Harvard School.

Quynh Le ran a brief presentation with UDRH staff in late July 2005 describing the benefits of what she had learned from the training course.



Dr Quynh Le,
Lecturer in Quantitative Research Methodology

Erica Bell – Busy Bee!

Research Fellow, Dr Erica Bell, in collaboration with others including medical education leader Dr Geraldine MacCarrick, has had three papers accepted in 2005 - two in international refereed journals and one as a national conference paper. They are:

'Lost in translation?': Developing assessment criteria that value rural practice. (Dr Erica Bell, Dr Geraldine MacCarrick, Dr Lisa Parker, Dr Reg Allen) This paper was accepted in May 2005 by the International Journal of Rural and Remote Health, an international peer-reviewed journal.

Self-management of chronic conditions: Implications for rural physicians of a demonstration project Down Under. (Dr Erica Bell, Dr Peter Orpin) This paper was accepted in March 2005 by the Canadian Journal of Rural Medicine, an international peer-reviewed journal.

'Just for us ladies': Intersections of gender, education, economic status and other factors affecting the success of self-management in rural contexts. (Dr Erica Bell) This paper given on 12 March 2005 at the 8th National Rural Health Conference and accepted in March 2005 for publication in conference proceedings.

Dr Bell has also published these reports:

Designing a residential service for youth with drug issues.

This is a major report of an eight month research design project examining innovative models for

the establishment of Tasmania's first residential service tailored to meet the needs of adolescents with drug issues.

Falls Prevention, phase two evaluation report: evidence into practice.

This is an evaluation report of phase two (July 2004 to June 2005) of *Stand up Right – Stay Upright! Building falls prevention capacity through workforce development*, a national falls prevention for older people initiative funded under a grant from the Australian Department of Health and Ageing.

Dr Bell is involved in a number of projects with the Salvation Army, having recently completed a major \$30,000 consultancy, commenced in November 2004, for this client.

A successful partnership grant application *Early Intervention Strategies and Responses to Children aged 0-5 Residing in SAAP Services* with The Salvation Army, was submitted to the SAAP Service and Regional Research Program. This research will cover the specific needs of children aged 0-5 affected by family violence and has attracted a grant of \$10,000.

A subcontracted evaluation, Parenting Partners, to provide consultancy services for assessing a parenting skills program in rural Tasmania, attracted a grant of \$6000 to the Salvation Army from the Commonwealth Stronger Families and Communities Strategy.

'I value the kind of "hands on" applied research that makes a real difference to Tasmanian communities,' said Dr Bell, 'as well as the publishing work that helps ensure our Tasmanian experience is known and valued internationally.'

'I'm lucky,' she added, 'to be working in a department that also values both.'



Dr Erica Bell discusses rural health issues with Julian Joscelyne, Manager, Intergovernmental Relations, Strategic Services Division, DHHS.

Unmasking the Mysteries of Dementia

Supported Researcher Georgina Earles has been writing a literature review focussing on issues surrounding early diagnosis of dementia as well as designing and carrying out her research project: *How do Tasmanian General Practitioners' understandings of dementia impact on the diagnostic process?*

This study aims to investigate general practitioners' perspectives on dementia and the diagnosis of dementia using a semi-structured interview and focus group design. It also aims to discover the usefulness of the Royal Australian College of General Practice Dementia Guidelines and whether doctors use these guidelines.

The study involves data collection from Tasmanian GPs of both genders and from a range of backgrounds, working locations, and ages.

Interviews are currently being conducted with GPs from all around the state prior to analysis of data in the coming weeks. It is intended that the results of this Tasmanian study will lay the ground work for a large scale questionnaire, examining doctors' attitudes to dementia in the broader Australian context.

Georgie attended the Australian Association of Gerontologists Annual Meeting in Melbourne in November 2004. She has also completed a number of skills development programs including two computer program courses; SPSS and NVivo, a Qualitative Research Methods workshop and a number of seminars and workshops on dementia. She will be travelling to Adelaide in late July to attend the 2005 General Practice and Primary Health Care Research Conference.



Georgina Earles, Supported Researcher

'My position was moved from Hobart to Launceston in early 2005, giving me the opportunity to get to know my Launceston colleagues better and to take on some additional work, with Sue Kilpatrick, on a study on community efficacy and social capital,' said Georgie.

UDRH Staffer Contributes to a Unique Publication 'IN YOUR OWN RIGHT Black Australian Nurses' Stories'



Sharon Dennis,
Indigenous Health Science/Higher Education Officer

UDRH's Indigenous Health Science/Higher Education Officer, Sharon Dennis is a contributor to a collection of stories that Olga Kanatsaki, AM, Professor of Trans-cultural Nursing at RMIT University has described as 'intimate, private, and heart wrenching... told with incredible dignity and humility... a powerful catalyst for questioning the humanity of us all.'

'IN YOUR OWN RIGHT' is edited by Sally Goold, AOM, and includes stories from Dr Mary Anne Bin-Sallik, Sadie Canning MBE, Lowitja O'Donoghue AC CBE and eighteen other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses.

'Many were approached to tell their stories; several declined to do so,' explained Sally Goold, who is the

Chief Executive Officer of the Congress for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses (CATSIN).

'Telling their stories would have been too confronting, and painful issues would have opened up old wounds. Your right to refuse is respected... To those who chose to share their story, thank you,' wrote Ms Goold.

As Olga Kanitsaki says 'the stories in this book remind us, so long as racism, discrimination and intolerance of difference govern our public service systems and the minds, souls and hearts of people who comprise those systems, the nursing profession and society at large will remain impoverished, tormented and not at peace with itself or its humanity.'

UDRH Research Capacity Strengthened by Appointment of Distinguished Academic

In May the Dean of the Faculty of Health Science, Professor Allan Carmichael, appointed Associate Professor Joan Abbott-Chapman to the position of Honorary Fellow in the Department of Rural Health.

'This is a great coup for UDRH, as Joan is a distinguished academic and researcher who will really add to our pool of expertise in rural health,' said a delighted Sue Kilpatrick.

'Joan and I have worked together on a number of projects, most recently on the concept of Community Efficacy of rural communities.

'Along with Clarissa Cook, we have a current application in to the ARC to expand this work, and focus it on rural health,' she added.

Associate Professor Abbott-Chapman is widely published in the field of equity and access in education especially with regard to social and community factors which encourage education participation. Her most recent research focuses on post-school pathways of rural youth, the contribution of VET to post-school retention, and the role of community social capital in improving youth life chances and well being in its broadest sense.



Associate Professor Joan Abbott-Chapman

Inter-Professional Learning in the Tamar Valley

University of Tasmania Health Science students got a feel for the Tamar's unique maritime history when they undertook their Inter-Professional Rural Program (IRP) placement in the George Town, Beaconsfield and Exeter areas. The program was coordinated Susan Rasmussen, IRP Project Officer at the University Department of Rural Health (UDRH).

Besides working with doctors, pharmacists, community nurses and allied health professionals from the region, the medical and nursing students visited a unique maritime precinct, the Low Head Pilot Station. Historic precinct manager, Howard Nichol explained shipping and navigation artefacts and used stories to bring to life the history of the Low Head area. Across the water, students visited another unique maritime based enterprise, Seahorse World.

However, the extra-curricula aspects of the inter-professional program went well beyond general interest and entertainment value, as Susan Rasmussen explained.

'Health professionals living and working in rural areas need to develop a feel for the social and economic factors that shape the culture of the community. They need to understand how local industries, from heavy industry to shipping to tourism, affect how people live, and how history, industry and social infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, volunteer groups and clubs, interact to build up social capital.

'In particular, the students who later practice in a rural area need to appreciate how the different health professionals rely on one another in a smaller community. We were indebted to local health professionals for providing them with 'hands-on' training that demonstrated this important lesson,' she said.

To enable health professionals of the future to understand the rural setting, Ms Rasmussen developed a comprehensive two week residential program to familiarise the students with aspects of the area around the mouth of the Tamar River. They visited pharmacies, a physiotherapy clinic, community health and multipurpose centres, an ambulance station, a medical practice, a nursing service and a local hospital. Sharon Dennis, the

UDRH/Tasmanian School of Nursing and Midwifery Indigenous Higher Education Officer passed on something of indigenous culture through story telling.

The two week IRP concluded with a reception for those health professionals, services providers, local government leaders and University staff who helped to make the program such a success. The event was held at the Low Head Pilot Station.



From left: Susan Rasmussen, Project Officer IRP; Marita King, Medical student; Alison Van Der Vlist, Nursing student, and Sarah Tustian, Medical student, at the Low Head Pilot Station Reception.



From left: Tony Meyer, Pharmacist, George Town; Carol Cowley, Community Nurse, George Town; Geraldine Crisp, Family Support Worker, George Town Council, and Doug Burt, Mayor of George Town

Falls Prevention Becomes Public Property

A three year collaborative project between the University Department of Rural Health (UDRH), state and Australian health departments, the Tasmanian Division of General Practice and health professionals came to fruition in May at the Community Rehabilitation Unit, Hobart.

The Falls Project, entitled *Stand Up Right – Stay Upright!* funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing and managed by UDRH, was officially launched in July 2003.

“As a component of the project closure a falls risk assessment tool was delivered into the custody of the Community Rehabilitation Unit of the Department of Health and Human Services,” said Maree Fish, Principal Project Officer.

This transfer was symbolised by the presentation of FallScreen™, a vital tool in the assessment of people at risk of falling, to Pip Leedham, Director, Primary Health, DHHS. The presentation was made by UDRH Director, Associate Professor Sue Kilpatrick.

The handover ceremony was part of a training day for health professionals, conducted by Kathleen Plumb, of the Prince of Wales Medical Research Institute in Sydney.

The FallScreen™ system takes the form of a computer-linked assessment tool suitable for Rehabilitation, Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy settings and for dedicated Falls Clinics. It takes around 15 minutes to administer and comprises 5 tests designed to assess a person's likelihood of falling. These assessments look at vision, peripheral sensation, reaction time, body sway and lower limb strength.

The assessment instrument was developed by the Prince of Wales Medical Research Institute and the purchase of this tool was funded by *Stand Up Right – Stay Upright!*. It will initially be used in conjunction with the Tasmanian Falls Prevention clinic; however, plans are underway for it to be taken far and wide around the state.

As a further outcome from *Stand Up Right – Stay Upright!* every Tasmanian medical practice will

have received two falls related posters. These posters are also available through each local General Practice Division's website and the project website.

In addition, through extensive collaboration with Dr Frank Nicklason, the project has developed a resource targeted to GPs and other allied health professionals. The resource *Falls Prevention: A clinical overview*, has been distributed to every GP in north west Tasmania with a pdf version available at each local Division's website and via the project website.

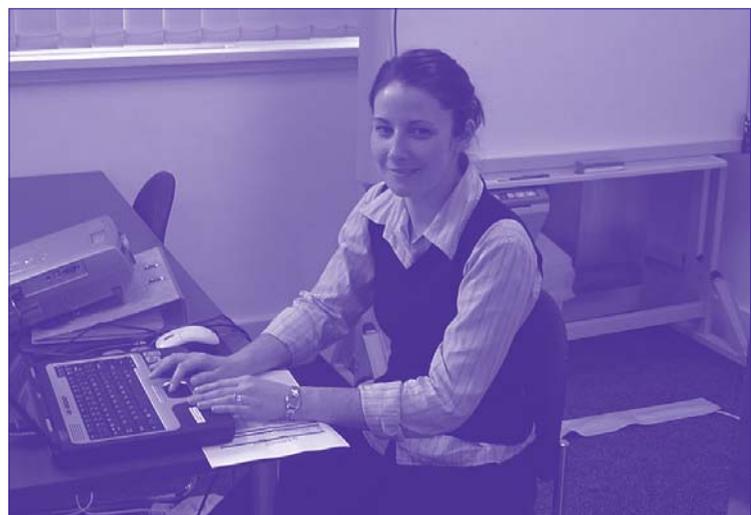
As *Stand Up Right – Stay Upright!* has now concluded any enquiries regarding the above resources can be directed to the UDRH on 6324 4000 or by accessing the project website at www.ruralhealth.utas.edu.au/falls/. Alternatively, Stan Bordeaux, Injury Prevention Policy Officer with DHHS can be contacted on 6222 7653 or email Stan.Bordeaux@dhhs.tas.gov.au.



Above: Associate Professor Sue Kilpatrick (left) straddles a transparent panel as Physiotherapist Jenny Summers supervises.



Right: Maree Fish (Left), Principal Project Officer, 'Stand up Right, Stay Upright!' and Pip Leedham, Director, Primary Health, DHHS



Kathleen Plumb, Prince of Wales Medical Research Institute, Sydney, provided training on the Fallscreen™ Handover Day

Community Health Strategies Planned in an Iconic Rural Setting

The national UDRH program was set up to serve rural and remote communities. UDRH sees effective engagement with health professionals and planners in these communities as a major priority. It is no coincidence that the issue of community engagement is also one that the University of Tasmania has identified and emphasised in its E.D.G.E. agenda.

In late April the UDRH met with Aged Rural Community Health (ARCH) for a Planning Day at historic 'Somercotes', Ross. This event was arranged by Stuart Auckland, Program Head, Rural Community Engagement Program and Ian Bell, Project Officer, Rural Hospitals Role Delineation Project, ARCH.

The themes of rural workforce retention and recruitment (workforce issues), service design/models of care, research and information, and community participation/development were identified as common themes of interest between the two agencies. In addition, the overarching issues of communication and the need to build and sustain collaboration between ARCH and UDRH were also canvassed.

A key outcome from the meeting was the establishment of working groups to progress collaborative activities under each of the theme areas.

There was a need seen for 'liaison persons' from the respective agencies to ensure continued contact between both organizations, disseminate information on joint activities to their respective agencies and explore/initiate further collaborative ventures.

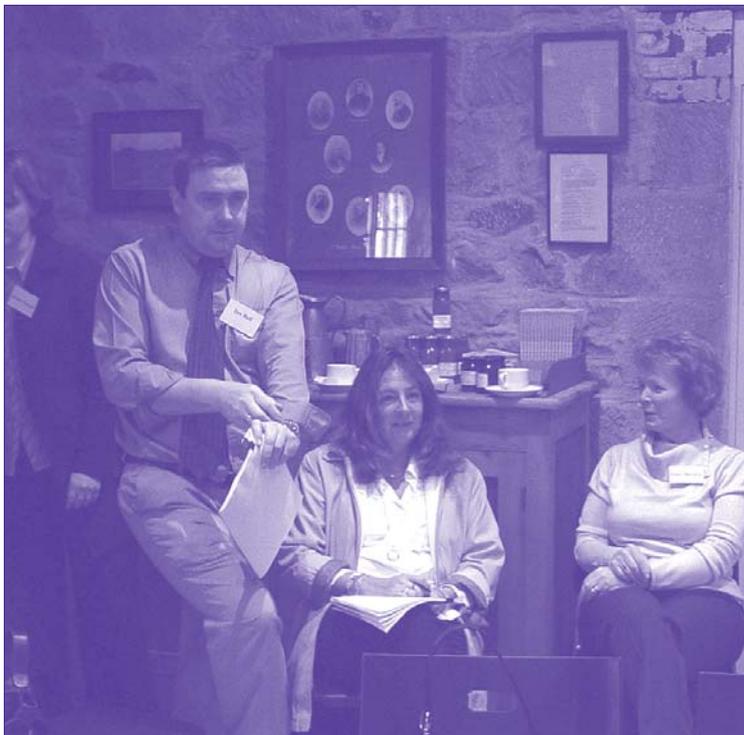
The development of two new Rural Health Teaching Sites (RHTS) at Swansea and Nubeena is a result of on-going negotiations between the UDRH, health service providers and local councils in the respective localities. The addition of these two new sites brings the total to 12 RHTS in Tasmania.

In recognition of the value of the RHTS program in supporting rural health in Tasmania, the UDRH has commenced a research initiative aimed at evaluating the social, cultural and economic and impact of the program in the rural communities they serve.



Siobhan Harpur (left), Acting State Manager, ARCH; Susan Powell (right), Rural Health Unit Manager ARCH

Below: Gina Butler, (left) Director of Nursing, ARCH; Reigh Baker of ARCH (centre)



Ian Bell, Project Officer, Rural Hospitals Role Delineation Project, ARCH (left); Michelle Le Mesurier, Manager (Acting) South East, ARCH; Patsy Burgess, District Manager, North, ARCH (right)



Labouring under difficulties - Stuart Auckland, Program Head, Rural Community Engagement, UDRH, outlines departmental initiatives to engage with rural communities, on crutches as a result of an injury sustained at the Rural Health Conference in Alice Springs

Rosalie Run off Her Feet at Health Careers Camps

Rosalie Maynard, Health Careers Coordinator at the University Department of Rural Health (UDRH) Tasmania was amazed and delighted at the interest shown in this year's Health Careers Camps.

Each year she runs innovative, exciting residential camps for Year 10 students who want to find out more about careers in health, drawing on the experience and expertise of practising health professionals, University of Tasmania academics and current health science students from rural areas.

'This year we received a record number of 155 applications from 29 schools as far apart as Rosebery, St Helens, Nubeena and Huonville – and of these, 14 are schools that have never been involved before,' said Mrs Maynard.

A difficult selection process resulted in 52 places being offered for the two June camps – 32 at Camp Clayton, Turners Beach, near Ulverstone (June 22-24), and 20 at the University's Sandy Bay Campus (28-30 June).

Using a compact two and a half day format of core sessions and elective workshops, the health careers program exposed the students to information and 'hands on' activities in the fields of allied health (including physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech pathology), medical practice and research, pharmacy, nursing and the Ambulance Service.

'Our own UTAS students are our best ambassadors, so we invited current University health science students to act as leaders and mentors – in particular asking them to draw upon their experiences growing up and studying in rural areas, choosing challenging health science courses and then successfully making the transition to University,' said Mrs Maynard.

Year 4 pharmacy student Ella Jeffrey looked forward to her group leader role at Camp Clayton.

'I grew up on the Tasman Peninsula where my mother was the only community health nurse in the district, so I have a broad base of knowledge about rural health,' said Ella.

'There are so many aspects of rural pharmacy practice that are above and beyond what urban practice offers, and I like sharing my enthusiasm about these diverse opportunities with the students at the camp.'

Fellow group leader Allison Turnock, a Year 5 medical student, is studying at the Rural Clinical School in Burnie and has undertaken placements at St Marys in Tasmania's Fingal Valley and in Central Australia.

'Having had personal experience of medicine in rural and remote areas I was keen to promote the friendliness of the people, the range of learning experiences and the personalisation of medical education in these areas,' said Allison.

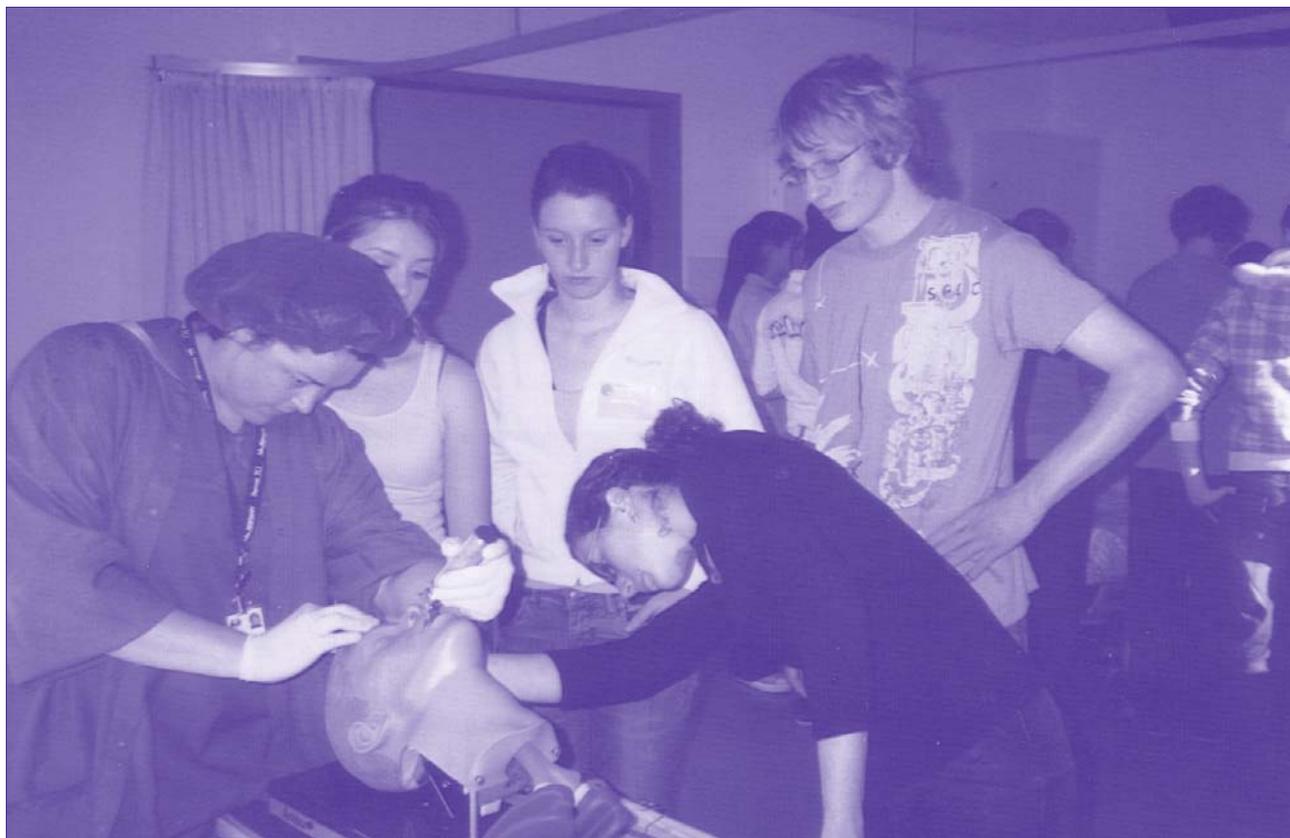
Year 3 pharmacy student Alannah Smith is committed to her role in promoting health science careers in rural areas.

'I'm very passionate about rural health and promoting it as a choice for young people. I attended a similar camp when I was in year 12 and it made me want to pass on my strong feelings about rural health to others,' said Alannah.

Whilst in Hobart Southern camp participants experienced communal student living by staying at Mount Nelson Villas and having meals at and touring Jane Franklin Hall and the University Apartments.



'Pork anyone?' Year 6 Medical Student Gary Heathcote prepares to demonstrate suturing techniques on pigs' trotters



Judy Walters (left) Registered Nurse at the North West Regional Hospital, shows students how to insert a tube

Health Careers Camps *(continued)*



Above: Year 5 medical student Alison Turnock (right) shows year 10 Camp Participants how to make plaster casts



Above: Nurse Educator Carol Otto (second right) demonstrates clinical techniques on a manikin at the North West Regional Hospital



Above: Wendy Flanagan (centre), with Pharmacy student Ella Jeffrey (third from left) and year 10 students at the North West Regional Hospital



Martin Harris

Teaching Teachers Vital Skills

Martin Harris, Research Fellow, has gained his Certificate IV in Workplace Trainer. This qualification enables him to 'train the trainer' and is compulsory for any one wishing to deliver accredited training in the VET sector.

Years of working in the teaching service continue to stand Martin in good stead. UDRH Director, Sue Kilpatrick can attest to this.

'I have had some excellent feedback from DHHS about workshops that Martin ran for the Know

Zone. They commend his style, including his relaxed teaching,' she said in a message to staff.

Martin recently served on the Steering Committee for the CommunityMindEd program, a mental health promotion and suicide prevention resource for VET teachers of Community Services, where he was primarily responsible for the material on suicide prevention for just released VET training package resource materials.

A Meeting of the Minds on Rural Topics

The University of Tasmania's Community Place and Change Theme Area brought some of Tasmania's most dynamic community leaders together on the same platform in Launceston in May.

The *Rural Community Place and Change* forum was organised by Associate Professor Sue Kilpatrick, Director of the University Department of Rural Health (UDRH), and Professor Frank Vanclay, Professorial Fellow in Rural Sociology, Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research.

'The forum's purpose was to start a conversation between the University and the community that may result in relevant research in the future, and to alert Tasmanians interested in rural Tasmania of recent, current and potential research projects and findings,' said Associate Professor Kilpatrick.

The three speakers, all from different areas of interest and expertise, each gave a 5-7 minute talk on what they saw as the top issues that need researching to benefit rural Tasmania. The talks were followed by 30-40 minutes of general discussion.

The panel members were Alan Johnston, Manager, Regional and Business Development, Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment; Roger Jaensch, CEO of the Cradle Coast Authority; and Pip Leedham, Director, Primary Health, Department of Health and Human Services.

The fourth advertised speaker, Jane Bennett of Ashgrove Cheeses, and former Australian Rural Woman of the Year, was unable to attend due to urgent commercial pressures, but nominated her issue – that of the importance of the arts in contributing to a vibrant rural community.

The audience included academic researchers interested in rural issues, and well as invited people with interests as diverse as preventative medicine in rural areas, the contribution of newcomers to rural communities, drug education and access to education for rural and remote children.

'With such a good response from within the University, and the pleasing attendance from across the broader community, we certainly got a multi-faceted and vigorous debate,' said Associate Professor Kilpatrick.

Theme area Coordinator, Professor Jeff Malpas, announced that the second Community, Place and Change lunchtime forum will be held in Hobart on 18th May on the topic of Ageing.

'A number of other focal points of interest are emerging in this theme area - innovation and the new technology, democracy and governance, the encouragement of creative communities, and planning issues – to mention just a few!' said Professor Malpas.



Roger Jaensch, CEO, Cradle Board Authority, makes a point, watched by Alan Johnson of the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment and Pip Leedham, Director, Primary Health, Department of Health and Human Service



A section of the audience listens with interest as panelists debate rural community issues; clockwise from top - Professor Rob Clark, Director of the Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research; Sue Whetton, Program Head Education and Support, UDRH; Judy Terry, Rural Sociology Consultative Committee member; Professor Malek Mohammadi from the University of Tehran in Iran; Dr Erica Bell, Research Fellow, UDRH; Dr Peter Orpin, Program Head, Research and Evaluation, UDRH and in the centre, Dr Rosalind Bull, Coordinator, Graduate Research, and Deputy Director, UDRH

Karla Peek — A Journey Through Learning

When Student Support Officer Karla Peek sets up a Rural Health Teaching Site as home for health science students and health professionals on rural placement she knows what it is to live, work and study in a rural and remote setting.

Karla sailed to Flinders Island in 1982 with her (then) husband en route from Victoria to the Tasmanian mainland. They fell in love with the Island and stayed.

For a while Karla worked for a small regional airline – Promair Pty Ltd – as their Flinders Island agent. Then she was employed by the Flinders Council as an Administrative Officer with responsibility for supporting Councillors, first point of contact for building and planning applications, administrative support to the General Manager and media liaison.

'Initially I was inspired to take up study as a mature aged student to provide intellectual stimulation whilst living in a remote Flinders Island farm house with a young family,' said Karla.

'Then I deferred my studies for several years before resuming again in 2002 after relocating to Launceston. Ironically my inspiration then was my wish to "value add" to my role at the UDRH.'

Karla has been recognised on the Dean of Arts Roll of Excellence for 2004 for her Bachelor of Arts studies. This year she is studying Honours in Sociology. Most of her degree was studied via distance education.

'My favourite bits have been attending lectures and tutorials and interacting with other students. Sociology encourages students to look at the world in a critical way and to question everyday "truths",' said Karla.

Karla has experienced very few trials and tribulations whilst functioning simultaneously as a mature aged student, a single mother and a full time employee of the UDRH.

'Studying the same subjects (though at different times) as my son has been extremely rewarding as we exchange ideas and information as peers. He also comes to me for advice!' she said.

Karla has found her work colleagues at UDRH to be encouraging of excellence, interested in her studies and genuinely delighted at her success.

'A supportive working environment and the enlightened study and professional development policy of the University provided me with leave to attend lectures,' she explained.

Karla is uncertain what pathway she will follow in the future.

'My current research is in the area of obesity and subjective understandings of health and wellbeing.'



Karla Peek, Student Support Officer, UDRH

'I may consider enrolling in a PhD at the end of my Honours year; however, that will depend on my marks. If I don't do that I will either do the TESOL course or a Grad Certificate in Education (TESOL) through the UTAS English Learning Centre,' she added.

Karla is a volunteer tutor with the Adult Migrant English Service and would be interested in teaching in this area.

'Having said that, however, I'm certainly interested in education for its own sake – not just as a means of advancing my employment prospects.'

Professional Development and Continuing Education for Health Professionals (PD&CE)

The PD&CE Program at UDRH seeks to achieve this Australian Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) objective:

- To provide training and support for rural health professionals (including mentors, supervisors and preceptors), consumers and communities, including Indigenous communities.

National UDRH Key Result Area (KRA)

PD&CE Coordinator, Susan Rasmussen has been developing a program that will meet the needs of this group.

'It's no easy task - any useful program is always going to be a "work in progress" as the needs and priorities of rural health professionals are constantly changing, requiring a flexible approach to training and a willingness to be adaptable and deliver what is useful to the health community,' said Susan.

An example of the type of course offered by the PD&CE Program is the workshop entitled: *Introduction to Health Service System Management.*

This 'taster' workshop could introduce participants to a University of Tasmania course planned for commencement in 2006. Alternatively, the 'taster' could lead to a TAFE Frontline Management course.

The presentation style is holistic, integrated, and interactive, and aims to provide a unique training and development opportunity for both key people and small work groups.

The Workshop Presenter, Dr Harvey Griggs, has taught, researched and consulted on these topics in three states of Australia, most recently, Queensland, where his work included Queensland Transport, Anglicare, and Mayne Private hospitals. His recent work in Tasmania and Victoria has included corporate clients such as Field Fresh Tasmania, Bonney Fox Pty Ltd, Webster Ltd, IntoWork, and Palliative Care Victoria.

The workshop 'taster' will focus on the challenges that managers face every day, especially frontline managers.

'We all have beliefs and we all make assumptions about the 'right' way of doing things,' said Dr Griggs.

'Although our beliefs and assumptions can make us effective, they can sometimes also make us ineffective. When they do make us ineffective, it is sometimes hard to understand why. It often takes a crisis to stimulate a change in our beliefs and assumptions, such as a promotion that requires a different, sometimes contradictory, mental model of managing, or indeed being passed over for promotion, or even worse, let go,' he explained.

'In the challenging world that is the health service industry, these confronting issues should provoke self-questioning and lively discussion amongst workshop participants,' said Susan Rasmussen.

Briefs...

Dr Clarissa Cook, Research Fellow, has been awarded a place, one of only 18 university-wide, in the Step-Up Program. This initiative is designed to assist female academic staff with their career progression.



Dr Clarissa Cook (right) with Associate Professor Sue Kilpatrick

Dr Rosalind Bull, Coordinator, Graduate Research Program, has been successful in securing one of only 12 places in the University's prestigious staff development program, Getting Ahead.

Peter Kilpatrick, Graduate Research student, has received a 2005 Learning Together Award for Educational Excellence. The certificate cited Peter's 'outstanding contribution in assisting schools to collect, analyse and utilise data to improve outcomes' and was awarded by the Hon Paula Wriedt, Minister for Education, on behalf of the Department of Education, Northern Branch.



Peter Kilpatrick

Christine Fahey, Research Fellow, has been awarded and accepted an Australian Postgraduate Award scholarship to complete her PhD fulltime. Her thesis is on volunteering in health services.



Leoni Coskun (second from right) and Maree Fish, (second from left) at their farewell with Karla Peek (left) and Rosemary Cane, holding Robert Coskun

Dr Quynh Le, Program Head, ICT and Lecturer in Quantitative Research Methodology, has been recognised as a 'registered supervisor' of graduate research students.

Maree Fish (see below) left UDRH at the end of June having managed the highly successful Falls Prevention Project Stand Up Right, Stay Upright! Staff farewelled Maree at an 'official' afternoon tea followed by a well attended and enjoyable informal dinner 'off campus'.

Karla Peek has been recognised on the Dean of Arts Roll of Excellence for 2004 for her Bachelor of Arts studies. This year she is studying Honours in Sociology.

Dr Pat Millar is working on a project that Sue Kilpatrick brought with her to UDRH. It relates to training for management in the livestock industries. Pat is based on Level 2 of the Anne O'Byrne Centre when she is not working from her home in Oatlands.

Dr Rosa McManamey has joined UDRH as an Honorary Associate. Rosa has recently completed her PhD on the topic of community newspapers and social capital in rural communities. She is busy writing some papers for international conferences and journals. Rosa is based on Level 2 at Anne O'Byrne.

Jess Whelan is working on a literature review on partnerships around health services in rural communities. Jess has almost completed her PhD in sociology on the topic of water and public health. Jess is usually at Anne O'Byrne on Fridays and shares a Level 3 office with Susan Johns.

Brigit Stratton is a Nursing PhD student who is also working with Lisa Dalton and Susan Rasmussen on a project relating to inter-professional education.



Brigit Stratton

Amanda Feely is on maternity leave after the birth of a daughter, Ella Louise. Her office administrator role has been taken over by Kellie Nue.



Amanda Feely

Caryl McQuestin is acting as Executive Assistant, Graduate Research, in Amanda's absence, as well as performing her role as Media and Marketing Coordinator.



Caryl McQuestin

Tina Pinkard, Personal Assistant to the Director, has taken a position in the School of Nursing and Midwifery. Her corporate memory and well honed editing skills, amongst other things, make her much missed at UDRH. Tina was replaced by **Cecilia Chiu** who commenced duties in August.



Cecilia Chiu

UDRH also farewelled short term appointment **Sarah Baylis** at the end of August.



Sarah Baylis

Leoni Coskun (left) returned to UDRH briefly after the birth of her son, Robert, before leaving to devote more time to her role with young elite athletes at the Tasmanian Institute of Sport.