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From the A/Co-Director's Desk



Stuart Auckland and Dr Erica Bell

Welcome to the spring 2010 edition of the UDRH Bulletin. At the beginning of the year, we would like to reflect on some of the achievements that have occurred at the UDRH in recent months, together with some imminent developments. The year 2009 was particularly successful for a number of our postgraduate students who successfully completed their postgraduate studies.

Congratulations must go to Dr **Martin Harris** on the successful completion of his degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The UDRH postgraduate research program continues to attract high-calibre students who seek to progress their studies into a postgraduate qualification. A highlight of the postgraduate research program is the graduate research symposium that is held twice a year and provides an opportunity for students to showcase their studies.

The UDRH continues to make its mark with a number of staff publishing journals and books. Dr **Erica Bell** has authored a book on the subject of evidence-based policy in a book titled *Research for Health Policy* that has been published by Oxford University Press and released internationally. Dr **Quynh Lê** has edited *Health and Well-being: A Social and Cultural Perspective*, by Nova Science Publisher, New York, and has also co-edited three other books: *Language and Literacy Education in a Challenging World and Linguistic Diversity* and *Cultural Identity: A Global*

Perspective by Nova Science Publisher, New York, and *Technologies for Enhancing Pedagogy, Engagement and Empowerment in Education: Creating Learning-Friendly Environments*, by IGI Global Publication, Hershey, USA. All four books are under contract. Associate Professor **Peg Levine** has also authored a book titled *Love and Dread in Cambodia: Weddings, Births and Ritual Harm under the Khmer Rouge*, published by the National University of Singapore Press.

There have been a number of successful grant applications. Dr **Clarissa Hughes** secured a FebFast grant. FebFast conducts a national education, awareness and fundraising campaign that encourages people to forego their alcohol consumption during February, and at the same time raise funds to support organisations working in research, prevention and service delivery concerning alcohol and other drugs use by young people.

Karla Peek with support from UDRH administrative staff successfully coordinated Rural Health Week 2009. Congratulations to all of the 29 Tasmanian Rural Health Award nominees. The Awards ceremony was a highlight of Rural Health Week 2009, with finalists in each of the three Award categories presented with prizes and certificates by the Hon **Michelle O'Byrne**, Minister for Tourism, Heritage and the Arts.

There have also been significant developments regarding the governance of the UDRH with the convening of the UDRH Board of Management in November 2009. The Board comprises representatives from a range of UDRH stakeholder groups and has a role in providing guidance and advice on the operations of the UDRH.

(continues: page 3)

Recruitment and retention a challenge for the Tasmanian allied health and oral health workforce

The final report on the *Tasmanian Allied Health and Oral Health Workforce Study* has been published and is available for download off the UDRH website. The study was conducted by **Shelagh Lowe**, UDRH Associate Lecturer Rural Allied Health, with funding support from the Department of Health and Human Services.

The report takes a broad-brush view of the responses to the survey instrument used in the study. It provides essential information about the Tasmanian allied health and oral health workforce demographics, work practices and training needs. It provides evidence to inform effective strategies for recruitment and retention of allied health professionals in Tasmania. Information relating to access to continuing professional development (CPD) and student clinical supervision will enable the training needs and future workforce requirements to be informed by evidence.

Whilst the survey does not enable a head count of the 25 allied health and oral health professions included in the study to be undertaken, it does give a very rich profile of how the professions are working. A total of 1,179 valid responses to the survey instrument were received, representing a calculated return rate of 44%.

Of major interest in the Tasmanian context is the recruitment and retention factors identified by the study. For the majority of the professions included in the study, training is not available within Tasmania. Attracting professionals

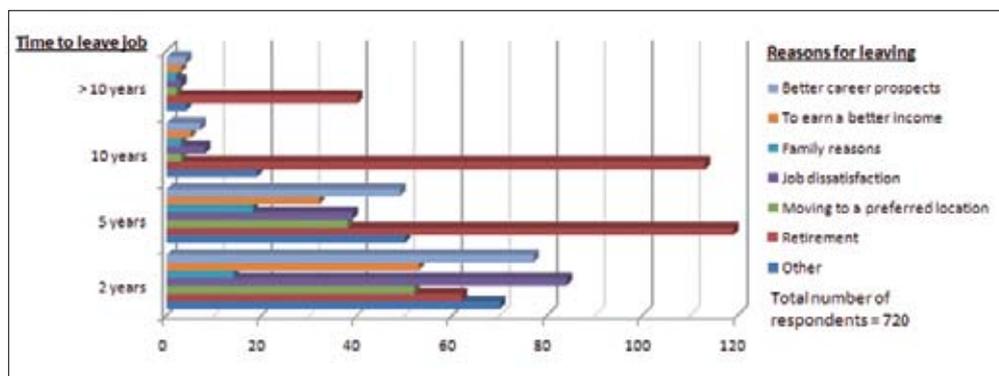


Figure 2: Reasons for leaving by timeframe for leaving current position

firstly to come and work here, and then to retain them is important to ensure Tasmania has the allied health and oral health workforce to meet the health needs of communities across the state.

Respondents were able to select from a range of options with regards to attraction to working in Tasmania. Work/Life balance (57% of sample) and type of work (51% of sample) were the most frequently cited reasons. Respondents were also asked about their intentions to “stay or go”. This is a factor of major concern for Tasmania as illustrated in Figure 1.

Of major concern is the number of participants who have been in their current position for less than two years who are intending to leave within the next two to five years (please refer to Figure 1).

Figure 2 illustrates that job dissatisfaction and better career prospects are significant factors for

those planning to leave within two years. Retirement of the workforce will also be putting pressure on workforce numbers and retention over the next 10 years.

Longitudinal studies to track changes in the workforce can easily be undertaken by repeating the survey at regular intervals. National profiling, as well as the ability to compare results across jurisdictions and regions, would be helpful to state and national workforce planning.

Researchers involved in the study, which has been conducted in Tasmania, New South Wales, South Australia and the Northern Territory, are now working to secure funding to repeat the study on a national basis in 2010.

To see more results from the Tasmanian Allied Health and Oral Health Workforce Study please download the final report at <http://fcms.its.utas.edu.au/healthsci/ruralhealth/files/tas-ah-and-oh-wf-study.pdf>

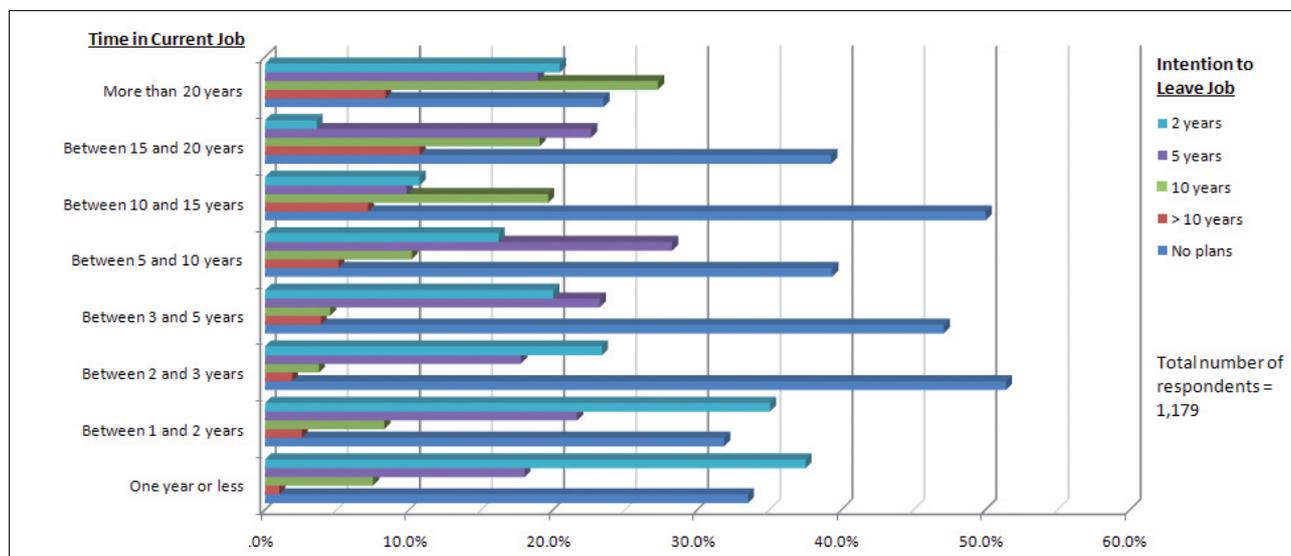


Figure 1: Intention to leave by length of time in current position

Graduate Research news

Summer brings with it beautiful blue skies with academic sunlight and enthusiasm. Heralding the warmer months, we were pleased with the success of our 2nd Collaborative Graduate Research Symposium that took place at the Dechaineux Theatre, School of Art, Hunter St, Hobart on 30 November and 1 December 2009.

The symposium was co-organised by the UDRH, Rural Clinical School, School of Nursing and Midwifery, School of Human Life Sciences and the Launceston Clinical School to provide opportunities for sharing research in progress, building professional and interpersonal networks, and reflecting on our research journey individually and collectively. It included a keynote address, an information session on Tasmanian health care, concurrent methodology workshops, and presentations from PhD and research Masters students.

The symposium evidenced the dynamic research and collaborative spirit of the participating groups, and provided a valuable opportunity to share knowledge and experience, to network and have a great time.

Staying with our seasonal theme, it is also timely to talk about the fruits of academic success, with warmest congratulations going to the following members for their accomplishments:

- **Susan Johns** (supervised by Professors **Sue Kilpatrick** and **Joan Abbott-Chapman**) and **Peter Mulholland** (supervised by Professor **Judith Walker** and Dr **Christine Stirling**) have submitted their theses for examination. We look forward to hearing the good news soon.
- **Martin Harris** (supervised by Professor Judith Walker and Dr **Marion Myhill**) has achieved his PhD. Congratulations to Martin and his supervisors for this wonderful achievement.
- **Ha Hoang, Maria Yue** and **Chau Tran** have had their preliminary research plans accepted.
- **Ree van Galen** and Maria Yue won the Rural Health Graduate Research Conference Grants second round to attend international conferences in Adelaide and Canberra.
- **Sharon Hetherington, Sibella G.**

King, Denis Visentin and **Marie-Louise Bird** co-authored a paper entitled "A Kinematic and Kinetic Case Study of a Netball Shoulder Pass" which has been published in the *International Journal of Exercise Science*.

- Susan Johns had an abstract titled "The ABC of Primary Health Care Collaborations in Rural Australia" accepted for the General Practice & Primary Health Care Conference in Melbourne on 15-17 July 2009. In addition, her article entitled "How Rural Schools Support the Early Years" was published in the *International Journal of Child Health and Human Development*, volume 2, no 2, 2009.
- **Andrew Harris** was invited to participate in a symposium with indigenous African psychology specialists in South Africa on 12 – 14 August 2009 to present aspects of his Masters research paper, "'Climbing the Tree from the Top': Developing Culturally Appropriate Counseling for African Humanitarian Entrants to Tasmania, Australia".
- Ha Hoang shared her research findings "Maternity Care Experiences of Ethnic Minorities in Rural Tasmania: A Mixed Methods Study", from her Masters thesis at the 4th International Conference on Community Health Nursing Research in Adelaide, 16 – 20 August 2009.
- **Chona Hannah** presented her accepted abstracts of two research papers "Behavioural Strategies of Intermarried Filipino Women in Dealing with Health Issues in Rural Tasmania" and "Intermarriage and Health Issues in a Rural Context" at the 4th International Conference on Community Health Nursing Research in Adelaide, 16 – 20 August 2009.
- **Cecilia Chiu** had a joint refereed paper titled "Culturally-Informed Health Metaphors on Health Service Delivery" accepted for publication in the *International Journal of Social Health Information Management* (IJSHIM), volume 2, issue 2. Cecilia also had her joint paper on "Spatial Distribution of Telehealth Network and its Prospect in the New National Broadband Network" accepted for presentation at the International Conference on Successes and Failures in Telehealth 2009 (SFT-09), in Brisbane, 10 – 12 November 2009.
- Ree van Galen had a full refereed paper titled "Primary Health Care Collaboration, Integration and Reform – A Nursing Response" accepted at the 2009 Primary Health Care Conference in Adelaide, 8 – 11 November 2009.
- Maria Yue had a full refereed paper titled "Multi-cultural Learning Experiences and Wellbeing of Chinese Background Students at Australian Universities" accepted at the 2009 AARE Research Conference in Canberra, 29 November – 3 December 2009.

We celebrate these achievements and wish our students well with their research journeys, and look forward to sharing with you more wonderful news about UDRH graduate research in the next issue.

From the A/Co-Director's Desk

(continued from page 1)

Shandell Elmer was appointed to the position of Workforce Education Training Development Coordinator whilst Dr **Lisa Dalton** is on secondment to the school of Nursing and Midwifery.

We are pleased to welcome a number of new staff to the UDRH including **Lindie Lupo** who was recently appointed to the position of Executive Officer, and **Latha Jeyaraj** who commences work with the UDRH in an administrative support role for the E-Health, Master in Health and Rural Health Teaching Site programs.

We are also delighted to share the news that Dr **Jess Woodroffe**, Coordinator of Community Development program area, is now the proud mum of **Max** born on 21 September 2009.

We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter and we look forward to bringing you more news of achievements and developments at the UDRH in 2010. On behalf of the staff at the UDRH, we wish you a rewarding year in 2010.

Stuart Auckland and Erica Bell
Acting Co-Directors

Celebrating rural health!

The health and wellbeing of rural Tasmanians was again in the spotlight with the staging of Tasmania's Rural Health Week 2009 in November.

A collaboration between the UDRH and the Department of Health and Human Services, Rural Health Week is a community-wide health promotion initiative that aims to increase awareness of health and wellbeing programs in rural communities, highlight the role of rural health practitioners, and celebrate the achievements of rural health champions through the Rural Health Awards.

The range of events and activities highlighted the diversity of rural communities and their specific needs and interests: organic vegetable gardens were established in Scottsdale and Bridport; Flinders Island residents took part in a cycling event; and a rural health expo was held in Huonville. The Scarecrow Trail, extending from Bicheno to Nubeena, was a collaboration between three local government areas (Tasman, Sorrell and Glamorgan/Spring Bay) that provides a model for future Rural Health Week events.

A highlight of Rural Health Week was the staging of the Rural Health Awards on Sunday 15 November 2009. This gala event provided an opportunity to

thank the many wonderful people who work tirelessly to improve health and wellbeing in their various communities. The Rural Health Community Award went to **Mr John Jones, OAM** in recognition of his outstanding achievements in founding the Rural Alive and Well Program in the Southern Midlands and Central Highlands local government areas. The Rural Health Group Award went to the Rotary Club of Wynyard, which has contributed significantly to a raised awareness of important health issues among both Club and community members through their involvement in the Bowelscan program, beyondblue, and fundraising activities for the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

The quality of nominations for the Rural Health Worker Award was so high that the judges decided on two winners: **Ms Anne Bates** and **Ms Sandra "Harry" Higgs**. Ms Bates is the Manager of the Campbell Town Health and Community Services, and she has shown exceptional leadership by introducing a management style and way of working that puts clients at the centre of health service. Ms Higgs is a Registered Nurse employed by the Triabunna District High School to coordinate L'ilTackers, a birth to four-year-old parent support program. L'ilTackers enables parents to share experiences and healthy activities with

their children from a young age.

Rural Health Week provides the UDRH with an excellent opportunity to engage with its rural constituencies and to facilitate a number of development activities for people living in rural areas. Developing and strengthening relationships – between the Rural Health Week State Planning Committee, rural health services, local councils, schools and community groups – provides a solid base for future collaborations and rural health initiatives. Rural Health Week is now firmly embedded in the rural health calendar, and we look forward to being a part of this exciting event in 2011 and beyond.

For further information: **Karla Peek** (tel: 6324 4012, email: K.Peek@utas.edu.au) and the Rural Health Week website at www.rhwtas.com.au

Photo captions (from left):

- 1) Northern Inter-school Orienteering
- 2) Flinders Island Cycling and Walking for Fun Day
- 3) South East Region the Scarecrow People... Get the MSG!
- 4) Dorset Organic Gardens and Farmfest



OzHelp extended to broader audiences

The UDRH recently signed an extension to a contract for the continuing evaluation of OzHelp. OzHelp Foundation Tasmania provides suicide prevention training and programs for mental health and wellbeing for apprentices in the building industry.

This program is being extended to the hospitality industry and broader, and more comprehensive programs have been developed. The UDRH will assist

OzHelp by providing ongoing evaluation of their program, and assistance with the implementation of recommendations that flow from these reviews. This partnership has been a productive and positive one and the program is receiving national attention.

For more information, please contact UDRH Lecturer Dr **Martin Harris** (tel: 6324 4029, email: Martin.Harris@utas.edu.au).

Subscribing to Rural Health eBulletin

Please complete the online subscription form on <http://www.ruralhealth.utas.edu.au/news/index> and click [[Subscribe to Rural Health eBulletins](#)]

News from the Rural Clinical School

RCS Visiting Research Fellow program 2009

An eminent UK clinician, teacher and researcher in pre-hospital and emergency care, Professor **Malcolm Woollard**, was the first Rural Clinical School (RCS) Visiting Research Fellow for 2009.

While in Burnie, Prof Woollard conducted a series of presentations and workshops involving over 70 paramedics, emergency clinicians, health professionals and RCS medical students.

He also went on the road with local North West paramedics to compare and contrast professional approaches.

Impressed by this experience, Prof Woollard said he was "astonished that

such a level of sophistication had been achieved in such a small population". He was also very impressed by the beautiful local landscape which reminded him of his home district in Wales.

It is anticipated that an ongoing relationship will be developed between the Tasmanian Ambulance Service, the Rural Clinical School and Professor Woollard through possible research projects on the North West Coast.

Prof Woollard holds distinguished clinical and research positions with Coventry University; is Chair of the College of Paramedics (British Paramedic Association), and has existing Australian connections as



Prof Malcolm Woollard's presentation via videolink to audiences around Tasmania

Professor in Pre-hospital Care at Charles Sturt University and Honorary Senior Research Fellow with Monash University.

Research muster investigates health research in the North West

The Rural Clinical School's Health Research Matters (HRM) program is taking the initiative with an exciting new research project designed to explore the research interests, activities and aspirations of health and related professionals on the North West Coast.

Aims of the research muster are:

- To quantify and scope the extent of interest in research among health

and related professionals and undergraduates in the North West region;

- To obtain an accurate picture of the amount of research activity and publication output by North West health professionals;
- To promote the HRM program and attract new participants to the HRM community;
- To assist in increasing the capacity of health research being conducted in the North West region of Tasmania;
- To develop a network of health professionals interested in or currently undertaking research; and
- To act as a conduit for gathering and disseminating information related to improving research activities.

A two-page questionnaire has been widely distributed to health and related professionals across the North West Coast. The extensive data sourced from this study will provide a valuable resource for the Rural Clinical School, particularly in targeting HRM activities to where they will be most beneficial.

For more information, please contact **Heidi Behrens** (tel: 6430 5905, email: Heidi.Behrens@utas.edu.au).



RCS medical students Henry Nowlan (left) and Lahiru Amarasena presenting at the HRM Paediatric Forum

Closer collaboration between UDRH and DHHS

The UDRH has a long and successful history of collaboration with agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). This close collaboration took a step further with the recent signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the UDRH and Primary Health, Care Reform Branch, DHHS.

The MoU signed by the respective heads of the UDRH and Primary Health, Care Reform Branch paves the way for closer collaboration on a range of potential joint project and research activity.

The document includes a statement of mutual recognition, and outlines agreed protocols and processes for developing, delivering and evaluating joint projects that take on board the existing policies of the respective organisations.

The MoU also makes reference to the broader Partners in Health agreement between the Faculty of Health Science and DHHS.

The MoU will be used as a framework for future joint planning exercises between the two organisations, and should prove valuable in providing clarity in both planning and process involved with joint activities.

First graduate from the Master of Health (E-Health Specialisation) program

Congratulations to **Marcin Gadzinski** who is the first graduate from the UTAS Master of Health (E-Health Specialisation) program, introduced in 2009.

Marcin enrolled in the UDRH Graduate Diploma of E-Health (Health Informatics) in 2005. He successfully completed that program in 2008, and was able to enter the inaugural Master program at third year level in early 2009.

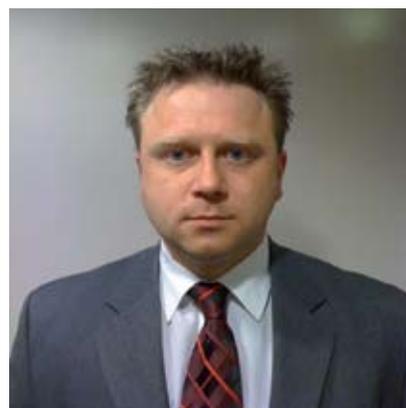
He adds this latest qualification to a Bachelor of Nursing, Bachelor of Computing (Honours) and Graduate

Diploma of E-Health (Health Informatics), and now hopes to enrol in the proposed Doctorate of Professional Health when it becomes available.

Marcin has been an enthusiastic and successful student, producing high quality, insightful work throughout his e-health courses.

He is no doubt applying his undoubted abilities to his work at the Royal Hobart Hospital as the Digital Medical Record (DMR) System Manager.

Well done Marcin.



Marcin Gadzinski

OUP releases new translational research book from UDRH

What has such appeal to the popular vote that **Barack Obama**, **Tony Blair**, and **Kevin Rudd** all promised to deliver it before they were elected?

What is so hard to deliver that some believe achieving it is as hard as sprouting wings and flying from one planet to another?

The answer is "evidence-based policy", the subject of a world first book published by Oxford University Press and authored by UDRH academic Dr **Erica Bell**. *Research for Health Policy* has just been released internationally, largely in America and Europe (see online catalogue at www.oup.com).

"If 'evidence-based policy' is a mantra of our age, it is also one of its great unfulfilled promises," said Erica. "The health policy literature suggests that too much policy has been shaped without access to sound evidence. Some feel that this is because policy makers are from Mars and researchers are from Venus. Others feel it is because we live in an age where policy making is more about political spin and expediency than truth telling.

"In this book I am exploring another more controversial argument: that the divide between research and policy is about a disconnect between the research methods often taught in universities, and the styles of evidence that policy makers need. My argument is not that research should be dumbed down to make it digestible for policy makers, but rather that research has too often failed to engage with the complexities of policy decision making."

Research for Health Policy is the first book to describe what translational research for health policy decision making looks like, offering new research methods that go far beyond traditional classical experimental techniques and standard qualitative methods.

It includes research evidence from many disciplines – from the language arts to sociology and political science, economics, mathematics, social epidemiology and bio-medicine – never before combined in such a way. It also includes practical tools, hypotheticals, and case studies never before published to offer readers many new and highly original practical approaches for doing better research for policy makers.

The book also includes extracts from Erica's interviews with 22 health policy makers at the most senior level in the health systems of 11 countries.

"I asked often hard to access people at the very top of the health sector – surgeon generals, national CEOs – to describe the research practices they felt would help them make the decisions they make daily. Their answers offer a lively and thought provoking juxtaposition of the scholarly discussion in the book."

Dr Erica Bell is Acting Co-Director and Deputy Director at the UDRH, Tasmania. She has over 80 academic and applied publications and presentations across health and education. Prior to her employment in 2004 in rural health, she was a policy research manager in the Queensland government leading a diverse multidisciplinary research team.

The book also reflects the UDRH's commitment to upskilling health practitioners as part of its workforce development mission.

"I gave a set of workshops for the Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation and Development (PHCRED) initiative on the subject in 2007," said Erica, "and the many health practitioners who attended kept telling me that I should write a book especially for them because there was nothing on the market.

"The task of helping health practitioners engage as active shapers of health policy by supporting them to produce powerful evidence is an important one," said Erica. "In rural health, we struggle with a situation where much of the research evidence is urban-based and homogeneous, yet rural communities are scattered and heterogeneous.

"The world's largest health research funding agency, the USA's National Institutes of Health, has made translational research a priority in their vision of 21st century research," Erica added. "This arises from increasing concerns that too much research is not being translated into policy and practice. I think our university's commitment to community engagement makes it a great place from which we can lead Australia's translational research agenda. I'm very grateful for the way in which our faculty has supported the work represented in this book."

Erica has three other edited books forthcoming in 2009 and 2010, and she is developing two further book proposals on health policy and services development.

UDRH scholar chairs the International Congress of Morita Therapy

UDRH Associate Professor in Rural Mental Health **Peg LeVine** is the Chair of the 7th International Congress of Morita Therapy, which will take place in Melbourne from 4 – 6 March 2010.

This is the first time the International Congress of Morita Therapy will be hosted in the southern hemisphere.

Registration to participate as a delegate, speaker and/or sponsor is still open. Please check the conference website at www.conferenceworks.net.au/morita-therapy

Peg remarked: "It is our honour that Professor Emeritus **Graeme Smith** from the Department of Psychiatry and Psychology at Monash University; Professor **Kenji Kitanishi**, MD as the Chair of the Morita Therapy Society, Japan; and Professor and Art Therapist **Nancy Slater**, PhD from the Adlerian School of Graduate Studies in Chicago are some of our keynote speakers."

"This will be a truly international event and we have had delegates from France, Africa, South America, North America, Germany, Australia, Cambodia, Lao PDR, and the United Kingdom registered to attend the congress.

"The overriding theme of the congress is 'Contexts' for Psychosocial Health. We are planning a sequence of 'roundtable' discussions around six themes so that we might know each other better during an interactive, dynamic and enjoyable



Associate Professor Peg LeVine in Takhmau Village, Cambodia

exchange. Similarly, a small university press journal is being planned from conference papers selected following a double-blind review process: *Morita Therapy Congress, Melbourne 2010: Theory, Practice and Research*," added Peg.

Shoma Morita, MD, (a contemporary of Freud) is squarely in the circuit of historical figures in psychiatry with Morita Therapy as a culturally viable treatment outside Japan, with evidence-based research in Asia.

Morita therapy has been found effective in treating a range of anxiety disorders, trauma-based disorders, including borderline features, dissociative-based disorders, and contextual and clinical depression. Today, the classical treatment is applied in public and private hospitals in Japan, and extends to Australia, China, Korea, and Russia, and more recently to developing regions in SE Asia. Also, Morita theory has been incorporated into postgraduate counselling psychology coursework in North America and parts of Australasia.

Staying healthy in difficult times

The UDRH, in partnership with the University of Tasmania's School of Sociology and Social Work and Deakin University, has received funding from the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation to undertake research into health behaviours and services used by farmers and fishermen in difficult times.

The purpose of the study is to investigate the process by which these groups achieve and maintain good physical and mental health through challenging times.

Farmers and fishers have always been exposed to the vagaries of climate and global economic forces. However, in recent months, there has been an accumulation of factors that are having a particularly severe impact upon rural Australians, including the ongoing

effects of the global financial crisis and climate change.

There is evidence to suggest that climate change is impacting adversely on many primary producers and their ability to farm using traditional methods. Soil erosion and salination of water supplies, unseasonal and excessive rainfall, and unpredictable recurrent storms are all becoming more frequent and widespread. Warming sea temperatures are likely to impact on many types of fishing activities and the aquaculture industries. Such pressures are known to have both physical and mental health consequences, and the results of the study will help address the growing burden on health services, particularly in rural areas.

Five research communities have been

chosen to take part in the study, each with a different industry base: sugar, fishing/aquaculture, cotton, grains, and mixed farming. The communities have populations ranging between 2,000 and 10,000 residents and are geographically dispersed around Australia. The study will inform policy makers, health practitioners and industry bodies in the design of health information and service delivery programs. Programs designed in line with project findings can be expected to increase the likelihood of health- and wellbeing-promoting behaviours by farmers and fishers, and hopefully better rural physical and mental health outcomes will follow.

For information: **Karla Peek** (tel: 6324 4012, email: K.Peek@utas.edu.au) and **Susan Johns** (tel: 6324 4008, email: Susan.Johns@utas.edu.au).

Sharon Dennis meets the national Indigenous Staff Network



Broken Hill

UDRH Associate Lecturer – Indigenous Health/Higher Education, Sharon Dennis, travelled recently to Broken Hill, New South Wales, to attend the Indigenous Staff Network (ISN) meeting on 3 – 6 November 2009.

ISN is a group comprising Indigenous staff members within the University Departments of Rural Health (UDRHs). The ISN members have varied roles in each UDRH that include the development and delivery of cultural programs, research, student and community engagement.

On this occasion, the ISN came together for a national meeting to discuss issues relating to the UDRHs and indigenous people in a national context.

An important part of the meeting was to introduce to members local indigenous health services, and to discuss issues in relation to their health delivery, including the local health services that work closely with indigenous health services, and the importance of engaging with local indigenous communities where appropriate.

Thriving in challenging circumstances

The University of Southern Queensland hosted the 3rd Australian Enabling Education Conference, 25 – 27 November 2009. This conference attracted a wide range of delegates from many educational sectors and provided a good opportunity to share knowledge and raise awareness of the importance of pursuing social inclusion in education.

UDRH Lecturer Dr **Martin Harris'** refereed paper draws from his PhD research, and provides a framework and template for the design and implementation of transitional programs to higher education by identifying the characteristics and process that allow individuals to thrive in challenging circumstances.

The generally accepted view is of a linear progression to higher education, involving a disruption of old patterns, a period of uncertainty, and then a new beginning. Martin's research, however, explores the evidence of such a dislocating challenge, and describes a new cyclical model that identifies the stages of the transition and the key characteristics within each stage. This research describes a suite of 16 prevailing themes and attributes the themes to the four process stages of the "thriving transition cycle" (i.e. preparation, encounter, adjustment and stability).

His research provides a unique, dynamic and detailed framework for the examination of the transition process and indicators for timely and effective interventions.

The art of health and wellbeing

Bringing together some of the world's foremost advocates, practitioners and academics in Arts and Health was the recent international conference, The Art of Good Health and Wellbeing 2009, held at Port Macquarie from 10-13 November 2009.

The conference was organised by **Margaret Meagher**, Executive Director of Arts and Health Australia, and was attended by 300 delegates, including a number of inspiring Australian, UK and USA delegates, who were willing to share a wealth of knowledge and practice in key approaches to the arts impacting on health and wellbeing.

Themes of the conference ranged from arts delivery, research implementation and evaluation, policy and structure in primary care, community health, health promotion, medical humanities and education. In due course, the conference website will contain all the plenary sessions for full viewing along with some PowerPoint files from presentations and artworks.

A number of pre-conference workshops were made available for delegates, including The Creative Ageing Workshop by **Susan Perlstein**, who ran the Elders Share the Arts program, New York, and later became founder and Director of Education at the National Center for Creative Ageing, Washington DC.

Mike White, Senior Research Fellow in Arts in Health, Centre for Medical Humanities, Durham University, UK convened a session discussing research – Are We There Yet? Meaningful International Exchange of Practice and Research in Community-based Arts in Health.

A full three-day workshop presented by Dr **Cheryl Dileo**, Professor of Music Therapy and Director, Arts and Quality of Life Research Centre and Dr **Joke Bradt** from Temple University, Philadelphia, for musicians and visual artists gave key information and skills to assist in preparing for work in hospitals and other health care facilities.

Dr **Rosa McManamey**, UDRH Junior Research Fellow, presented a paper entitled "Arts Health Community Resilience and Healing: Social Capital and a Response to Natural Disaster". The presentation was well received and resulted in vigorous discussion and interest in relation to current practices relating to bushfire recovery and community response. The paper focused the importance, functioning, and structure of social capital networks – through bonding, bridging, and broadly linking partnerships – in a way that can engender successful grass roots community initiatives engendering healing and resilience in the wake of a natural disaster.

However, the focus of the after-paper discussion and questions turned to the importance of story-telling and narrative as ongoing evidence in contributing to strengthening community identity; the sharing of very emotional experience to both engender healing in others, and the maintenance of local knowledge and history.

Some of the participants at the workshop were community members and practitioners from a number of natural disaster areas including the Thredbo landslide recovery in 1997, the Eyre Peninsula fires in 2005, and the 2009 Victorian bushfires.

Enhancing health service provision in Meander Valley community

Meander Valley is fondly recalled for its natural beauty and community spirit. Currently, it is also on the map for a research project that aims to enhance health service provision in the Meander Valley community.

The findings of this research project will complement the outcomes of the Health and Wellbeing Survey conducted in 2006/2007, which supported a number of initiatives, such as the development of a fenced playground at the Deloraine Train Park, a tennis court at Hadspen, bike/walking trails at Hadspen and Prospect, funding for Community Safety, and a number of new local services.

The current research project is collaboratively conducted by Dr

Quynh Lê, Stuart Auckland, Andrew Harris of the UDRH and health service providers in the Meander Valley municipality.

A questionnaire has been developed to gain an understanding of the physical health and wellbeing of the Meander Valley population, and to investigate access issues for different localities and communities.

The information will be used to assist health policy makers and health professionals in improving health access and services. Two workshops were conducted to engage communities in the data collection process and to review survey administration for future reference.



(from left) Andrew Harris, Dr Quynh Lê and Stuart Auckland

For further information about the project, please contact: Dr Quynh Lê (tel: 6324 4053, email: Quynh.Le@utas.edu.au, postal address: Locked Bag 1372, Launceston, Tasmania 7250).

A review of the 2009 UDRH Seminar Series

Year 2009 was a fantastic one for the UDRH Seminar Series. We have had well over 500 people take part, and, at times, have had over a dozen venues participating at any one time. This level of involvement shows the tremendous value of the research being undertaken within the UDRH and other health professionals in Tasmania.

The seminar series is an important link allowing research to connect and contribute to the staff and greater community dealing with health issues on a daily basis.

We would like to thank all of our presenters for the 2009 year for their time and insight. In 2009, we heard from:

- **Sue Whetton:** "Privacy and Health Informatics" and "E-Health: More than Technology",
- **Dr Christine Stirling:** "The Community Care System for People with Dementia",
- **Shelagh Lowe:** "The Tasmanian Allied Health Workforce – Getting Them and Keeping Them?",
- **Dr Pat Millar and Flora Dean:** "Difficult-to-engage Families",
- **Deborah van Velzen and Jonathan Bedloe:** "Pandemic Flu – Your Questions Answered",
- **Dr Erica Bell:** "Using Research to Shape Health Policy",

- **Dr Peter Orpin and Kim Boyer:** "Healthy Eating, Healthy Aging Study",
- **Susan Johns:** "Finding Common Ground: Early Childhood Collaborations in Rural Tasmania", and
- **Dr Clarissa Hughes:** "Learning from SNAP: How 'Social Norms' Insights Could Help to Re-focus ATOD Education".

In addition, thank you to everyone who has participated in the Seminar Series in 2009.

In the next few weeks, the UDRH will distribute to participants details of the next seminar, and a Continuing Professional Development survey by which it is hoped to gain a greater understanding of what our audiences are interested in, and how they prefer to access seminars and professional development as a whole. Please fill in the survey form with as much information as you can.

It is also time to plan for 2010 seminars. If you have any suggestions for presenters or topics, please let UDRH Administrative Coordinator **Diane Martin** know by email to Di.Martin@utas.edu.au

Thanks again for your support, interest and participation in 2009, and we look forward to seeing you at our training activities in 2010.

Sue Whetton recognised for contribution to health informatics

In July 2009, **Sue Whetton**, UDRH Lecturer (Online Educational Development), was made a Fellow of the Australasian College of Health Informatics.

Her fellowship is in recognition of her ongoing contribution to the field of health informatics. The Australasian College of Health Informatics is Australasia's peak health informatics professional body, representing the interests of a broad range of clinical and non-clinical professionals working within the health informatics sphere.

Sue coordinates the E-Health (Health Informatics) program and the Master of Health (Specialisation) program.

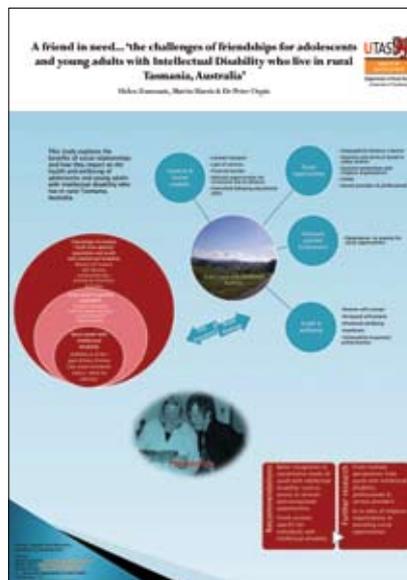
She chairs the Faculty of Health Science Steering Committee, and is charged with the responsibility for embedding e-health/health informatics in the curriculum of professional courses within the faculty.

Sue is primary author and content editor of the textbook *Health Informatics: A Socio-technical Perspective* published by Oxford University Press (2005), and has contributed to national and international forums on health informatics, particularly around the nature and focus of the discipline.

A friend in need . . .

Helen Zournazis, UDRH Project Officer Community Health Development, had a poster and oral presentation at the 10th World Down Syndrome Congress, Dublin Ireland from 19 – 22 August 2009. This international conference attracted over 1,000 participants from policy makers, medics, people with Down syndrome and their families. Presenters and participants came from all round the globe, and included Tasmanians.

Helen's research project was part of her Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation and Development (PHCRED) employment in 2008. Her presentation focused on the challenges faced in the development of friendships for rural adolescents and young adults with intellectual disability. Helen's literature review indicated that friendship formation is an essential element for one's health and wellbeing, particularly during adolescence. This qualitative study used semi-structured interviews which were conducted with seven parents/carers of adolescents and young



Helen's poster for the World Down Syndrome Congress

adults living in rural Tasmania.

The study highlighted that limited services and activities reduce opportunities for forming and maintaining friendships, and that

isolation and mobility issues in rural areas contribute to increased parental involvement. Nevertheless, parents/carers who were themselves highly socially connected, stated their adolescent/ young adult with intellectual disability had extensive social networks and support. The importance of friendships was stated as contributing to increased happiness and reduced loneliness.

Helen concluded her presentation by highlighting that living in a rural environment compounded the many issues that individuals with intellectual disability face in the establishment and maintenance of friendships.

A delegate at Helen's presentation informed her that a similar larger study is currently being undertaken in rural Western Australia.

The conference organisers requested Helen to also provide a poster presentation of this study, as this was indicated as an important topic for conference delegates.

Social Norms work remains in the spotlight

UDRH Research Fellow Dr **Clarissa Hughes** and colleagues have been continuing to progress research and practice relating to positive, innovative models of health education for young people.

UDRH began work in this field back in 2005 when the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation agreed to fund SNAP (the Social Norms Analysis Project), the first Australian trial of the social norms approach to health promotion. Since that time, Dr Hughes has been working to assess and contribute to the evidence-base, improve networks and communication, and invigorate debate about how the insights of the approach can inform policies and practices in the field of health/wellness promotion.

Some recent highlights include:

King Island Trip – Dr **Gillian Long**, Huon Project Officer for SNAP, Tasmanian Institute of Law Enforcement Studies, University of Tasmania, and Dr Clarissa Hughes visited King Island on 16 and 17 November 2009, where they presented an information session and quiz to the local dance group, as well as working with the local school. Students in grades 4, 8 and 10 enjoyed the interactive sessions in which they used clickers (audience response devices) to find out about

perceived behaviours relating to issues such as bullying and alcohol use.

NSW Presentation – The New South Wales Government Department of Education and Training (DET NSW) recently flew Dr Hughes to Sydney to present to a group of drug education consultants, policy analysts and others working in the area of student wellbeing. Dr Hughes presented an overview of the international evidence base for social norms work and explained the key ways in which social norms differs from much conventional school-based health promotion. The participants discussed the implications for their work, and further collaborative work between UDRH Tasmania and DET NSW is planned for 2010.

Videoconference Seminar – On 25 November 2009, Dr Hughes presented at a UDRH seminar on "Learning from SNAP: How 'Social Norms' Insights Could Help to Re-focus ATOD Education" to various sites around Tasmania. During the seminar, Dr Hughes reflected on the essential learnings from SNAP, and suggested ways in which social norms could prompt a re-think of health promotion for young people. The session also updated participants on several post-SNAP research projects, work with

international colleagues, and the new 4Real website/online survey portal that will be launched in 2010.

New 4Real Network being established – If you would like to become a member of the new 4Real RAP (Research and Practice) network for people (teachers, counsellors, youth workers, nurses, policy analysts, etc) who are interested in social norms, please send an email to Clarissa.Hughes@utas.edu.au (with "4Real RAP Network" in the title of the email) and include the following information: Name, Position, Organisation, State/Territory and Preferred Email Address.

Pay a Visit to the Rural Health Training Events Home Page

The UDRH Rural Health Training Events (www.ruralhealth.utas.edu.au/events/) home page is a central repository of information about rural health training events for rural Tasmanian health professionals, health students, community organisations and consumers.

We welcome your visit to check out training information or to include your events.

PHCRED update

On 19 November 2009, the UDRH Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation and Development (PHCRED) team joined with their partners in the Menzies Research Institute to present the 6th Annual Tasmanian Primary Health Care Research Symposium at the Wrest Point complex in Hobart.

The theme of the symposium was "Getting it out there", chosen in recognition of the need to improve dissemination of the growing body of PHC research and evaluation in the state, so that others may share in this valuable learning.

Guest plenary speaker was Associate Professor **Ellen McIntyre**, Manager of the Primary Health Care Research and Information Service (PHCRIS) based at Flinders University in South Australia. A/Prof McIntyre shared some of the wide experience of the PHCRIS team in improving dissemination of primary health care research. Her presentation provided some valuable tips for participants.

The symposium this year attracted a record 18 presentations covering a diverse range of projects and levels of experience in research and presentation. Project topics covered almost the full spectrum of research approaches

and topics as diverse as a technical introduction to qualitative comparative analysis as a research methodology, to a nurse's reflection on the factors prompting her decision to begin training as a Nurse Practitioner.

Verbal feedback from the day was very enthusiastic, and our goal for 2010 is to increase attendance beyond this year's 50 registrations to give this exciting work the exposure it deserves.

For further details, please refer to the full abstracts and presenter details on the PHCRED website (www.phcred.utas.edu.au/symposiums.htm).

Putting health on the map

The Community Advisory Board (CAB) of the Beaconsfield District Health Service and the UDRH in collaboration with the West Tamar Council commenced a project in May 2009 to map the community health and wellbeing needs of residents in the Beaconsfield catchment area.

The project involved consultation with residents and service providers who live or provide services in the 7270, 7275 and 7276 postcode areas.

The project aims to gather a variety of information from community members, health service providers and community stakeholders – including the council, schools, businesses and service groups – in order to plan and develop funding grants, service plans and other initiatives that can be used to improve the health and wellbeing of the community in the Beaconsfield catchment area.

The Beaconsfield Health and Wellbeing Mapping Project is a timely initiative, as the last health needs assessment was conducted in 2002.

The current scheme is designed to identify and prioritise the relevant needs and assets of the local community by incorporating the views, perceptions and thoughts of as many people as possible from within the Beaconsfield catchment area.

As such, community members and service providers were invited to participate in this project in two key ways: via community/ youth/ service provider surveys, which were distributed by mail or accessed online; and through a series of community focus groups conducted during August to October 2009.

The project has been well received by community members. This was evidenced by high levels of interest to participate in focus groups, the positive feedback contained in survey responses, and very healthy survey return rates (over 30% of community surveys and 50% of youth surveys).

The findings from the surveys and focus groups are being analysed, and will be available in a report through the CAB in early 2010.

For further information, you can contact the key project members:

Michael Perkins, Beaconsfield Health and Wellbeing Project, Chair Beaconsfield Community Health Advisory Board (tel: 6394 7189, email: Imperkins@bigpond.com)

Helen Zournazis: Project Officer, University Department of Rural Health, (tel: 6324 4000, email: Helen.Zournazis@utas.edu.au)

Sustainable Farm Families – Circular Head pilot project

The Circular Head Sustainable Farm Families pilot project was delivered to dairy farm families over a 12 month period concluding with a workshop in July 2009. Eight farm families from the Circular Head region participated in the program.

Sustainable Farm Families (SFF) is a preventative health program developed by Western District Health Service in Victoria that aims to directly engage farm families in a health education program

that will help them recognise and identify factors affecting the health of farm families.

It achieves this by undertaking a range of health assessments on participating farmers and their families, and by monitoring their health status over a 12-month period.

In addition, participants are provided with information by SFF-trained health professionals pertaining to a range of health issues that impact on the health and wellbeing of farm families. As part of the program, participants were asked to develop their individual health action plans based on information provided to them through their health assessments and workshop sessions.

The 12-month pilot program concluded in July 2009, and as part of the evaluation, participating farm families acknowledged that the program had encouraged them to make significant positive changes to their lifestyles. In particular, a number of participants stated that they had reduced their weight; others had made a point of taking time off from farm duties; some participants had implemented a farm safety audit on their farm equipment; whilst others had implemented physical activity regimes for themselves and their families. All participants agreed that the program had raised their awareness about the importance of farmer health and safety, particularly the direct correlation between the health of farm families and farm productivity.

Coordinators of the Circular Head Sustainable Farm Families pilot project would like to thank the following sponsors for their generous contribution to the program: Circular Head Council, Fonterra Pty, ANZ Bank and Incitec Pivot.

In Brief

The UDRH is pleased to welcome the following colleagues:

Lindie Lupo has joined us as Executive Officer, responsible for the effective and efficient administrative and contractual management of the UDRH. Her areas of responsibility include strategic and business planning, financial management, human resources management and administration.

Lindie has previously held senior financial and administrative positions in a range of public and not-for-profit organisations, the most recent being Corporate Manager at Northern Tasmanian Development.

Lindie replaces Dr **Bruce Williams**, who left the UDRH in October 2009.

Latha Jeyaraj takes over the position of Student Support Officer, as the incumbent **Yvette Massey** has been seconded to the School of Nursing and Midwifery as Administrative Officer until 31 December 2010.

Latha is responsible for providing administrative and coordination support of graduate coursework including the E-Health Program and Master in Health. Latha also assists in the undergraduate area and administers the Bachelor of Nursing and Allied Health Student Support Programs and the Rural Health Teaching Site Program. Prior to this Latha was employed by the University of Melbourne for seven years and worked at the School of Graduate Studies and the Faculty of Economics and Commerce.

Another new member to the team is **Nevenka Alempijevic** who joins as the Mental Health Academic Program Administration Support Officer. She will provide administrative and coordination support for the Mental Health Academic



(from left) Latha Jeyaraj, Nevenka Alempijevic

Program including the support of research, teaching and learning, and community engagement activities conducted under the Mental Health Academic Program.

In the last five years, Nevenka worked for the recruitment industry and market research. Currently, she is finishing the Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation and Development (PHCRED) apprenticeship under the supervision of Dr **Martin Harris** and is enrolled in MA Industrial/Organisational Psychology.

The UDRH misses Dr **Rosemary Cane** who left us in November 2009. As a dentist with a keen interest in research, Rosemary joined the staff of the UDRH in 2000. It was a milestone appointment in the absence of a dental school, and within an environment where oral health was not included as a national priority.

Rosemary's early work resulted in a National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) research grant investigating public oral health service models, which involved consideration of workforce education, recruitment and evolving population methods to control rates of dental decay. This work laid the foundation for the establishment of a successful clinical placement program

for dental students and initiatives to increase the number of dentists in Tasmania.

Whilst at the UDRH, Rosemary was a member of the national Dental Workforce Education Committee for the Australian Dental Association.

Following further research successes, Rosemary was awarded a NHMRC postgraduate public health scholarship to undertake her PhD with Associate Professor **Peg LeVine** and Dr **Gerard Gill** as supervisors. It is with great regret that personal circumstances have prevented Rosemary from completing this work, which considered visits to GPs for dental problems and the integration of oral health and general health.

Reflecting on her years at the UDRH, Rosemary cited: "The opportunity to work with a diverse group of people and approaches to improve the community's health, and to increase awareness of oral health as part of health, is the highlight of my career".



Dr Rosemary Cane

Upcoming training opportunities

UDRH Seminar Series

For details, please contact Diane Martin (tel: 6324 4043, email: Di.Martin@utas.edu.au)

Presenter: Helen Howarth, Lecturer in Rural Pharmacy, UDRH
Subject: Healthy Hearts
Date: 2 Mar (Wed)
Time: 12:15 – 1:30pm
Venue: Telehealth Studios state wide

PHCRED Workshops

For details, please contact Candice Lai (tel: 6226 4803, email: PHCRED.Tas@utas.edu.au)

Subject: An Introduction to Research and Evaluation in Practice
Dates and venues:
Hobart – 16 Feb (Tue)
Launceston – 20 Feb (Sat)
Burnie – 27 Feb (Sat)

Subject: Introduction to Literature Searching
Dates and venues:
Hobart – 12 (Fri), 20 (Sat) & 26 (Fri) Mar
Launceston – 25 (Thu) & 26 (Fri) Mar