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From the A/Co-Directors' Desk

Welcome to the May 2009 edition of the UDRH Newsletter. The release of this newsletter coincides with the recent 2009 Federal Budget announcement. Given the current fiscal environment, it was pleasing to see that the rural health sector fared reasonably well. Some of the highlights included a new 5-point classification scale to be used to determine eligibility for national rural and remote health programs.

In addition, there were announcements on major investments in health infrastructure with funding going towards initiatives in a number of Tasmanian rural and regional areas. On another positive note, funding will be allocated through the UDRH program to support workforce training and in particular further assistance to encourage students in health disciplines to pursue a career in rural health.

A number of UDRH staff have just returned from the 10th National Rural Health Conference recently held in Cairns where UDRH staff presented 11 papers across a range of research and program areas. This is a superb achievement, given that only 120 out of 370 papers were accepted. In addition, UDRH graduate research students **Anna Spinaze** and **Peter Mulholland** obtained the Rural Health Graduate Research Conference Funding Grants to attend and present at the conference.

Dr Erica Bell presented a paper on climate change. As a forerunner in rural health and climate change research in Tasmania, Erica will host a research forum on "Climate Change and Rural Tasmania – What Evidence for which Policies and Practices?" on 5 June 2009. Details of the forum can be found in this newsletter.

We are pleased to welcome **Jane Wardlaw**, **Leigh Tesch** and **Faline Howes** as Junior Fellows under the Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation and Development (PHCRED)



Stuart Auckland and Dr Erica Bell

program. **Helen Zournazis** has also joined us to work as a project officer on the Beaconsfield District Health Community Needs Assessment.

It is timely to mention that Rural Health Week 2009 will be staged this year and will run from 9 to 15 November. An official launch of the event was held on 7 April. At the launching ceremony, Health Minister the Hon **Lara Giddings** encouraged local community groups to actively participate in Rural Health Week.

The UDRH would like to urge local groups from communities around the state to apply for Rural Health Week seeding grants for planning and organising their health promotion activities. A grant of up to \$2,500 will be awarded to each successful applicant. Applications will close on 30 June 2009. For further information, please contact Rural Health Week Liaison Officer **Karla Peek** (email: K.Peek@utas.edu.au, phone: (03) 6324 4012).

Communities are also invited to nominate local champions of rural health and there will be three awards – the Rural Health Community Award, Rural Health Worker Award and Rural Health Group Award. Visit the Rural Health Week website (<http://www.rhwatas.com.au>) for details.

We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter.

Stuart Auckland and Erica Bell
Acting Co-Directors

Tuning in to the notes of Rural Health Week



Health Minister Lara Giddings

Singers young and not so young were a highlight of the launch of Rural Health Week 2009 on World Health Day, 7 April, at the Midlands Multi Purpose Health Centre in Oatlands. Rural Health Week was officially launched by the Minister for Health, the Hon **Lara Giddings**.

Rural Health Week is rural Tasmania's premier health promotion event and the

UDRH is one of the lead organisations involved in planning, promoting and supporting statewide and regional events.

Rural Health Week complements the aims and objectives of Tasmania's Health Plan as it supports a primary health care approach by supporting community-based preventative health programs.

Students from the Oatlands District High School provided an uplifting start to the launch and had the audience tapping their toes to a medley of well-known songs including Waltzing Matilda.

On a more serious note, speakers talked about rural health issues, the importance of health promotion and illness prevention, and the challenges facing rural communities in times of drought and economic hardship.

Rural Health Week 2009 will provide communities with opportunities to celebrate their achievements in health and wellbeing under the theme "Health and Wellbeing: Sustaining Rural Tasmania". Community grants of up to \$2,500 each will be available, and communities will be encouraged to nominate their champions in health for Rural Health Awards.

Applications for community grants are now open. Further information about the

grants and award nominations can be obtained through the Rural Health Week website on <http://www.rhwatas.com.au>

With an audience encouraged to reflect on the power of music to improve the mental wellbeing of dementia patients, the launch finished up with the harmonies of the Midlands Singers, who regularly sing for patients.

Rural Health Week will be held from 9 to 15 November 2009.

In 2007, more than 5,000 Tasmanians took part in Rural Health Week activities in dozens of rural communities. The broad range of activities included tai chi and yoga, social get-togethers, advice about complementary and alternative medicine, and health checks.

Further information is available from **Karla Peek** (tel: (03) 6324 4012, email: K.Peek@utas.edu.au) or the Rural Health Week website (<http://www.rhwatas.com.au>).

Photo captions (from left):

- 1) Acting Dean of Health Science and Rural Health Professor Judi Walker addresses at the launching ceremony
- 2) Oatlands District High School Choir
- 3) Midlands Singers



New publication: *Critical Discourse Analysis: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*

A new book *Critical Discourse Analysis: An Interdisciplinary Perspective* edited by Dr **Quynh Lê**, UDRH Lecturer, Dr **Thao Lê** and **Megan Short**, both of the School of Education, will be published by Nova Science Publishers, New York in July 2009.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a relatively new field in the academic world. CDA transcends individual disciplines as the issues it deals with are complex and multidimensional, covering,

inter alia, health, linguistics, history, sociology, philosophy and psychology. As such, the study of CDA requires an interdisciplinary approach and perspective.

This book attracted contributions from scholars around the world, including well-known Australian researchers, Professors **Joseph Lo Bianco** (University of Melbourne), Professor **Peter Freebody** (University of Sydney), and Professor **Alison Lee** (University

of Technology, Sydney). Its 25 chapters comprise interdisciplinary topics in education, health, social science, information technology, and research methodology.

The book is currently on sale at the Amazon website and the Nova Science Publishers website (https://www.novapublishers.com/catalog/product_info.php?products_id=9711).

Dental researcher Rosemary Cane receives award of excellence



Dr David Butler (left) and Dr Rosemary Cane (centre) receive the award at the ADA Congress

Dr **Rosemary Cane**, a UDRH researcher, was recently presented a prestigious award by Australia's top dental association.

A paper co-authored by Rosemary, Dr **David Butler** of Oral Health Services Tasmania and Dr **Colin Chilvers** of the

Launceston General Hospital has won an Award of Excellence in the Clinical Report category offered by the *Australian Dental Journal* of the Australian Dental Association (ADA).

Rosemary said, "This paper is an example of a highly successful clinical

collaboration between the medical profession, dental profession and research services in providing care for a special needs dental patient, as an essential aspect of regional and rural public dental services."

The paper highlights the potential seriousness of dental infection, particularly for people with complex medical conditions living in a rural setting.

Dr Butler and Dr Chilvers also hold conjoint positions as Clinical Senior Lecturers at UTAS, and Dr Cane holds a National Health and Medical Research Council postgraduate scholarship.

The *Australian Dental Journal* publishes peer reviewed papers on research, clinical developments and treatments of relevance to Australian dental practice and is distributed to more than 10,000 dentists throughout Australia as well as a number of domestic and international subscribers.

Climate change and rural Tasmania

Climate change poses a major challenge for rural Tasmania. A community event hosted by the UDRH will bring together over 22 Tasmanian research leaders from diverse disciplines to explain to general audiences what their research findings mean for rural Tasmania. These research findings will provide evidence for specific policies and practices.

Event: Climate Change and Rural Tasmania – What Evidence for which Policies and Practices?
Date: 5 June 2009 (Friday)
Time: 9:30am – 5:00pm
Venue: University of Tasmania, Stanley Burbury Theatre, Churchill Avenue, Sandy Bay, and rural locations across Tasmania via video conference

The forum convenor and UDRH A/Co-Director Dr **Erica Bell** said, "This event aims to focus attention on the needs of rural Tasmania at a time when the global financial crisis is combining with the effects of climate change to increase the hardships experienced by these communities."

"The community forum is about helping translate the climate change research into practical understandings of what responses are needed for rural Tasmania. The fact that Tasmania is home to internationally recognised climate-change researchers means we can be optimistic about our capacity to develop sound evidence-based policy for climate change."

The event will be opened by the Hon **David Llewellyn**, MP, who will provide a retrospective on the Tasmanian government's actions on climate change. The Hon **Lisa Singh**, MP, recently appointed Minister Assisting the Premier on Climate Change, will later provide comments on the government's future responses to climate change.

"I'm delighted to say that within a few days of opening bookings for this event, it was set to attract a large audience, including many parliamentarians and government policy makers who can make a difference to rural Tasmania," said Dr Bell.

Topic areas to be covered are:

- management of rural Tasmania's water and marine environments;

- land and agriculture;
- forests and vegetation;
- new approaches for human health;
- sustainable built environments;
- management and governance;
- education and development;
- law and legal systems.

"A large body of evidence has accumulated to show that responding to the health effects of climate change will require working across research silos," said Dr Bell. "This event is shaped by the consensus that effective policy for climate change, including health policy, will involve a 360-degree view of the research evidence."

The community forum is free and open to policy makers, practitioners, not-for-profit workers, activists, entrepreneurs and all other interested community members who will have the opportunity to ask questions of panels, made up of speakers from each topic area, throughout the day.

To reserve seats at this event, contact **Sarah Brinckman** on Sarah.Brinckman@utas.edu.au or (03) 6226 7375.

Graduate Research news

The UDRH Graduate Research program will run its first 2009 Collaborative Graduate Research Symposium on 16 June 2009 at the Art Gallery – Education Building, Block A, Newnham Campus, Launceston.

The symposium is 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, professional and interpersonal networking, as well as for the participants to reflect individually and collectively on their research journeys. The symposium will include presentations from PhD and research Masters students from the above schools. Symposium information is available at the UDRH Graduate Research website (<http://www.ruralhealth.utas.edu.au/gr/support-program.php>).

We are pleased that Professor **Judi Walker**, Chief Executive of Rural Clinical School and Professor of Rural Health; Professor **Peter Frappell**, Dean of Graduate Research; Professor **Sue Kilpatrick**, Deakin University; and all the heads of the above schools have accepted the invitation to participate at the symposium, despite their busy schedules.

A total of 13 responses from the students to present at the symposium have been impressive.

We would like to applaud the students who have submitted topics: **Sandra Campbell**, **Dr Rosemary Cane**, **Deb Carnes**, **Shandell Elmer**, **Karen Ford**, **Ree van Galen**, **Susan Johns**, **Robyn Kelly**, **Winifred vanderPloeg**, **Brigit Stratton**, **Danielle Williams**, **Juanita Westbury** and **Zich Zichy-Woinarski**.

Guest speaker Professor Sue Kilpatrick will share her experience on “(Re)Establish Health Research on the Move” and meet UTAS students who are still under her supervision. Dr **Erica Bell** will chair this keynote address session.

The symposium also includes a provocation panel on “Preparing for Tomorrow Today: Health Research in a Changing World”. Invited panel members are: Professor **Madeleine Ball**, **Dr Clarissa Hughes**, Professor **Denise Fassett**, **Dr John Field**, **Dr Peter Orpin**, and Professor **Andrew Robinson**. Associate Professor **Dominic Geraghty** will be the chairperson of the panel.

The symposium is indicative of a dynamic and collaborative research spirit. So far, we have been excited by the response and we look forward to this promising event.

In addition to the symposium, we have some more graduate research news to share.

Warmest congratulations go to the following members for their successes and achievements:

- **Chona Hannah** and **Ha Hoang** for winning the UTAS Graduate Research Candidate Conference Grants to attend and present at the International Conference on Community Health Nursing Research in Adelaide.
- **Peter Mulholland** and **Anna Spinaze** for winning the Rural Health Graduate Research Conference Funding Grants to attend the 10th National Rural Health Conference in Cairns.
- Ha Hoang's published article, co-authored with Dr **Quynh Lê** and Professor Sue Kilpatrick and entitled “Having a Baby in the New Land: A Qualitative Exploration of the Experiences of Asian Migrants in Rural Tasmania” derived from her Masters thesis, received positive feedback from readers: “The research is so valuable in making our health care systems more about care and understanding, and less about economics and administration.”

Pilot study to map community cancer health-needs profile



(from left) *Dr Rosa McManamey, Deborah Church, Jess Whelan and Dr Clarissa Hughes*

Over the past five months, the Cancer Council Tasmania and UDRH have collaborated on a unique pilot study to examine the cancer health and wellbeing needs of rural communities in Tasmania.

The Circular Head municipality was chosen by the Cancer Council Tasmania as a pilot site for the research and collaboration with the UDRH.

The aims of the project are to review the needs of the Circular Head community

in relation to all areas related to cancer prevention and treatment.

There were two key rationales for choosing the Circular Head municipality for the pilot study. First, Circular Head is known to experience health issues stemming from isolation from cancer services. Second, the region is known to have a remarkable community spirit having contributed at least \$800,000 to charities in the last couple of years, including a major contribution to the Cancer Council's Relay for Life.

The project stems from a commitment of Cancer Council Tasmania to both improving the provision of cancer services to the Circular Head Local Government Area and advocating for enhanced future access to a range of health and allied services in the region.

The research project led by UDRH staff **Jess Whelan** and **Dr Rosa McManamey** and Cancer Council

Tasmania Deputy Chief Executive Officer **Deborah Church** predominantly involved the collation and analysis of over 70 secondary sources and informal consultations with stakeholders and service providers.

This information was used to develop an extensive cancer profile of the Circular Head region that incorporates regional demographic trends, an understanding of cancer risk factors and behaviours, development of cancer service profiles, and the establishment of actions and recommendations for further research and enhanced future access to a range of health and allied health services in the region.

The report is currently being finalised with stakeholders, and will be launched and released formally in June 2009.

It is anticipated that the project will be expanded to cover other rural Tasmanian communities in the next two years.

Teenagers gain research skills

UDRH Research Fellow Dr **Clarissa Hughes** has been working with a number of high schools around Tasmania, as part of their peer leadership and drug education programs. Twelve Tasmanian schools have received funding from the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations to conduct special forums on topics relating to wellbeing and resilience, and many of these forums have a research component.

According to Clarissa, "The National Schools Drug Education Project Grants have been a real boon for schools. The funding has enabled them to pursue issues relevant to their school and link in with other schools, parents and the wider community."

Clarissa also believes that the funding has been particularly beneficial for rural communities. "Having grown up in a rural area, I'm conscious of the fact that sometimes rural communities can

be isolated and can face difficulties accessing specialised support. This funding has enabled schools to access such support and has also assisted them to link in with a wide variety of individuals and organisations in their local area."

Clarissa is a firm believer in the benefits of students "getting their hands dirty". "When I speak to groups of students at high schools, I try to make the sessions as interactive as possible. Students' understanding of the research process is so much better if they are actually doing things rather than just hearing about them."

Recently Clarissa worked with **Janet Potter** and a group of Grade 10 peer leaders at Kingston High, to assist them to develop a survey on bullying and antisocial behaviour and administer their survey to Grade 7 students using instant response devices or "clickers". "I was so impressed by their leadership skills and



Students using a clicker

the way they work together. They enjoyed using the clickers instead of filling in paper forms and their enthusiasm was really obvious."

If you would like to find out more about ways in which Clarissa can work with schools on topics relevant to student wellbeing, contact Dr Clarissa Hughes on (03) 6226 7797 or email: Clarissa.Hughes@utas.edu.au

Anna Spinaze gets support to attend the National Rural Health Conference

Anna Spinaze was awarded a Rural Health Graduate Research Conference Funding Grant to attend and present at the National Rural Health Conference in Cairns, 17 – 20 May. The paper Anna presented is entitled "Social Connectedness and Spatial Connectedness for Rural and Remote Health Professionals", which has also been accepted for the academic peer reviewed publication stream.

This conference has sentimental attachment as well as academic cache for Anna, as she attended it previously as a medical student and student rural health club member in 2001. She was accompanied to Cairns by her two year old son, **Rory**, and his grandfather, **Lester**, as child carer.

Anna is currently pursuing a PhD degree with the UDRH.

UDRH Masters student, **Peter Mulholland**, also obtained the same grant to attend the National Rural Health Conference.



Anna Spinaze presents at the National Rural Health Conference

Improving maternity care for Asian migrants

UDRH PhD candidate **Ha Hoang**, UDRH Lecturer Dr **Quynh Lê** and Professor **Sue Kilpatrick** of Deakin University had a joint paper entitled "Having a Baby in the New Land: A Qualitative Exploration of the Experiences of Asian Migrants in Rural Tasmania, Australia" published in the international journal *Rural and Remote Health*. The paper can be downloaded at: <http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=1084>

The paper explored the childbirth experiences and the barriers to accessing maternal care of 10 Asian migrant women from diverse cultural backgrounds, including Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean and Filipino.

The findings reveal that Asian migrants in Tasmania faced language and cultural barriers when dealing with the health care system, which is new to them. As some Asian migrants retain their own traditional views and practices for maternity care, confusion and conflicting expectations may occur. Family and community play an important role in supporting migrant women through their maternity period. Providing interpreting services and social support for migrant women as well as improving cross-cultural training for health care providers are recommended in order to improve existing maternity care services.

Pregnancy and childbirth can be the most significant events in a woman's life. It is potentially a period of achievement, happiness and fulfilment, but also a time of dependence and vulnerability. This study provides some insights into the issues and problems facing Asian migrant women in their childbirth experiences in rural Tasmania. It is hoped that the findings will contribute to the enhancement of health care services for vulnerable migrant women in rural Australia.

News from the Rural Clinical School

New facilities to support training at King Island and Smithton

The construction of new facilities to support training in remote locations is underway at King Island and Smithton. Once completed, increased numbers of students and doctors in training will be able to undertake extended clinical attachments.

On King Island, building of the new facility, which includes three ensuite bedrooms, shared living spaces and outdoor decks, is well underway. The development is adjacent to the existing Rural Health Teaching Site in the grounds of the King Island Hospital and Health Centre, making the most of the site's northerly aspect and views. It will offer more family-friendly accommodation options for clinical placements and supervisors, as well as extra space.

At Smithton, work has just begun to remodel the existing Rural Health Teaching Site to complement the new hospital facility. Family-friendly, apartment-style accommodation will



The new King Island facility

provide opportunities for longer-term placements, and will blend with existing accommodation.

The facilities have been made possible through an agreement between the Rural Clinical School and the construction project manager the Department of Health and Human Services.

The extra accommodation will be very valuable at a time when health student

numbers are increasing and curriculum redesign, particularly in medicine and nursing courses, is widening to include rural and community health as key clinical training opportunities.

Most final year Rural Clinical School medical students will be undertaking remote medical attachments on King Island and in Smithton in 2009 and into the future.

RCS student excellence and career directions



Graduation for the Rural Clinical School class of 2008

Rural Clinical School (RCS) students were well represented in prizes and awards presented as part of UTAS graduation ceremonies at the end of 2008.

Of particular note were:

- **Naomi Jeram** (Years 5 and 6 at the RCS) – awarded the GE Clemons Prize for the medical student judged as most strongly
- **Josephine Stringer** (Year 5 at the RCS in 2007) – awarded a prestigious University Medal and the Royal Australasian College of Physicians Prize in Paediatrics and Child Health,

exhibiting the qualities of humanity, conscientiousness and devotion to the profession of medicine, and the Andrew Platts Memorial Prize for Internal Medicine,

- **Richard Jamieson** (Year 5 at the RCS in 2007) – granted the Orthopaedic Fellowship.

As well, 6 of 12 final year RCS students were awarded first class honours.

Three RCS students who graduated in the MBBS last year accepted intern positions at the North West Regional Hospital (NWRH) for 2009, along with two other UTAS medical graduates. Others from the class of 2008 are interns in Launceston, Melbourne, Darwin, Alice Springs, Sydney, Geelong and Townsville.

In addition, former RCS student Dr **Mike Stoneman** was awarded 2008 NWRH Intern of the Year. Dr Stoneman is now a Resident Medical Officer at the NWRH and has begun the first part of the GP Registrar Training Program at the hospital.

Other former RCS students are working all around Australia in a variety of fields. A number have returned to work on the Coast in anaesthetics, paediatrics, general medicine, general practice, obstetrics and gynaecology and health promotion.

North West Coast research news



Winifred vanderPloeg (left) with supervisor Dr Ali Maginness

The Rural Clinical School (RCS) congratulates former occupational therapist **Winifred vanderPloeg** on winning a Tasmanian Graduate Research Scholarship. Winifred is based in Burnie and has successfully transferred from a Master of Medical Science to a PhD under the supervision of Professor **Judi Walker** and Rural Clinical School academic and clinical psychologist Dr **Ali Maginness**.

Her research, whilst very much in the development phase, will focus on health literacy, defined most often as “the degree to which individuals have

the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions”. Another focus will be on the prevalence of health literacy on the North West Coast.

Most literature on the topic comes from the US and Canada. Australia is just starting to develop its own bank of health literacy research to match a growing interest in this area as a crucial factor underpinning the delivery and use of health services. Winifred hopes her research will make a valuable contribution to this area.

Other research news from the Rural Clinical School includes:

- Interest in postgraduate Clinical Psychology NW attachments has increased, with up to 10 students expected to be based in the North West in 2009 under the supervision of Dr Ali Maginness.
- The successful Rural Clinical School Health Research Matters program will focus on attracting a wider audience across the North West Coast in 2009. The first workshop for this year was held at the Mersey

Community Hospital and attracted good interest.

- Rural Clinical School students are being encouraged to explore opportunities in research as part of their studies.

Some students are undertaking preliminary studies into the number and type of clinical presentations to North West Regional Hospital paediatric outpatients clinics. Under the direction of Dr **Bert Shugg**, students will undertake research that will add to the national paediatric database, following on from workshops delivered in the North West last year by Visiting Research Fellow Dr **Harriet Hiscock**.



RCS Research Fellow Maree Gleeson discussing research proposals with medical students

NW health professionals undertaking Graduate Certificate in Teaching & Learning



(from left) Dr Deb Wilson, Rose Moore, Dr Robyn Brogan, Dr Nick Towle, Dr Satish Kumar, Dr Ray Wilson

Ten North West health professionals, who are teaching in the MBBS rural clinical program, are learning to be students again themselves.

They are undertaking the UTAS Graduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning through the Rural Clinical School (RCS).

RCS Medical Education Advisor **Rose Moore** said the participants are keen to learn more about current educational approaches to learning and teaching, as well as sharing their own experiences of teaching with their colleagues.

The 10 health professionals enrolled in the course are Dr **Mohammed Ahmedullah**, pharmacist **Julie Beechey**, Dr **Robyn Brogan**, midwife **Jeanette Hermans**, Dr **Satish Kumar**, clinical psychologist Dr **Ali Maginness**, pharmacist **Suzette Seaton**, Dr **Nick Towle**, Dr **Deb Wilson** and Dr **Ray Wilson**.

Youth alcohol expertise recognised



Dr Clarissa Hughes

UDRH Research Fellow and Academic Research Coordinator, Dr **Clarissa Hughes**, has been recognised as a leader in the field of youth alcohol research in this country. Her work in the area of Social Norms and “social ecological” approaches to health promotion is receiving attention locally, nationally and internationally.

Recently Clarissa was approached by the Australian Research Alliance on Children and Youth (ARACY) to peer review a report on Young People and Risky Drinking, which is the first of ARACY’s Action for Young Australians reports.

She was also invited to participate in a web-based seminar (webinar) which aimed to bring together leading

researchers and policy makers with a range of health and education professionals, to review the evidence for different approaches, and to discuss ways to translate academic knowledge into action “on the ground”. The session was run by Dr **Sherry Sagers** from the National Drug Research Institute in Western Australia.

Clarissa said, “ARACY uses the webinar technology to such good effect. When you are dealing with lots of busy people, it can be difficult to get everyone together, and it can also be very expensive if travel is involved. The webinar gets around all those problems and my experience with the ARACY webinar on Young People and Risky Drinking was that you can have great, productive meetings with a range of relevant people from all over the country without leaving your desk.”

“It’s a form of technology that can certainly benefit those in rural and remote areas, and it’s also reinforced to me that living in Tasmania needn’t be an impediment to involvement in important national and international work.”

ARACY is a national non-profit organisation working to create better futures for all Australia’s children and young people. It focuses on advancing collaboration and evidence-based action. To find out more about ARACY, visit the ARACY website (<http://www.aracy.org.au/>) or contact their Melbourne office on (03) 9345 5145.

Ha Hoang obtains a grant to present at an international conference

UDRH PhD student **Ha Hoang** has been granted the Graduate Research Candidate Conference Grant to attend the 4th International Conference on Community Health Nursing Research in Adelaide from 16 – 20 August 2009. The title of the conference is “Health in Translation: Researching for the Future”.

Ha will present at the conference a paper entitled “Maternity Care Experiences of Ethnic Minority in Australia: A Mixed Methods Study”.

She is grateful to the UTAS Graduate Research Board for giving her an opportunity to share her research work, and to learn from other researchers in the health care field. She also believes that presenting at the conference will help her improve her presentation skills,



Ha Hoang

which will benefit her preparation for the viva voce at the end of her PhD study.

Another UDRH PhD student, **Chona Hannah**, was also awarded a grant to attend the same conference.

Difficult-to-engage families

Engaging difficult-to-reach families can be the hardest part of working on a project, whether it is in community development, family capacity building, or health promotion and lifestyle change.

More than 60 health and community workers from eight locations statewide attended the seminar on “Difficult-to-engage Families” presented by UDRH Lecturer Dr **Pat Millar** and UnitingCare Family Services Northern Manager **Flora Dean** on 22 April 2009.

The seminar presented an overview of research and practice by Dr Pat Millar and Flora Dean.

According to Pat and Flora, this important issue is deeply involved with social inclusion, who explained that by reaching these families, we raise quality of life indicators for all.

Hard-to-reach groups include young parents, fathers, those not using other services, culturally and linguistically diverse and indigenous families. In non-metropolitan settings, isolated families and those with transport difficulties may be difficult to reach.

Several strategies have been found to be useful to engage difficult-to-reach families. These include:

- employing outreach workers, home visiting,
- using soft entry points such as playgroups, and
- collaborating with services working more closely with target groups.

The seminar also pointed out that inadequate program timeframes for effecting change and staff shortages are the main challenges to organisations attempting to reach these groups.

Subscribing to UDRH Tasmania Rural Health E-Bulletin

Please visit www.ruralhealth.utas.edu.au/news/index.php?page=ebulletins. Click [[Subscribe](#)] to input your email address for free subscription.

Role of schools in alcohol education

UDRH Research Fellow Dr **Clarissa Hughes** is part of a multidisciplinary team responsible for conducting an important new national study.

The National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA) at Flinders University has been commissioned by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) to undertake a project to examine the role of secondary schools in alcohol education.

This national scoping project, which is part of the Australian Government's Youth Binge Drinking Initiative, aims to

- investigate existing research on alcohol education programs aimed at deterring and reducing alcohol use in secondary school students;
- consult with experts and key stakeholders (eg school staff, students and parents) about their

experience with school-based alcohol education programs; and

- provide practical recommendations to DEEWR.

Project components include a literature review, public submissions and school consultations.

School consultations are currently being conducted with government, state and independent schools in all states and territories.

Professor **Ann Roche** from Flinders University approached Clarissa to be involved in the funding application because of her expertise in alcohol-related health promotion with adolescents, and in particular the Social Norms approach. Clarissa is the only Tasmanian member of the team and is responsible for the Tasmanian and Victorian data collection as well as being involved in the literature review and reporting.



"I was really pleased when we were notified that our application had been successful," said Clarissa. "NCETA has a brilliant reputation in this area, and I could see the importance of the study both as adding to the evidence base but also as something that will contribute to policy development."

The final report is due in August 2009. If you are interested in receiving the results of this study or your school would like to be involved in the consultation phase, contact NCETA on (08) 8201 7535 or email: nceta@flinders.edu.au

Getting them and keeping them?

Close to 100 health professionals in Tasmania attended the seminar conducted by UDRH Associate Lecturer **Shelagh Lowe** on 25 March 2009. A total of 11 statewide sites were linked to this video conference titled "The Tasmanian Allied Health Workforce – Getting Them and Keeping Them?"

The seminar discussed findings from a comprehensive study into the Tasmanian allied health and oral health workforce conducted by Shelagh Lowe and Professor **Sue Kilpatrick**, Pro Vice Chancellor (Rural and Regional), Deakin University, in 2008.

This study involved 25 different disciplines from the allied health and oral health workforce sectors. It undertook to develop a comprehensive profile of the workforce, including distribution, demographics, work practices, education and training, student supervision, recruitment and retention, and perceptions of professional standing and support.

The study forms part of a national study into the rural allied health workforce. Analysis of the very rich data collected from the participants in Tasmania is continuing. Data collection has been completed in NSW, and analysis has commenced. The Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia

are at varying stages of the project in their respective states. The data enable the publication of individual and multi-professional reports at state and national level to provide a level of information, not previously available, on the Australian rural allied health workforce. It includes data collected from professionals working across all health sectors, including the public-, private- and federal government-funded sectors.

This research has a great deal of relevance to current health workforce planning and health system reform. The provision of the range of services – integrated primary health care services, acute care and rehabilitation services – and its delivery by a highly skilled and qualified allied health and oral health workforce is critical for improving health and wellbeing within Tasmania. Comprehensive current workforce data are required to inform the process.

In the seminar, Shelagh presented and facilitated discussion on key findings from the recruitment and retention section of the workforce survey. The seminar also explored possible ways to attract allied health professionals to work in Tasmania, and investigated the reasons behind their departure and ways to retain them in the Tasmanian workforce.

Negotiating work and life in rural Australia

UDRH's Dr **Quynh Lê** and Deakin University Professor **Sue Kilpatrick** had their joint paper "Vietnamese-born Health Professionals: Negotiating Work and Life in Rural Australia" published in the international journal *Rural and Remote Health*, volume 8, December 2008.

This paper examined the life experiences and acculturation strategies of Vietnamese-born health professionals working and living in rural Australia.

The study provides insights into the lives of these health professionals in a rural context, exploring their experience of cultural shock and the coping strategies they may use.

A need has been identified for a larger study to inform recruitment and retention of these health professionals in rural Australia, and to assist universities prepare overseas students, who plan to pursue a health career in Australia, and their clinical supervisors for rural placements.

The paper can be downloaded at: <http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/subviewnew.asp?ArticleID=1062>

PHCRED update



Leigh Tesch

The Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation and Development (PHCRED) program has had a very eventful start to 2009. **Candice Lai** took over the position of Statewide Facilitator in mid January and has since hit the ground running.

The year's program kicked off with the Introduction to Research workshops in February, followed by the Literature Searching workshops in March. April saw the Qualitative Research Methods workshops, and in May the Reviewing the Literature workshops had just been held.

The Qualitative Research Methods workshops will be repeated in June. For those who missed out on the first round, please check the workshops schedule.

PHCRED welcomed three new Research and Development Program (RDP) junior fellows in February. **Leigh Tesch** and **Faline Howes** are the Menzies Research Institute fellows and **Jane Wardlaw** is the UDRH fellow. We look forward to working with them and hearing about their projects in the annual PHCRED Symposium on 24 November 2009.

PHCRED has also continued its bursary with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Although the advertising was late going out, some high quality applications were still received in early May. The winner will be announced by the end of May.

Given the success PHCRED has enjoyed with the DHHS bursary, the program may look into starting something similar in the near future – so watch this space!



Faline Howes

In the meantime, PHCRED has started off by funding a small prize award for Dr Emma Warneke's 3rd year medical students. These students will compete in a poster presentation, and the winners given book vouchers and a certificate.

For more information, please visit the PHCRED website (<http://www.phcred.utas.edu.au>) or contact Candice Lai, Statewide Facilitator, at Candice.Lai@utas.edu.au or (03) 6226 4803.

Getting Australian rural health professionals ready for climate change

On the threshold of a new era of consequences, it seems climate change is not speaking to medical education and training, and vice versa. As such, UDRH A/Co-Director Dr **Erica Bell** urges that Australia should act locally, nationally and internationally to help ensure rural and remote general practitioners are prepared for a climate-changing world.

Dr Bell presented a paper entitled "Climate Change: Is Australian Rural and Remote Medical Education and Training Ready for the Age of Consequences?" at the 10th National Rural Health Conference in Cairns, 17 – 20 May 2009. The abstract of the paper was selected by the National Rural Health Association to promote the conference in its media release.

Dr Bell said, "Australian statements of rural and remote competencies and related quality assurance mechanisms, such as accreditation, are sophisticated



Dr Erica Bell

and well-developed. However, there are important differences between the world suggested by the climate change research and the world suggested by

these competencies and the system of quality assurance in which they sit.

"Therefore, medical education and training, at the national level, will need to more fully, rapidly, and flexibly reflect integrated and cross-regional multidisciplinary evidence about climate change.

"Climate change will alter the landscape of Australian health care needs, demanding new kinds, and levels of complexity, of doctors' clinical and non-clinical competencies, especially in rural and remote health care."

The climate change literature also suggests the future will demand greater adaptive capacities from general practice education and training, especially for rural and remote practice. However, Australia appears better placed than many developing countries to meet such challenges.

Evaluating students' RIPPER experience

UDRH Lecturers, Dr **Quynh Lê**, **Judy Spencer** and **Jess Whelan**, had their joint journal article, entitled "Development of a Tool to Evaluate Health Science Students' Experiences of an Inter-professional Education Programme", published in the *Annals of the Academy of Medicine Singapore*, December 2008, Vol. 37 No. 12. (Downloadable at: <http://www.annals.edu.sg/pdf/37VolNo12Dec2008/V37N12p1027.pdf>)

This paper discussed the development of a questionnaire to evaluate students' understanding of inter-professional issues and learning outcomes before and after the Rural Inter-professional Program Emergency Retreat (RIPPER).

RIPPER is an educational program developed collaboratively by an inter-professional team from the schools within UTAS Faculty of Health Science.

The assessment validity and reliability of the questionnaire involved three



A student presenting at RIPPER

processes: content validity, construct validity and internal consistency reliability. Data analysis provides evidence of validity which identified factors related to the importance of team working and collaborative learning in inter-professional teams to develop clinical skills including clinical decision making in rural settings with limited resources. The reliability was found to be adequate, with the questionnaire measuring student attitudes to inter-professional learning experiences.

Youth health service SNAPs up positive messages

UDRH Research Fellow, Dr **Clarissa Hughes**, inspired the statewide Youth Health Service staff when talking about her work on the Social Norms Analysis Project (SNAP) at a recent forum in Campbell Town. The teams are very interested in building Social Norms approaches into their work, and benefiting from the experiences of the SNAP in promoting positive health and wellbeing for young people.

Comments from the participants are very encouraging.

"We are always looking for positive and effective ways of engaging young people in health and wellbeing, and the Social Norms approach is a great addition to our tool kit," said **Elizabeth Ritchie**, Youth Health Nurse, headspace Northern Tasmania.

"All the messages on our youth centre walls talk about risks for young people's health. Wouldn't it be great to saturate the centre with positivity!" remarked **Jonathan Pare**, Youth Health Worker, Pulse Youth Health Service.

"The Social Norms approach fits so well with the strengths-based focus of the Youth Health Service Framework. Clarissa's work also gives us ideas about how to better evaluate the work we do.

We love the clickers – a surveying tool that gives young people instant feedback about their peers' views and behaviours. It will be great to build on this connection between DHHS and UDRH," said **Ange Downie**, Acting Area Service Coordinator, North West Area Health Service.

The Youth Health Service is for young people aged 12–24 years and has teams of allied health professionals and nurses based in the North, South and North West of Tasmania. Young people can access health promotion outreach programs and services across the state and through the youth centres in the North and South. While some individual services are provided, the focus is on working with young people and other key people in communities to promote health and wellbeing, and on prevention and early intervention in health problems.

Contact details for the teams are below:

- North – headspace Northern Tasmania, Cnr Brisbane and Wellington Streets, Launceston, (03) 6336 4480
- North West – Parkside, 1 Strahan Street, Burnie, (03) 6440 7140
- South – Pulse Youth Health Service, 2 Terry Street, Glenorchy, (03) 6233 8900

The community care system for people with dementia

The interactive seminar on "The Community Care System for People with Dementia" on 24 February attracted more than 65 health professionals and members of the public in 13 different sites across the state. This seminar was presented by Dr **Christine Stirling**, Senior Research Fellow at Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre, Menzies Research Institute.

The seminar aimed to provide an opportunity for health care practitioners to help develop an agenda for research into people with dementia living in the community.

Dementia is an important national health priority in Australia. It is projected that the numbers of people with dementia will increase by 60%, from the 2002 estimate of 113,000 to 179,000 in 2020, and that this will create a significant strain on Australian health services.

Dementia is a syndrome that covers a range of conditions resulting from progressive impairment of brain function. Most forms are incurable and result in progressive loss of physical and mental capacities. The prevalence of dementia increases with ageing, estimated to double every 5.1 years after the age of 65.

Community services have a mandate to provide patient-centred care, which is made difficult because the system is complex and fragmented. The fragmented sector is a difficult environment in which to enable consumers to participate effectively in self management and care decisions. The Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre is commencing research into ways to assist carers and people with dementia to make decisions and navigate the community care system.

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.

In brief . . .



Diane Martin

We are pleased to welcome **Diane Martin** as Administration Assistant, helping us with reception at the UDRH Launceston office at the Anne O'Byrne Centre. Diane is a customer service specialist and draws on years of experience in a call centre environment and banking. She will work with the administrative team to deliver services to students, academic staff and UDRH clients.

We are also pleased to welcome back ex-UDRH Director Professor **Sue Kilpatrick** as an honorary academic. Sue recently moved to Victoria into the role of Pro Vice Chancellor (Rural and Regional) of Deakin University. However, she has not completely escaped the

UDRH, and we are grateful that Sue continues her liaison with us, bringing her skills, experience and support by continuing to supervise a number of our students.

Executive Officer Dr **Bruce Williams** has been appointed as a member of the Reference Group to the Board of Management of Rural Financial Counselling Service Tasmania. Bruce has a longstanding interest in rural communities and has been keen in supporting rural enterprises. Rural Financial Counselling Service Tasmania is a statewide, confidential and free service, providing information and support for the farming community.

Upcoming training opportunities

UDRH Seminar Series

Subject: Nutritional Risk in the Elderly: Flying in under the Radar. Findings from the Healthy Eating, Healthy Ageing Study
Presenter: Dr Peter Orpin, PHCRED Coordinator, and Kim Boyer, Senior Research Fellow, UDRH
Date: 26 August (Wednesday)
Time: 12:15 – 1:30pm
Venue: Telehealth studios in Burnie, Hobart, Latrobe, Launceston and King Island (other locations by arrangement)
For details, please contact **Cecilia Walters** (tel: 6324 4028, email: Cecilia.Chiu@utas.edu.au)

PHCRED workshops

Subject: Qualitative Data Analysis
Presenter: Dr Emily Hansen
Dates: 24 & 31 July (Friday)
Time: 10:00am – 3:00pm
Venue: Conference Room in St John's College, top of College Rd, Sandy Bay, Hobart
For details, please contact **Candice Lai** (tel: 6226 4803, email: PHCRED.Tas@utas.edu.au)

UDRH Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Program

Subject: Communication Styles and Conflict Resolution for Working in Multidisciplinary Teams
Presenter: Associate Professor Adrian Schoo, Physiotherapist, Director of Workforce and Deputy Director, Greater Green Triangle UDRH
Date: 3 July (Friday)
Time: 10:00am – 12:30pm
Venue: Video conference theatres statewide
For details, please contact **Karla Peek** (tel: 6324 4012, email: K.Peek@utas.edu.au)

Other UDRH forums

Subject: Reaching Our Full Potential – International Experiences in Contemporary Support Models for People Living with Disabilities
Presenter: Professor Tim Stainton, University of British Columbia
Dates & venues:
• 25 May (Monday), Tram Sheds, Launceston
• 26 May (Tuesday), Glenorchy Civic Centre, Hobart
Time: 10:00am – 12:30pm
For details, please contact **Jane Wardlaw** (tel: 6324 4052, email: Jane.Wardlaw@utas.edu.au)

Subject: 'These poor wretches are to be worked in irons': Aboriginal Convicts in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land
Presenter: Dr Kristyn Harman, Associate Lecturer, Riawunna
Date: 29 May (Friday)
Time: 6:30 – 7:30pm
Venue: Room B110/111, Cradle Coast Campus, University of Tasmania
For details, please contact **Sharon Dennis** (email: Sharon.Dennis@utas.edu.au)

Subject: Climate Change and Rural Tasmania: What Evidence for which Policies and Practices?
Date: 5 June (Friday)
Time: 9:30am – 5:00pm
Venue: University of Tasmania, Stanley Burbury Theatre, Churchill Avenue, Sandy Bay, and rural locations across Tasmania via video conference
For details, please contact **Sarah Brinckman** (tel: 6226 7375, email: Sarah.Brinckman@utas.edu.au)