

Rural Clinical School Bulletin

University of Tasmania

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FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCE

Welcome

Professor Judi Walker

Chief Executive of the Rural Clinical School, Professor of Rural Health

The Rural Clinical start has got off to an excellent start this year with new and continuing students and staff oriented to the extended facility at Burnie in time for the start of semester.

The focus on this edition of the Bulletin is on “results” and “outcomes” which is a nice position to be in for an emerging entity where so much energy is expended on course development, expansion plans and building construction.

In the Bulletin we describe the results of the building extension at Burnie and new initiatives at Latrobe which will enable us to comfortably house increasing numbers into the future. In addition expanded and enhanced residential accommodation has been negotiated and is now under construction on King Island (page 2) and at Smithton (story next edition).

We hear from students who have completed clinical training at the RCS on a regular basis, and some of their achievements and career directions are provided. Such news is very motivating for staff, local health practitioners, patients and members of communities where students have undertaken training, as well as providing inspiration for new students.

Months of planning went into a new School of Medicine initiative – the Rural Communities Program, which saw 120 second year medical students placed in selected rural communities across Tasmania to learn about the context of rural medicine. In the North West we billeted a number of students for the first time and were delighted with the enthusiasm this created amongst host families and students.

Our longstanding relationship with the Circular Head Council has been formalised through the signing of an MOU to provide a framework for further cooperation and joint initiatives on a range of programs, which will lead towards increasing health benefits and opportunities for future training in the municipality.

Our graduate research program has been boosted with the award of the first Tasmanian Research Scholarship to an RCS PhD student and we are proud to showcase another new clinical academic appointment in Dr Deb Wilson, Clinical Senior Lecturer.

I hope you enjoy reading about our activities – please keep in touch.



Extended RCS facilities proving valuable



Extensions to the RCS facility in Burnie were completed just in time for the start of the 2009 academic year. They include additional teaching space and offices, an expanded Clinical Skills and Simulation Centre, study hubs, clinical teaching-consulting rooms and a student recreation area.

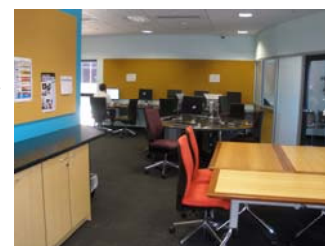
While a date for an official opening is being negotiated with the office of the Federal Minister for Health, the new facilities are already being well used. As well as catering for increased numbers of medical students undertaking the rural MBBS program at the RCS, the new facilities are proving popular with nursing and pharmacy students and local health professionals.

An Advanced Paediatric Life Support course was held recently for more than 30 professionals working in paediatrics across Tasmania as well as interstate.

Course organisers appreciated having access to extra breakout rooms for small group sessions and the training possibilities provided by the expanded Simulation Centre.

Student ambulance officers have also had an orientation to the new building and will be using the facilities for part of their NW-based training. And RCS staff and students are appreciating the extra flexibility provided by the range of teaching spaces which can better cater for different sized groups across a range of learning situations.

At the Mersey Community Hospital (MCH) in Latrobe, additional computers have been installed at the RCS Clinical Education Centre for use by medical, nursing and pharmacy students. An additional house has also been secured in Latrobe to provide accommodation for Mersey-based students.



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RCS Student Excellence and Career Directions



Graduation for the RCS Class of 2008 – a proud moment to remember!

Student Excellence:

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 & 6 at the RCS) - awarded the GE Clemons Prize for the medical student judged as most strongly exhibiting the qualities of humanity, conscientiousness and devotion to the profession of Medicine, and the Andrew Platts Memorial Prize for Internal Medicine.
- ◆ Josephine Stringer (Year 5 at the RCS in 2007) – a prestigious University Medal and the Royal Australian College of Physicians Prize in Paediatrics and Child Health.
- ◆ Richard Jamieson (Year 5 at the RCS in 2007) – the Orthopaedic Fellowship.

As well, six of twelve final year RCS students were awarded first class honours.

Career Directions:

Three RCS students who graduated in the MBBS last year accepted intern positions at the NW Regional Hospital 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.

As well, former RCS student Dr Mike Stoneman was awarded 2008 NWRH Intern of the Year. Dr Stoneman is now an RMO 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, O&G and health promotion.

Year 2 medical students based in the region for Rural Communities Program

More than 120 second year UTAS medical students have spent a week in small communities around Tasmania learning more about rural health services.

This innovative Rural Communities Program is part of a staged introduction to rural practice for medical students at UTAS - and part of an overall aim to produce junior doctors who will be well-equipped to address the future healthcare needs of Tasmania's communities.

Thirty-one students have been in the North West region, based in Queenstown, Wynyard, Penguin, Ulverstone, Latrobe and Sheffield.

These communities have welcomed students to their towns for a week of grassroots learning about local networks of health care, local facilities and - most importantly - how these impact on the lives of people living in these communities.

Early feedback has been very positive from all involved. Students based in the NW say the

week has broken down many misconceptions they had about rural practice and rural communities, and they have generally been blown away by the friendliness and welcoming nature of the communities. Many have been impressed with the characteristics of rural practices and the practitioners they have met, the standard of local facilities and the communities' "can-do" attitudes and their involvement in getting things happening.

The RCS coordinated the placements in the NW region and has been delighted with the level of community support for the week-long program from local health professionals, service clubs, councils and schools.

In particular, a number of Rotary Clubs have directly supported students via billeting, with local members showing them what rural hospitality is all about.

Students visit Latrobe High School and (below) with Wynyard Rotary Club hosts



New King Island residential accommodation underway



Increased numbers of students and doctors in training will be able to undertake extended clinical attachments on King Island when new

residential accommodation is completed mid-year.

Construction of the new facility, which includes three ensuite bedrooms, shared living spaces and outdoor decks, is well underway.

The new facility is being built 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 extra space as well as more family friendly accommodation options for clinical placements and supervisors.

Building plans include the creation of good quality, private, landscaped spaces.

The building has been made possible through an agreement between the Rural Clinical School and the Department of Health and Human Services, which is project managing the construction.

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 RCS medical students will be undertaking remote medical attachments on King Island in 2009 and into the future.

Introducing New Staff: meet Dr Deborah Wilson

Meet anaesthetist Dr Deborah Wilson who is among a number of new clinical academic appointments at the RCS in 2009.

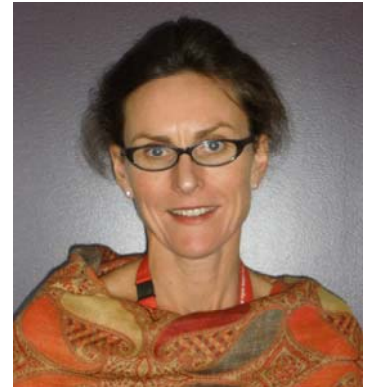
Dr Wilson completed her undergraduate and fellowship exams in Perth, Western Australia, before completing a postgraduate fellowship in obstetric anaesthesia in Vancouver, Canada. She has a special interest in paediatric and orthopaedic anaesthesia and has been at the NW Regional Hospital in Burnie since 1998.

Dr Wilson says that she particularly enjoys the diversity of rural clinical practice. "In one day you can give an anaesthetic to a six-month baby, a pregnant lady and someone very old". She believes this clinical diversity is what really benefits students studying at the RCS.

Dr Wilson values her new teaching role. "I have always enjoyed teaching and now my kids are a bit older and more independent, it is nice to have the time to teach. The students are good fun and it helps keep me up-to-date."

So why practice in the North West of Tasmania? "I love the region's natural beauty and the fantastic fresh produce to cook, eat and grow. There are great outdoor activities – beaches, walking, cycling, windsurfing and swimming. And the lack of people makes it easy to do most things. There is always a car park at the beach and often you will have it all to yourself!"

Welcome to the RCS clinical academic team.



Dr Deb Wilson

STOP PRESS: Congratulations to former RCS student Dr Clare McArthur on completing her primary exam in anaesthetics! Dr McArthur graduated in 2004 with first class honours, completed her intern year in Hobart and then worked in Tamworth for two years before returning to work in Burnie. She describes the support from her colleagues in the Anaesthetics Department of the NW Regional Hospital as "fantastic and tremendously helpful" and said she and husband Dr Rowan McSwan (also a former RCS student) were both enjoying being back in Tasmania.

Local PhD student awarded Tasmanian Graduate Research Scholarship



Winifred Vanderploeg with supervisor Dr Ali Maginness

Congratulations to former occupational therapist Winifred Vanderploeg on winning a Tasmanian Graduate Research Scholarship. Winifred has successfully transferred from a Master of Medical Science to a PhD under the supervision of Professor Judi Walker and RCS 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" - and its prevalence on the North West Coast. Australia is just starting, to develop its own bank of health literacy research to match a growing interest in health literacy as a crucial factor underpinning the delivery and use of health services.

In other Research News:

- ◆ Interest in postgraduate Clinical Psychology NW attachments has increased, with six students expected to be based in the North West in 2009 under the supervision of Dr Ali Maginness.
- ◆ The successful RCS 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 MCH and attracted good interest.
- ◆ RCS 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 NWRH 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 discusses research proposals with medical student Meredith Stewart

Health Professionals undertaking Grad Cert in Teaching & Learning

Ten local 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 RCS.

Medical Education Advisor Rose Moore says 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.

Pictured are (L to R) Dr Deb Wilson, Rose Moore, Dr Robyn Brogan, Dr Nick Towle, Dr Satish Kumar and Dr Ray Wilson. Others enrolled in the course are Dr Mohammed Ahmedullah, midwife Jeanette Hermans, pharmacists Suzette Seaton and Julie Beechey and clinical psychologist Dr Ali Maginness.



The RCS in Brief:



- ◆ **Community Welcome for Staff and Students:** Over 90 guests attended a Community Welcome for new and returning staff and students to kick off the start of the 2009 academic year. During the evening, student scholarships and awards were announced and an MOU signed between the RCS and General Practice North West. The MOU establishes a framework to develop new collaborative activities, including further streamlining the Integrated Primary Care Program. This program involves a number of General Practices as partners in the RCS MBBS course.



- ◆ **ANZAME09 – Bridging Professional Islands:** This year's ANZAME conference (the Australian & New Zealand Association of Medical Educators) will be held from 30 June - 3 July in Launceston. The conference aims to highlight the need for and current focus on a collaborative approach to health professional education. Participants are being encouraged to consider Tasmania as a microcosm of the health workforce education issues facing Australia, New Zealand and many other parts of the world. Visit www.cdesign.com.au/anzame2009/ for registration details.

- ◆ **RCS Student Netball Teams:** RCS students have high hopes as they take to the courts at the start of the 2009 netball season. Growing interest has resulted in two netball teams this year, including an all-girls and a mixed team.

- ◆ **10th National Rural Health Conference:** The RCS will be well represented at this national conference in Cairns in May. Chief Executive Professor Judi Walker, Associate Head Assoc Prof Peter Arvier, Junior Research Fellow Heidi Behrens, Dr Nick Towle and Marketing Manager Rosalie Maynard will present posters during the conference. Dr Towle will also be involved in a climate change forum and Jennifer Beamish will also attend.



- ◆ **Faculty of Health Science collaborative teaching and learning project:** Manager of the Clinical Skills and Simulation Centre, Maree Gleeson, is the RCS representative on the FHS Safety & Quality collaborative project. The project team is working towards developing "common resources" to support teaching and learning in the classroom, on-line and in simulation centres for a range of topics outlined in the National Patient Safety Education Framework.

- ◆ **Staff News:** The RCS farewelled ARC researcher Dr Ros Foskey and welcomed Ms Louise Lee to the administrative team. Ms Issy Neal has recently been appointed to the position of Administration Officer, Finance and Facilities.

- ◆ **Extra accommodation options for RCS students:** The RCS has expanded its accommodation options to cater for growing numbers of students. As well as the Atrium Apartments, the RCS has secured a number of quality rental properties close to the main RCS facility, the NW Regional Hospital and the University's Cradle Coast Campus in Burnie. More detailed information is available under the RCS website's Facilities section.



- ◆ **Visiting Student:** University of London medical student Rob Wiltshire is planning to return to Tasmania/Australia later in the year for a further three month elective attachment. The fifth-year Kings College student was based at the RCS over summer while he undertook a three week rural attachment in Obstetrics and Gynaecology in Burnie.

Top to bottom: Community Welcome guests, RCS netballers, Ms Louise Lee, one of the new Burnie student accommodation properties.

Kentish and Circular Head partnerships benefit rural health workforce training

The RCS has formalised ongoing relationships developed over many years with both the Kentish and Circular Head Councils with the signing of formal Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs).

The MOU with the Kentish Council assures the continuation of RCS funding for residential accommodation in Sheffield for medical, nursing, clinical psychology and pharmacy students on rural clinical attachments.

The MOU between the RCS and the Circular Head Council will see the two organisations

work together in a number of programs and activities that include:

- ◆ a joint venture to develop a university clinical teaching/consulting room at the Smithton Medical Centre;
- ◆ a continuing program of clinical attachments for final year medical students at Smithton;
- ◆ an ongoing RCS emergency skills course of benefit to students, local health professionals and the wider community;
- ◆ collaboration in programs to encourage local high school students into health careers; and

- ◆ an exchange of information and joint collaboration in research and other programs which will contribute to better health outcomes in the community.

The teaching/consulting room is complete and will enable increased numbers of final year RCS students to undertake remote medical practice attachments in the Circular Head region.

As well, building of new student accommodation in Smithton has begun. Plans for other activities will be further developed during the year ahead.

About the Rural Clinical School:

The Rural Clinical School is funded through the Australian Government's Department of Health and Ageing, and is part of the University of Tasmania's Faculty of Health Science. The RCS is part of a national network of Rural Clinical Schools.

For more information about the Rural Clinical School or the material contained in this bulletin, please contact:

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