

# Rural Clinical School Bulletin

University of Tasmania

July 2009



FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCE

## Welcome

**Professor Judi Walker**

**Chief Executive of the Rural Clinical School and Professor of Rural Health**

I was privileged to be asked to convene the 2009 ANZAME Conference which was held for the very first time in Tasmania at Launceston. The Conference theme *Bridging Professional Islands* promoted a collaborative approach to significant changes in health workforce education and stimulated debate and discussion around a number of key issues including inter-professional education, evidence and opportunities for simulation-based education, workplace-based learning, the impact of increased student numbers and professionalism.

Feedback confirmed the appropriateness of the theme and the very high quality of the keynote and concurrent presentations, with the venue and organisation of the conference scoring highly. ANZAME09 provided RCS clinical educators with a great opportunity to engage with colleagues from Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Pakistan, the US and the UK. Rose Moore and Robyn Brogan provide their perspectives in this Bulletin.

Recently we welcomed Dr Michael Buist to the RCS as Clinical Associate Professor in Simulation-based Training and Patient Safety, a conjoint academic appointment with the North West Area Health Service. Many met Michael through the ABC's *Australian Story* which reinforced how fortunate we are to have attracted him, Sarah and the children to the region. We look forward to moving to new horizons in simulated learning and patient safety education and research through Michael's leadership in this area.

This issue of the RCS Bulletin includes an announcement about a successful funding opportunity for the RCS and our key strategic partners—GP North West and the Cradle Coast Authority. By the time the next issue is published we will have appointed the project team and should have a clear idea of the shape and direction of the virtual health information exchange system in the North West region of Tasmania – please keep in touch.

*Professor Walker is pictured above right with the President of ANZAME, Professor Tim Wilkinson, Associate Dean Medical Education, University of Otago, NZ.*



**AMEE 2009:** Professor Judi Walker and Associate Professor Marcus Skinner will represent the RCS at this key international conference for medical education in Malaga, Spain, along with Professor Allan Carmichael, Dean of the Faculty of Health Science. Prof Walker will be the SE Asia and Australasian representative on an international jury to judge conference posters. She will also present a paper "Training the future medical workforce: appropriate, responsive and relevant education and training".

## \$1.2 million funding for NW e-Health Information Exchange System



**GPNW Chief Executive Officer Elvie Hales, Professor Judi Walker and Cradle Coast Authority Chief Executive Roger Jaensch**

An Electronic Health Information Exchange System which will enable the sharing of vital patient medical information between GPs, hospitals and allied health service providers is to be developed across the North West region.

\$1.2 million to fund the project was made available in the last Federal budget, following a joint submission from the University's Rural Clinical School, General Practice North West and the Cradle Coast Authority through local Braddon MP Sid Sidebottom.

The e-Health system will be developed over the next two years to allow the sharing of information instantly and securely, using secure internet technology.

Once operational, the system will save time and reduce the risk of errors in handling patient information, particularly in complex cases where

several different health service providers may be involved in ongoing patient care.

GPNW CEO Elvie Hales said the system will free up GPs time by enabling them to send and receive secure referral and discharge information electronically, relieving some effects of the current GP shortage.

RCS Chief Executive Professor Judi Walker said that medical students would greatly benefit from being trained in an environment where patient safety can be enhanced by the confidential and accurate sharing of important patient health information between GP and medical specialist environments.

And CCA Executive Chairman Roger Jaensch has described the project at the logical next step in the process of "joining up" health services in the Cradle Coast region.

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## Introducing new staff: meet Dr James Roberts-Thomson

Fresh from running the London marathon as part of his honeymoon overseas, Dr James Roberts-Thomson is now back to work as a general surgeon at the Mersey Community Hospital (along with his wife HDU Nurse Unit Manager Jackie van den Berg).

Originally from Table Cape near Wynyard, Dr Roberts-Thomson completed his undergraduate medical degree at UTAS. He returned to North West Tasmania in 2004 after working in other parts of Australia and overseas, including 14 years in South Africa.

Dr Roberts-Thomson is a Clinical Senior Lecturer with the RCS and has taken on the role of clinical academic coordinator of the rural undergraduate medical program at the Mersey (along with his colleague Dr Mohammad Ahmedullah).

Dr Roberts-Thomson says he enjoys the mixture of teaching, endoscopic and

laparoscopic surgery along with being an "all-rounder" in general surgery. He says his teaching commitments add to his overall career satisfaction: "It's more satisfying to give than to receive and I enjoy inspiring others to take an interest in their work."

The North West Coast appeals to him due to his own origins in the region, the friendliness of the people, the uncrowded roads and Tasmania's beautiful heritage.

Dr Roberts-Thomson believes that medical students studying at the RCS benefit from having more involvement with patient care and relaxed teachers and mentors. "Plus they have lovely living conditions!" he adds.

**Footnote:** Dr Roberts-Thomson's time in the London marathon was a very respectable 4 hours 11min. He first ran the race in 2008 and again this year as part of the Devil Island team, which is raising money for an East Coast devil

breeding sanctuary free from the facial tumour disease threatening the species around the State.



## Health Research Matters Forums



Henry Nowlan and Lahiru Amarasena presenting at the Burnie forum

### Burnie Forum: Identifying Common Paediatric Outpatient Presentations

Despite a great deal of anecdotal information, there has been no formal process for collecting information about paediatric patients presenting to outpatient clinics at the NW Regional Hospital.

But now, under the direction of Dr Bert Shugg, RCS students have begun gathering data on the prevalence, epidemiology and trends of selected types of paediatric presentations at the NWRH to add to a national paediatric database currently being developed.

Year 4 and 5 medical students Lahiru Amarasena and Henry Nowlan outlined the research they are undertaking with final year medical student Meredith Stewart at a recent HRM Forum. The students' research aims to:

- ◆ Identify the common primary presenting complaints seen by paediatricians at the NWRH outpatients clinics;

- ◆ Predict needs for clinical training, disease management and future investment in resources for paediatric care in the NW;
- ◆ Identify seasonal factors/ variability in presenting clinical problems; and
- ◆ Link the NW research into the larger Australian National Paediatric Network study.

### Mersey Forum: Juggling work and research

At the June forum, hospital pharmacist Lorraine Smith reported on the progress of her Masters by Research into the role of the pharmacist in the management of erectile dysfunction. She also gave an insight into the challenges of juggling full-time work with research.

Ideas for future research areas at the Mersey Community Hospital were pooled, with the result that a PHCRED workshop will be held on Friday 21 August at the hospital to assist practitioners with research skills.

## ANZAME 09: a great success

A record 350 delegates attended the recent ANZAME09 (Australian and New Zealand Association of Medical Educators) conference in Launceston. Here are some perspectives from RCS staff who attended.

### Rose Moore (Medical Education Advisor):

Of particular interest to me were the plenary sessions where it was possible to gain a better understanding of the interface between developments in medical education and workforce outcomes. I think the conference puts in perspective what we are undertaking at the RCS.

I found all sessions prompted me to think about how we could work more effectively in the areas of curriculum design, teaching in the

clinical setting and promoting leadership amongst our teaching community and students.

Also how to communicate better with the other clinical schools to identify common areas for development and use the combined expertise we have amongst us as a team.

### Dr Robyn Brogan (Palliative Care Specialist and RCS Clinical Senior Lecturer):

The conference was well worth my time and I was delighted to leave inspired by new thoughts and friends. I felt particularly encouraged by the following three themes: inter-professional learning; university and health service partnerships; and leadership and follower skills.

In regard to the first two themes: when universities work cooperatively and

collaboratively with institutions, services and individuals, there is so much to be gained - particularly in promoting quality, safety and patient-centred approaches to providing care.

The third theme highlighted for me the need to develop the professionals skills and qualities that enable undergraduates through to specialists to both lead and follow when appropriate.

These skills would enable all health professionals to work effectively and collaboratively in multi-professional and inter-professional teams, and to actively contribute to debates and decisions around safe and effective changes in health services.

## Research on the Edge: inaugural Cradle Coast Research Conference



RCS Research Fellow & conference organising committee member Maree Gleeson with presenter Winifred Vanderploeg

NW Coast postgraduate researchers and postdoctoral fellows working across a range of areas will showcase their research at this conference to be held at the Cradle Coast Campus in Burnie on 6 August 2009.

“Research on the Edge” has been designed to celebrate the excellence and innovation happening in research across the North West in health, education, sociology, regional development, agriculture, the humanities and architecture.

RCS Research Fellow Maree Gleeson believes the conference will enable researchers from quite diverse areas to inform colleagues about

their research projects and also build foundations for future collaboration.

RCS PhD candidate Dr John Henshaw will present the results of his research to date into whether the use of transdermal opioids can reduce healthcare use in a rural pain population. Fellow PhD candidate Winifred Vanderploeg will also share the early stages of her research into “Health Literacy, Navigation & the Tasmanian Public Healthcare System”.

A total of 17 papers will be presented during the day. Full program details are available at <http://www.utas.edu.au/cradlecoast/postgradconference.htm>.

## RCS students out and about

In among studying for exams and undertaking attachments in various locations, RCS students have been doing .... LOTS! Here's a small sample:

### Indian Night Banquet:

Students, staff and hospital colleagues enjoyed a sumptuous Indian banquet amid colourful decorations and traditional Indian dress to raise funds for an Indian orphanage supported by IMPACT (International Medical Projects Assisting Communities Today). The banquet raised almost \$1,000 and guests suggested the next step should be the production of an Indian Banquet cookbook so the delicious food could continue to be enjoyed.

### Montezuma Falls Bushwalk:

A crew of 16 intrepid hikers joined staff member and bushwalking guru Jen Beamish on a day walk through the West Coast rainforest to Montezuma Falls recently. The Falls were spectacular after weeks of rainy weather and the rich mining history of the area added another dimension to the trip.

### Weeding Tasmania's World Heritage:

Final year medical student Hannah Ward spent part of her Easter break locating and weeding blackberry infestations on the Andrew and Franklin Rivers deep in Tasmania's beautiful world heritage area. Not your average gardening trip though as the area is only easily accessed by inflatable rafts. (Hannah and her partner Josh set up the North West branch of

the UTAS White Water Rafting Club when they moved to the region in 2008.)

### Chocaholics Delight:

Students enthusiastically embraced Latrobe's Chocolate Winterfest, having already become familiar with the local chocolate factory's delights. The RCS was well-represented in all aspects of the annual festival from the chocolate mousse eating to the cake decorating competition. Back to the diet for the rest of semester!

### Metcalls win the netball Grand Final:

The RCS Metcalls have taken out the grand final in the local girls netball competition. After a shaky start, the team finished the season in spectacular style with Year 4 medical student Rose Wyllie named as best on court in the grand final game.



Top to bottom: Indian night banquet, weeding by raft (Hannah centre), the bushwalkers plus faithful friend Bessie Braid - the dog. See back page for photo of the victorious Metcalls.

## Hoc Mai Student Bursaries awarded for 2009

Two RCS medical students will undertake electives in Vietnam at the end of the year, funded by the Hoc Mai Australia Vietnam Medical Foundation and the RCS.

Danielle Walker and Telena Eastley have been announced as this year's Hoc Mai bursary recipients. Both students will travel to Vietnam during their summer break to gain first-hand experience of emergency medicine in a developing country.

RCS Chief Executive Prof Judi Walker said she was delighted that it was possible to offer two

\$5,000 bursaries in 2009 through an ongoing collaboration between the RCS and the Hoc Mai Foundation.

One of last year's recipients, Candice Hanson, described the experience as a wonderful opportunity and said she had also gained a greater appreciation of our own hospital system here in Australia as a result of her time in Vietnam. “I have learned so much (from the experience) that I will carry with me for the rest

Hoc Mai recipients Danielle Walker & Telena Eastley



## News in Brief:



- ◆ **Staff News:** The RCS has wished School Manager Ms Kate Brown all the best as she begins a six-month secondment as General Manager for the Menzies Research Institute in Hobart. New staff include Ms Therese Evans (pictured left) as part-time Finance Advisor and Senior Projects Officer, and Dr Hazel Baynes as Australian Postdoctoral Fellow (Industry) with the three-year ARC funded study "Community Engagement for Productive Ageing". As mentioned on the front-page, the RCS is also delighted to welcome Dr Michael Buist to the position of Clinical Associate Professor in Simulation-based Training and Patient Safety. Dr Buist has recently moved to Tasmania from Victoria to take on the Director of Medicine role for the NW Area Health Service, working at both the Mersey and Burnie hospitals.



- ◆ **Australia-wide evaluation of the RCS and UDRH programs:** A report by consultants Urbis on the evaluation of the RCS and UDRH programs around Australia has recently been released. The joint evaluation found that overall the Programs were meeting their objectives and contributing to enhancing the rural health workforce. Seven themes and 25 recommendations were identified for strategic consideration in the future. These themes were strategic leadership and vision, program management, maintaining the culture of innovation, the capacity of the health system to absorb training requirements, partnerships, community impact and implications for the local workforce.



- ◆ **Residential Accommodation at King Island and Smithton:** New residential accommodation is almost complete on King Island with only minor finishing touches and external landscaping remaining. In Smithton, existing accommodation has been upgraded to provide a more comfortable, self contained style for students. The renovation allows students with families to be comfortably accommodated along with individual students.
- ◆ **GPNW Tall Timbers Education Event:** Eight RCS medical students were lucky enough to attend the GPNW annual weekend education event, this year held at Tall Timbers, Smithton. They joined 22 GPs and several practice nurses and managers for a very informative and social weekend. Key sessions included "An Introduction to Lifestyle Medicine", "Child and Adolescent Mental Health Disorders in a Rural Setting", The Prevention of Paediatric Sport Injuries" and "Team Work in General Practice".
- ◆ **Rural Week for Year 1 Medical Students:** The entire first year UTAS MBBS cohort (127 students) will spend "Rural Week" in the North West and North from 17-21 August and will be based at Camp Clayton near Ulverstone. Planning is underway to provide the students with an insight into rural medical practice during the week-long program.



- ◆ **Visiting University of London Student:** The RCS will welcome back final year University of London medical student Rob Wiltshire in August. Rob will undertake a five-week Emergency Medicine elective with the NW Area Health Service, followed by three weeks with the Royal Flying Doctor Service based out of Broken Hill. The Kings College student was based at the RCS over the summer while he undertook a three week rural attachment in Obstetrics and Gynaecology in Burnie. Rob was "blown away" by the hands-on learning opportunities available here as compared to the UK.

*Top to bottom: Therese Evans, part of the new KI accommodation, GPNW weekend participants, the victorious RCS Metcalls (see story p. 3)*

## North West Health Careers Camp

What will it be like being a nurse in 2015 or maybe a doctor in 2020?

This could be the reality for any of the 35 Year 10 high school students who took part in this year's NW Health Careers Camp held in July. Students were selected from as far away as Queenstown, and from schools along the Coast to Latrobe.

The Camp is part of a strategy to ultimately have more people from rural areas working in health across a range of disciplines – with

research backing up the concept that those with rural origins or connections are more likely to practice in rural areas following completion of their qualifications. The Camp is seen as part of an overall approach to help address the rural health workforce shortage.

The Camp program has been running for some years, and the results are already showing. Six current uni students, who attended the Camp when they were in Year 10, jumped at the chance to play their part in motivating this year's

group.

They described attending the Camp as making a big difference in their own study and career decision making pathways.

The Camp is organised through the NW Health Careers Education Partnership, involving the RCS, the North West Area Health Service and the Department of Education. One-day health careers workshops are now being planned for local Year 9 students interested in future careers in health.

## 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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