



NOVEMBER 2010

Welcome from the Co-Directors



RCS Acting Co-Directors Assoc Prof Peter Arvier and Dr Lizzi Shires

As many of you will know, the RCS has recently said goodbye to former Chief Executive Professor Judi Walker, who has taken up the position as Professor and Head of the School of Rural Health with Monash University.

Prof Walker has been nationally acclaimed as a pioneer in the development of academic rural health in Australia and has played a pivotal role in the establishment of the RCS in the North West.

Under Prof Walker's leadership, the RCS has grown from only four medical students and operating from a three-bedroom unit on the hill behind the NW Regional Hospital, to the current state-of-the-art educational facility with 49 medical students in 2010. As well, she has played a key role in supporting the growth of research in the North West and been a strong voice for inter-professional learning and a range of rural health workforce initiatives.

Associate Professor Arvier and Dr Lizzi Shires are now acting RCS Co-Directors and will be aiming to continue Prof Walker's good work. They can be contacted

via Jen Beamish on (03) 6430 4564 or email Jennifer.Beamish@utas.edu.au

Drs Arvier and Shires are looking forward to maintaining contact with Prof Walker and developing closer links with Monash University's four Regional Clinical Schools in Mildura, Bendigo, Central Gippsland and East Gippsland.

The RCS has also farewelled Clinical Senior Lecturer Dr John Henshaw (pictured below with Prof Walker) and Executive Officer (Academic) Rachel Farnsworth. Dr Henshaw is focusing on writing up his PhD while Rachel has moved to Launceston with her family to work with the Faculty's Health Services and Workforce Education Unit. Both will be sadly missed.

As usual, there's lots going on at the RCS, so this is a bumper edition to bring readers up to date with what's been happening over the last few months.

End of year Celebrations

RCS medical students have now finished their final exams and the academic year for 2010. The students have provided very positive feedback about the fantastic learning experiences which have been available to them during the year. All in all they say they've had a great time here in the North West.

A very big thank you to all who have contributed in any way to the students' learning and clinical experiences during the year. Your input to the students program has been greatly appreciated and we look forward to your continuing involvement with the RCS into the future.

Next year we will have even more students joining us. There will be 33 new fourth years and 25 students staying on to complete their final year in 2011.

Five RCS graduates will also be welcomed back next year as NW Area Health Service interns. This is a tremendous vote of confidence in the quality of training available in this region and will hopefully have further flow-on effects to the local rural health workforce in the years ahead.

Students and staff kicked up their heels to celebrate at an end of academic year dinner, which also included the presentation of awards to students who had shown outstanding commitment and excellence in the areas of surgery, general medicine, paediatrics, O&G, mental health, research initiative, emergency medicine and

chronic disease (full details plus more student photos on page 7).

The Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine award for the best Complex Rural Case Presentation went to Henry Nowlan (below right) and the Rural Doctors Association of Australia award for the student demonstrating outstanding contribution and commitment to rural practice in Tasmania was awarded to Kaylee Barnett (with Assoc Prof Arvier below left).



Emergency Skills Course: learning alongside experts

A graphic emergency scenario wrapped up the three-day Emergency Skills Course held for RCS students in Smithton during September. The scenario involved cars crashing into a house and triggering a fire, with "victims" trapped in the burning vehicles.

Thirty three RCS students worked alongside emergency service personnel from across the North West Coast, local doctors and staff from the Smithton District Hospital, who used the scenario as a training exercise.

Assoc Prof Peter Arvier said the RCS greatly appreciated the generous support and expertise provided by to the event by the Smithton health community, local SES crews, the Tasmanian Ambulance and Fire Services and local police.

"Their involvement allows students to gain skills in critical response and the management of trauma under the supervision of experts," he said.

Assoc Prof Arvier said it was a great opportunity for the students to "put into practice" techniques and principles learnt during the course.

He also credited the strong partnership between the RCS, the Circular Head Council and the local community for providing excellent learning opportunities in rural and remote medicine for RCS students.



Research excellence recognised with prestigious award



Dr Mark Reeves

Congratulations to RCS Senior Research Fellow Dr Mark Reeves who was awarded the "Best Paper" prize for 2009 by the journal *Anaesthesia and Intensive Care*.

The prize was presented at the editors' session of the Australasian Society of Anaesthetists National Scientific Congress held in September in Melbourne.

The \$2,000 award was for a paper by Dr Reeves and his colleague Dr Marcus Skinner titled "Intra-articular infusion of ropivacaine

after unilateral total knee arthroplasty." and published in the November 2009 edition of the *Anaesth Intensive Care* journal.

Dr Reeves is a Director of Clinical Training with the Postgraduate Medical Council of Tasmania, focusing on support for advanced RMOs. He also teaches and is involved in research in the RCS undergraduate program.

Rural Clinical Psychology unit delivered at RCS



Dr Ali Maginness (RCS Lecturer Clinical Psychology) at right with students

Dr Ali Maginness delivered a unit on Rural Clinical Psychology in Burnie this week to 13 students enrolled in the Masters of Clinical Psychology course at UTAS.

It is the first time the unit has been offered, and the first time a unit has been delivered outside Hobart.

The intensive two-day course covered some of the challenges and unique situations of practicing in rural and regional areas, where there are

considerably fewer psychologists per head of population compared to metropolitan areas.

The course focused on

- ◆ the challenges of working in rural and remote situations;
- ◆ service delivery models for rural locations; and
- ◆ specific issues such as using new technologies, climate change and extreme environmental events.

The unit included a workshop on working well with Indigenous clients.

\$30K Clifford Craig Medical Research Trust funds to North West

The Clifford Craig Medical Research Trust has announced \$30K of funding for medical research based in the North West.

Professor Michael Buist, who holds a conjoint appointment with the University of Tasmania's Rural Clinical School and is Director of Medicine with the North West Area Health Service, has received the funding for a project titled "The identification of the "non-medical" acute medical hospital admission in a regional Australian hospital."

His research will develop a screening method to distinguish between adult patients who are admitted to hospital for true medical conditions from those who are admitted for other less acute medical reasons – including social problems, aged care and end-of-life care.

This is the first time the Rural Clinical School has received funding from the high-profile foundation.

The research will be done in the emergency departments of the NW Regional Hospital and the Mersery Community Hospital, where patients from these two categories present.

Professor Buist said he is delighted to have been

successful in gaining the Trust's support for the project. "The findings of this research have the potential to be taken up at a national level and could have significant cost-saving benefits to the health system as well as benefits to our patients," he said.

Clifford Craig Medical Research Trust CEO Peter Milne said the Trust has allocated nearly \$250,000 for new research projects to commence in 2011 and Professor Buist's project is one of the seven applicants to have been approved by the Trust's Scientific and Research Committee.

Peter Mancell, Chair of the North West Medical Research Fund which raises money for the Trust, said it is extremely pleasing to see funds flowing directly to the North West, and a fitting reward for the wonderful work of his fund-raising committee and the generous support of the local community.

Professor Buist has recently been promoted to the position of Clinical Professor in Patient Safety with the Rural Clinical School in recognition of his international profile in the area of patient safety.



L to R: Clifford Craig CEO Peter Milne with Prof Michael Buist and NW Medical Research Fund Chair Peter Mancell

Centre for Rural Clinical Education at the Mersey

Work on the development of a Centre for Rural Clinical Education at the Mersey Community Hospital is expected to get underway in early 2011.

The redevelopment will include a clinical skills and simulation centre, multi-use teaching spaces, learning hubs and study areas, new staff offices and separate clinicians and student lounge areas.

The new Centre will extend clinical training opportunities at the Mersey for medical and nursing undergraduate clinical training, enrolled nurse training, postgraduate clinical training and access to continuing professional education and support.

Funding of the Mersey Centre of Excellence is part of a nationwide strategy to boost training in rural communities. The new Centre will help to ensure that students undertaking rural training, along with health professionals working in the area, have access to top quality facilities.

This will also assist in the recruitment and retention of new staff who will be eager to train and work in a state-of-the-art facility.

In total, \$33 million has been allocated to 22 projects around Australia through REID (Rural Education Infrastructure Development Pool) funding.



The Mersey Community Hospital at Latrobe

Introducing Dr Sharon Condon

Welcome to Dr Sharon Condon, at right, who has been appointed RCS Executive Officer (Academic). Sharon will be working closely with the academic team, supporting teachers and students in the undergraduate rural clinical program.

Sharon originally came to Tasmania from Queensland to house-sit on a North West farm, which included looking after seven goats!

In the lush, green, peaceful surroundings she finished writing up her PhD on the topic "Single mothers and work/life balance" - and decided

she would like to move to live and work here more permanently.

Sharon brings many qualifications and experience to this position. She has a Graduate Certificate in Tertiary Education, and has taught English as a foreign language qualification while living overseas in Japan.

Before moving to Tasmania, Sharon worked for Griffith University for ten years as a tutor and research assistant and as the academic supervisor of a leisure studies student practicum.



Celebrating postgraduate research on the North West Coast



Pro Vice Chancellor Research Paddy Nixon addressing the conference

One hundred UTAS students, staff and North West industry representatives were treated to an array of research related activities as part of Research Week at the Cradle Coast Campus in August. Culminating in the Cradle Coast Postgraduate Conference, the week included a range of presentations, workshops and displays highlighting the diversity and complexity of research being undertaken by postgraduate students on the North West Coast and other parts of the UTAS research community.

In opening the conference Pro Vice Chancellor Paddy Nixon encouraged researchers to speak to one another and find synergies in their research pursuits.

The conference titled "Growing Research Together" emanated from the work undertaken by the Cradle Coast Research and Higher Degree Committee which is co-chaired by Dr Robyn Eversole from the Institute of Regional Development and Maree Gleeson from the Rural Clinical School.

The Committee aims to promote the postgraduate talent and skills across campuses and regions, and will be organising another Conference in 2011.

Cross Boundary Research Grants awarded

The Cradle Coast Cross Boundary Research Grants were awarded to three deserving projects at the opening of Research Week in August.

The RCS's Dr Ali Maginness and Veronica Moore received a \$5,000 grant for their project proposal "Gardening at the Heart of Residential Aged Care facilities". The project will investigate the impact that gardens/gardening has on wellbeing for aged care residents and contribute to the ongoing development of nurturing aged care residents.

Also receiving a \$5,000 grant was NW Area Health Service physiotherapist Lauren Richardson's project "Does *Balance Group* improve self-efficacy for physical activity in older people at risk of falls?"

Lauren will collaborate with the RCS, the UTAS School of Human Life Sciences and the NW Area Health Service to assess the change in elderly patients belief in being able to undertake

activities more confidently following their participation in the NWAHS Physio Departments' 8-week Balance Group.

And the final grant recipient was Christine Pritchett for her project "The role of the ApoE Gene in cognitive performance following brain injury." Christine is a UTAS PhD candidate and a sessional tutor at the University's Cradle Coast Campus.

"We are delighted that health professionals see the importance of research in their practice" said Maree Gleeson Co-Chair of the UTAS Cradle Coast Research and Higher Degree Committee. "These research grants allow professionals to collect evidence about their practice and then be able to share it with the wider community. There are wins all round!"

For more information on research grants available to NWAHS employees please contact Maree by email at Maree.Gleeson@utas.edu.au



Maree Gleeson with research grant recipient Lauren Richardson

Mindfulness Based Practice to the forefront



Health practitioners take part in a Mindfulness Research Workshop

Dr Maura Kenny returned to the RCS in September to continue her work as the Visiting Research Fellow in Mindfulness Based Practice.

With over 70 attendees at the four workshops conducted over her two-day visit, Dr Kenny affirmed the positive and growing interest in mindfulness nationally and internationally.

Dr Kenny also delivered a workshop to the UTAS North West Women's Peer Mentoring Group so they could experience the delights of mindfulness based practice. Twenty-three women from the RCS and the Cradle Coast Campus learnt how mindfulness could enhance their professional and personal wellbeing during the session.

To keep their renewed interest in this technique going, RCS staff have set aside a regular weekly timeslot so they can practice mindfulness with their colleagues.

As well, a number of attendees at Dr Kenny's workshops have expressed interest in collaborative research projects relating to health practitioner self care and how a mindfulness approach can assist in achieving better outcomes.

RCS Research Manager Maree Gleeson said the Health Research (Matters?) Program is keen to support projects in this area. For more information please email Maree at Maree.Gleeson@utas.edu.au.

eHIE gains approval for Phase 2



The Electronic Health Information Project (eHIE) has recently been given approval from the Australian Government's Department of Health and Ageing to move to the next phase of the project.

This phase will begin the implementation of eHIE's vision of creating a regional community of practice in which electronic patient health records can be shared across healthcare

organisations in North West Tasmania, providing secure access to accurate, relevant information at the point of care.

During this part of the project, an electronic referral to specialist services within the North West Area Health Service (NWAHS), as well as an electronic request for diagnostic imaging will be developed. The foundation elements of secure messaging - unique healthcare identifiers, authentication and encryption will be employed.

Both services will be developed within GP applications currently used in the region, according to Australian Standards.

They will be sent using a secure messaging service (ReferralNet), in collaboration with the receiving organisations - the NWAHS and Regional Imaging Tasmania. The message will then be received and integrated into NWAHS

information systems.

These referrals will be implemented on a specialty by specialty basis in conjunction with an improvement of the patient pathway, led by the NWAHS.

eHIE will concurrently develop information and training material to assist practices. Following a successful pilot phase, a supported implementation of the referrals at all interested practices will be rolled out.

The project is a collaboration between the RCS, General Practice North West, the North West Area Health Services, and the Cradle Coast Authority, and is funded by the Australian Government's Department of Health and Ageing. The project carries a shared local vision elicited from local GPs, specialists, and the NWAHS.

RCS gains Immediate Life Support course accreditation

Thanks to a lot of dedicated work undertaken during the year, the RCS is now accredited as an Australian Resuscitation Council (ARC) Immediate Life Support (ILS) training centre - a first for Tasmania. As a vital part of this process, a number of staff have gained accreditation as ILS instructors. These include: Drs Satish Kumar, Lizzie Shires, Deb Wilson and Nick Towle and Clinical Nurse Educators Luanne Steven and Lynn Greives.

ILS training ensures a standard approach to early resuscitation practice for undergraduate medical students and Junior Doctors. The course covers more advanced skills than basic life support, but is not as extensive as the two-day Advanced Life Support program.

The course is also suitable for many health care professionals wishing to refresh their skills, including GPs, paramedics, hospital and community Nurses (at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels).

Being an inter-professional program, it aligns with the RCS Clinical Skills and Simulation

Centre's mission to be a regional facility for inter-professional teaching and learning.

ILS training focuses on:

- ◆ The cause and prevention of cardiopulmonary arrest;
- ◆ The ABCDE approach to assessment;
- ◆ Initial resuscitation and defibrillation;
- ◆ Managing patients in cardiopulmonary arrest until a resuscitation team arrives; and
- ◆ Participating as a member of a resuscitation team.

The course may be run as a one day or two half days, with the ability to adapt some content to reflect local practices. It is nationally recognized and the participants' result is valid for four years. The ILS program is also accredited with the UK Resuscitation Council and carries continuing education credit points with a number of professional bodies.

The first programs are being conducted during November with 11 JMOs currently completed.

The RCS aims to include the ILS course in the

MBBS final year program in 2011 and will continue to collaborate with colleagues in the North and South to ensure a consistent teaching and learning approach is established.



Participants and instructors involved in the first ILS course

Another sensational season for the RCS MET Calls



In 2010 the student MET Calls netball team was reformed. With only four continuing players it was a team of new faces. Team captain Danielle Walker gives a summary of the season:

We had a slightly shaky start to the season, but as we got used to playing with each other; started to understand the rules and worked out which way around our bibs went on, we became unstoppable!!

Given the height and accuracy of our steadfast goalies, we were the dream team in the offensive circle.

And our mid-court players proved that despite being new to the game, speed and fitness can get you most places. Some of our team members'

hockey skills were always helpful, and the team's refusal to say die continually got us over the line.

So after a sensational season and a fantastic preliminary final win (15-14), we made it to the grand final.

Unfortunately when the big day arrived, the Puzzles team were too good for us, defeating us by - well, a noticeable amount! But the team played brilliantly, revved up by our cheer squad with newspaper pom-poms in hand!

Ah well, there's always next year ...

The PMCT / RCS Vertical Integration Project



Richard Rozendaal and Rose Moore
checking out the new PMCT website

The Postgraduate Medical Council of Tasmania (PMCT) in the North West now has a brand new website www.pmct.org.au that includes weekly details about the education program available to both junior doctors and medical students at both the NW Regional Hospital and the Mersey Community Hospital.

Amongst other things, the website is designed to promote attendance at education sessions by a broad range of interested learners at different stages of their medical career.

This “vertical integration” has been shown through research to assist medical students with their transition to professional practice, and in

turn, to also assist other participating doctors with their professional development.

Whilst the RCS and PMCT have been working with an integrated model for a number of years, the recent development of the new look PMCT website is now an important underpinning resource.

PMCT and RCS are hoping that community based doctors, including GPs, may also tap into these sessions where they can, and as always, invite the other health professionals to take part.

Those interested in attending sessions should RSVP to Rose Moore on 64304556 or Rosemarie.Moore@utas.edu.au

Building medical education and workforce outcomes in the NW

Prof Judi Walker (former Chief Executive RCS) and Rose Moore (Medical Education Advisor for both the RCS and the Postgraduate Medical Council of Tasmania) presented at the Rural Medicine Australia 2010 Conference in Hobart in October. They talked about how medical

education is delivered in the NW for undergraduate students and doctors in training, and the more recently developed career pathways and vocational education opportunities now available to junior doctors who choose to work in the region.

The Conference was attended by national and international delegates, and is part of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) 2010 program.

For a copy of the presentation please contact Rose Moore as above.

It's all a load of rubbish!

Don't be fooled into thinking that RCS Clinical Medical Education Advisor Dr Nick Towle has fallen on hard times if you see him fossicking in rubbish bins! Dr Towle and some student helpers have been undertaking an audit of RCS waste bin contents in the lead-up to the introduction of the UTAS Resource Recovery Program.

This program will introduce greater recycling opportunities, and encourage staff to become more aware of ways of reducing the rubbish in bins at the end of each working day.

“The audit is the first step in identifying the type of rubbish that we generate over a week and will also help us work out what types of rubbish bins might be needed to make the recycling part of the process more efficient and user-friendly,” Dr Towle said.

RCS staff and students were not alerted to the audit so that waste bin content would not be altered while the process was underway.

But RCS cleaner, Maria Banfield, was involved in the plans by storing each day's waste for audit purposes over the five day period.

The RCS may be promoted within UTAS as the first school to progress this audit, and will hopefully be included as a pilot for the next stage of the Resource Recovery Program.

The program is just one initiative of the University's commitment to environmental sustainability and its development of an integrated model of sustainability.

As a micro-community, it is hoped that the University's experiences in the pursuit of sustainability will inspire and build the capacity of its staff, students and the external community to take action on the economic, environmental, and social challenges across Tasmania.

Dr Towle undertaking the waste audit



Curriculum Mapping

The University of Tasmania's School of Medicine has been working steadily on mapping the MBBS Curriculum for Year 1 – 3 in a way that clearly records what, how, and where students are taught the different components of the MBBS course

The project will enable teaching clinicians to clearly understand what students have learnt in

the early years of the MBBS, enabling them to more effectively plan the content of their own teaching sessions.

The RCS is now a part of this project, with Rose Moore (Medical Education Advisor) and the academic team working on mapping the 2010 final year program using an adaptation of the Year 1 – 3 tool.

Since many components of the final year program are linked to the junior doctor education program, the project has become part of the broader PMCT/RCS Vertical Integration Project (see story above) which will link the MBBS Medical Graduate Profile and the Australian Curriculum Framework for Junior Doctors.

Student Awards (from page 1)

Year 4 Student Awards:

- ♦ **GPNW Simon Monks Award** – Hilary Taylor-Evans
- ♦ **Obstetrics & Gynaecology** - Patrick Lau
- ♦ **Paediatrics** – Sarah Shepherd
- ♦ **Excellence in Research Initiative** – Henry Nowlan
- ♦ **Mental Health** – Ingrid Smethurst
- ♦ **General Practice** – Luke Hamilton

Final Year Student Awards:

- ♦ **Anaesthetics** – Alex Gillie
- ♦ **Medicine** - Rebecca Beaton, Telena Eastley and Gemma Kiely (runners up)
- ♦ **Surgery** - Kate Meredith & Alison Rutledge
- ♦ **Emergency Medicine**
 - ♦ Nitya Malhotra (best student)
 - ♦ Ramanan Daniel (best presentation)
- ♦ **Chronic Disease** - Kate Scoles & Paul Bremner
- ♦ **Remote Practice** - Ben Johnson (Queenstown), Angela Commare (Smithton), Jye Gard (King Island)
- ♦ **Selective** - Emily Liu (Infectious Diseases), Rekha Ratnagobal (Ophthalmology/Palliative Care)

- ♦ **ACRRM prize** for teamwork at Smithton - Danielle Walker, Patrick Lau, Sidha Jeyasreedharan, Amanda Felmingham, Hayden Farquhar, Joanne Chew, Maighdlin Galea
- ♦ **ACRRM Award** for best Complex Rural Case Presentation – Henry Nowlan
- ♦ **RDAA Award** for student demonstrating outstanding contribution and commitment to rural practice in Tasmania – Kaylee Barnett
- ♦ **Community Involvement** – Henry Nowlan & Danielle Walker



Clockwise from top: Final year students - and again after final exams, and Year 4 students

Clinical Psychology Postgraduate success in the North West



Dr Elysia Cunningham

Elysia Cunningham and Frances Saner recently graduated from the UTAS School of Psychology having completed their training in clinical psychology.

Elysia was conferred her PhD, and Frances graduated with her Masters in Clinical Psychology.

To complete their training, Elysia and Frances undertook all the required clinical placements here on the North West, including placements with Mental Health Services, Disability Services, GPNW Clinical Services, Youth Justice and the Education Department.

Their supervisor, Dr Ali Maginness, said that both Elysia and Frances have continued working as clinical psychologists in positions on the NW Coast. "Hopefully, with time, they will also be able to supervise clinical students undertaking clinical placements in the region," she said.

Dr Maginness' conjoint position, as a Clinical Lecturer in Psychology with the RCS and a specialist Clinical Psychologist with the Tasmanian Department of Health at Parkside in Burnie, was established to enable local supervision of postgraduate clinical psychology students.

Staff team: a super effort!

Congratulations to the RCS "Hillbilly Hikers" team - Colleen Cheek, Jen Beamish, Issy Neal and Louise Lee, who were the overall winning team from the Cradle Coast Campus in the recent "Danceorama Challenge".

The Challenge is part of the University's Staff Fitness and Wellbeing Program and the RCS team gained most points for their physical activities over the past few months against stiff competition.

Colleen Cheek, Project Manager of the eHIE project (see story p. 5) was also awarded the "Most Improved" North West participant in the

Challenge.

Colleen did admit to getting lost one morning when setting off before breakfast for her usual 10km walk through the beautiful bush near her farm.

But all team members said they had really enjoyed the camaraderie of the competition and had made some positive changes to their health through an increased emphasis on regular daily physical activity in their busy lives.

The Hillbilly Hikers L to R: Jen Beamish, Louise Lee, Colleen Cheek and Issy Neal





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



- ◆ **New Staff:** Welcome to Richard Rozendaal who has joined the RCS administrative team. Richard is also supporting the Postgraduate Medical Council of Tasmania's work in the North West and has come to us from New Zealand. A warm welcome also to Judith Harris who has an office at the RCS while working on the Gold Standard Framework of Care project with Dr Robyn Brogan, which is funded by the NW Area Health Service. Judith is Project Officer / Nurse Facilitator for the GSF project.
- ◆ **RCS Community Advisory Board (CAB):** The September CAB meeting was held in Queenstown followed by a Community Forum. The close community contact provided by CAB is extremely valuable and provides opportunities for two-way benefits to both the communities and RCS programs.
- ◆ **Faculty of Health Science, Teaching & Learning Forum & Dean's Reception:** Faculty of Health Science colleagues from around the state met at the RCS in September to learn about innovative teaching and learning practices, including how new technology can support teaching. This forum was followed by the Dean's Reception which is an annual event, held at different campuses. This is the first time it has been held in the North West.

(Above) CAB Community Forum participants and (Below) RCS staff enjoying the Dean's Reception with Faculty colleagues from Hobart.

Community Engagement for Productive Ageing

This RCS study funded through an ARC Linkage grant has completed its second phase and is now in its third and final phase.

Phase 2 looked at government policies that support the provision of social services to older people in Tasmania. The research has shown that the most effective services and supports are based on an understanding of relationships between health behaviours or lifestyles and their social and environmental context.

Services which promote active rather than passive social contact, are more likely to impact positively on health and well-being.

The researchers found that when it comes to support services, 'one size' does not fit all and that older people want someone who can work flexibly with them to help out with the things that get a bit harder as people get older, like getting around, making appointments, and

staying in touch with what's happening in the community.

For this reason, the research team is developing a model of support that is flexible and based on relationships. This is different to the current way that services are put together.

They propose that a more appropriate model of service supports would have the following elements:

- ◆ Community based, building on community resources and using social capital already in communities.
- ◆ Teaches community members to identify isolated people or those in need and connect people to services.
- ◆ Based on developing real relationships and trust with individuals.
- ◆ Able to be tailored to meet the needs of individual communities.

- ◆ Is run by someone who understands older rural people (perhaps an older rural person!) and has the ability to 'think outside the square' when trying to solve problems with older people in rural communities.



RCS researcher contributing to regional directions

RCS Research Manager Maree Gleeson has been elected to the Board of the Cradle Coast Authority as a public nominee. Her work in health professional education and research across the health and education sector will contribute to the skills base represented on the Board.

The Cradle Coast Authority is a joint authority created to co-ordinate and drive economic development across the nine local government areas of North-West and Western Tasmania.

The Authority's primary role is to identify priorities for economic development and to broker partnerships between the different levels

of government, industry and community groups to address these priorities on a regional scale.

Maree will Chair the CCA's Healthy Communities Initiative Federally funded project and aimed at engaging people who are at risk of having poor health status.

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.