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From the Director's Desk

Welcome to this autumn 2008 edition of the UDRH Bulletin!

We are pleased to be able to bring you up to date with developments at the UDRH while the Director Associate Professor **Sue Kilpatrick** takes three months study leave visiting the north of Scotland as part of her collaborative research work with the Centre for Rural Health, UHI Millennium Institute, Scotland. During Sue's absence, we will share the Acting Director's role.

It is particularly pleasing to be able to report that the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing has announced that funding for the UDRH programs has been secured for the next three years. This allows the UDRH to continue its vital rural health research and collaborative activities.

As we look forward to a new funding cycle, it is perhaps timely to reflect on how the UDRH is performing from the perspective of the communities in health that use our services. In the coming weeks, a questionnaire will be sent out to people who use the UDRH services asking for feedback on a UDRH activity that they may have participated in, or, have been associated with. This information will allow the UDRH to maintain a focus on rural Tasmanian communities. At the same time a broader National evaluation of all UDRH programs is being conducted on behalf of the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing and we look forward to assisting the evaluators.

One of the key highlights of the first quarter of 2008 has been the launch of the St Helens Rural Health Teaching Site, which brings the total number of sites around Tasmania to 14. The site has been developed through funding from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing and in partnership with the Tasmanian



Dr Christine Stirling and Stuart Auckland

Department of Health and Human Services and the Break O'Day Council. This is an exciting development as it will not only support the expansion of the Faculty of Health Science's student clinical placement program but also create new collaborative opportunities for rural health in that area.

We would like to congratulate **Kim Boyer** on her appointment as Chair of the Tasmanian Academy, part of the Tasmania Tomorrow reforms of education that aims among other things to improve the transition from school to further education and training and work.

UDRH staff have been busy working across a range of activity areas. A good example of an activity that has experienced considerable expansion this year is the UDRH Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program. This program has already delivered a number of seminars and workshops covering a range of health and wellbeing issues including Mental Health First Aid, Cultural Awareness and Community Development. More seminar activities are planned for the rest of the year.

You can read more about the achievements of UDRH staff together with information about some of their conference presentations and publications in this issue.

Christine Stirling & Stuart Auckland
Acting Directors

Rural health teaching site opened at St Helens

A new Rural Health Teaching Site opened on 16 April 2008 at St Helens. It will provide accommodation and IT facilities for health students who are undertaking rural placements.

Professor of Rural Health **Judi Walker** said that the UDRH and the St Helens District Hospital had collaborated on the development of the Teaching Site.

"This is another step in the strategy of making rural areas attractive to health students," she said.

"Each year up to 20 nursing, medical and pharmacy students gain clinical experience at St Helens, working with local health professionals who are vital to their education.

"A positive rural placement experience as a student provides a strong incentive to consider working and living in a rural community as a graduate.

"This experience is invaluable for the students but the cost of accommodation can be prohibitive. This new Teaching Site will greatly reduce the financial costs incurred by students."

At the opening ceremony, the Hon **Dick Adams MHR** commended the UDRH for its commitment to working with local communities to improve health care for people in rural Tasmania.

"I am happy to see the UDRH expanding its Rural Health Teaching Site network to provide quality facilities necessary to the students undertaking rural placements



(From right) Rural Health Professor Judi Walker; the Hon Dick Adams, MHR for Lyons; Break O'Day Mayor Robert Legge; UDRH Acting Director Dr Christine Stirling

and rural health professionals," he said.

"The work of the Department helps build Tasmania's health workforce and retain health professionals in the rural communities."

The opening underlines the already-strong relationship between the St Helens community and the University of Tasmania.

St Helens Hospital staff will supervise daily operations of the Teaching Site and Break O'Day Council staff have offered invaluable assistance throughout the establishment period.

Break O'Day Mayor, **Robert Legge** said the Council has entered into a property purchase/lease back agreement with the

UDRH and will waive some annual rates and charges.

"We are keen to see increased numbers of students in our community and we hope these new facilities make St Helens an even more desirable destination for health professionals," he said.

The UDRH has a network of Rural Health Teaching Sites with facilities at Campbell Town, Dover, Flinders Island, George Town, King Island, Nubeena, Oatlands, Queenstown, Scottsdale, Sheffield, Smithton, St Helens, St Marys and Swansea.

The teaching sites are also available to visiting health professionals such as dentists, nurses, locum GPs and allied health professionals.

A short message from UDRH Director



A/Prof Sue Kilpatrick in Highland Park, Orkney Islands

I am currently in Scotland on study leave, visiting the Centre for Rural Health Research and Policy, University of the Highlands and Islands in Inverness.

You may recall that Professor **Jane Farmer** of the University of the Highlands and Islands visited UDRH Tasmania in 2007. Jane and I are conducting a comparative study in Scotland and Tasmania of the potential of rural community health professionals as social entrepreneurs. We are investigating the experiences of health professionals living and working in rural areas in relation to building social outcomes for their communities.

The term social entrepreneur has been applied to those who formally

or informally generate community associations and networking that produce social outcomes. For example nurses might initiate health promotion programs to address local needs; stimulate social or cultural activities (e.g. lunch club or oral history project); or establish not-for-profit health and care enterprises.

I will be interviewing health practitioners working in locations as remote as the Orkney Islands, the Isle of Arran and Fort William. I have also taken the opportunity to visit academics at the Universities of Dundee, Stirling, Glasgow and St Andrews, and will be attending a conference between the north of Scotland and north of Norway National Health Services.

Sue Kilpatrick
Associate Professor and Director

Congratulations to Kim Boyer as Chair of Tasmanian Academy

The UDRH would like to congratulate its Senior Research Fellow **Kim Boyer** on her recent appointment by the Minister for Education and Skills **David Bartlett** as chair of the Tasmanian Academy, one of the three new Tasmania Tomorrow organisations with an aim to reform post year 10 education and training.

Kim is also chair of the Southern Area Taskforce which is working to improve transition outcomes for young people, and Deputy Chair of the Southern School Improvement Board. She has also held senior positions with the Health Department. Formerly, Kim was Deputy Chancellor and

Acting Chancellor of the University of Tasmania.

Kim was excited about being able to contribute to Tasmanian education reform. She said: "The Academy board and staff have enormous potential to build enhanced options and opportunities for young Tasmanians."

Kim looks forward to a high level of collaboration with her fellow chairs of Tasmanian Polytechnic and Training Tasmania to ensure that the pathways for young Tasmanians between high school and high quality further education and training are supportive and flexible.



Kim Boyer

UDRH researcher wins Oxford book contract



Dr Erica Bell

Dr Erica Bell, Academic Research Leader and Research Fellow at the UDRH, has won a sole-author book contract with the prestigious Oxford University Press.

The book, which will be a scholarly work on health policy, is due for international distribution in 2009 in the UK and USA, as well as other countries.

"Rural health has much to gain from

building a profile in health policy," said Dr Bell, "because many of the challenges we face are also about getting better policy frameworks. Without good policy, our practitioners and communities will continue to be disadvantaged."

Dr Bell has practical experience in policy, having worked as a manager of a large policy research unit in government where she led numerous projects, including ministerial and cabinet reviews, aimed at micro and macro policy development. Many of these projects involved hundreds and even thousands of community participants. She is author and co-author of key state and national policy documents, particularly in equity areas. This experience, together with her scholarly publications across diverse sub-disciplines of health and education, informs the book.

Dr Bell explained that many centres for health policy research have sprung up in America and Europe over the last decade, however, Australia is only just beginning to build its strengths in this area.

"This has meant that I have had to network with policy research leaders internationally to try to overcome the tyranny of distance that can leave researchers in particular areas rather isolated. I was delighted to meet Professor **Huw Davies** who is considered one of the UK's most influential policy researchers at the 2006 Health Services Research Conference which my department supported me to

attend. His work, together with that of others in health policy, such as John Lavis who is the Canada Research Chair in Knowledge Transfer and Exchange, has really been helpful. These are health researchers who are working at the interface of policy and research to develop new ways of thinking.

"I hope my work will make a contribution to ensuring that the University of Tasmania, and Rural Health in particular, have an international voice in health policy research. In a context where the world's largest health funding agency, America's National Institutes of Health, has made translational research for practice and policy a major part of its vision for the 21st Century, it seems likely that researchers will be increasingly called upon to better meet the needs of health policy makers."

PHCRED Travel Grants

The UDRH and Menzies Research Institute are offering travel assistance of \$1,500 to research active primary health care practitioners to attend a national conference in 2008. Round 2 Travel Grants application will be advertised in June 2008.

For details, please visit: http://www.phcred.utas.edu.au/travel_grants.htm

Graduate Research news

The Rural Health Graduate Research program has been further enriched with the arrival of new students: **Sharon Hetherington, Ree Van Galen, Dr Rosemary Cane, Maree Gleeson, Winifred Houshold and Yvonna Zuyoam**. Warmest welcome to Sharon, Ree, Rosemary, Maree, Winifred and Yvonna!

Congratulations to Dr Rosemary Cane for winning a NHMRC public health postgraduate scholarship to undertake a PhD in methods to integrate oral health into general health. Her research will have a strong preventive and health promotion focus, with a view to achieving practical outcomes that benefit the Tasmanian community. The target group will be people who find it difficult to maintain their oral health alongside other significant social and medical issues.

Congratulations also to Sharon Hetherington, Ree Van Galen and **Kate Squibb** for winning the Graduate Research and Tasmanian Scholarships.

We are so pleased to share with you the news that **Suzette Seaton** has lodged her intention to submit her MMedSc thesis. Congratulations and best wishes to her.

On the publication and conference side, we are proud to share the following news and warmest congratulations to those involved:

- **Shandell Elmer** has a joint paper "A Look at the Culture-Quality-Performance Link" accepted for publication in the special issue on Safety and Quality in Primary Health
- **Shandell Elmer** has had her abstract "Developing Organisational Capacity: From Quality We Learn" accepted for the First Annual Alcohol Tobacco and other Drugs Council of Tasmania Conference in Hobart: ATOD Practice, Integration and Development.
- **Andrew Harris** has had his joint article entitled "West African Refugee Health in Rural Australia: Complex Cultural Factors that Influence Mental Health" published in the *International Journal of Rural and Remote Health*.
- Sharon Hetherington has her refereed paper "The Social and Functional Benefits of Low Intensity Physical Activity for Older People. The Efficacy of Tai Chi for Older Australian Adults" accepted for presentation at the 7th World Congress on Aging and Physical Activity in Japan.
- **Anna Spinaze** and Dr Rosemary Cane have abstracts for their papers "Finding a Method: Exploring Video-cued Interviewing, for Qualitative Action Research into Rural Clinician Roles and Identities around Chronic Disease Management" and "Black Tooth Stumps and Toothache: Signs of a Bigger Picture?" accepted respectively at the GP and PHC Research Conference in Hobart, 4 – 6 June 2008.
- **Ha Hoang** presented her paper titled

of the *Australian Journal of Public Health* in February 2008.

"Maternity Care: An Intercultural Study" at the World Congress of Health Professions 2008, which took place in Perth in March 2008.

- **Chona Hannah** presented a paper on health and wellbeing of intermarriage Filipino women at the International Research Conference in Iloilo, Philippines in February 2008.
- **Martin Harris** presented a paper titled "Overcoming Cultural Barriers in Suicide Prevention" at the Diversity in Health Conference in Sydney, on 10-12 March 2008.
- **Melinda Minstrell's** paper entitled "Supportive Care of Rural Women with Breast Cancer in Tasmania, Australia: Changing Needs over Time" has been accepted for publication in the *Journal of Psycho-Oncology*.

Congratulations to **Lorraine Smith, Chona Hannah and Diep Thi-Le** for their progress:

- Lorraine Smith, Chona Hannah and Diep Thi-Le's preliminary research plans have been approved.
- Chona's ethics application has been approved.

We look forward to the Collaborative Graduate Research Symposium in Launceston on 27 June 2008. This is a joint event between the UDRH, Rural Clinical School, Launceston Clinical School, School of Nursing and Midwifery and School of Human Life Sciences. There will be a lot to share and tell.

From papers to a book

Dr **Quynh Lê**, UDRH Lecturer, was the driving force behind the book entitled *Graduate Research Papers in Rural Health* which is a compilation of the research works of rural health graduate research students, comprising papers mainly contributed by them.

The book, launched earlier in the year, includes papers at various stages of research. Some are at the early stage of research inquiry and some are reflections and evaluations by researchers at the final stage of their research journey. Individual papers deal with a variety of topics and use different research approaches in response to the increasing challenge of the complex nature of rural health research. The

papers contributed reflect a collaborative research discourse that includes graduate research candidates, academic staff and supervisors, and networked health researchers.

Commending the students' efforts, Professor **Carey Denholm**, then Dean of Graduate Research, said: "I am very pleased to provide some introductory comments to *Graduate Research Papers in Rural Health*. I am aware that this UTAS publication has been under consideration for some time and I know that it will have a significant and lasting impact both within the rural health research training landscape and in assisting to shape and encourage research activity within the field."



The book is available in hard copy, CD and online formats. The online version is free (<http://www.ruralhealth.utas.edu.au/gr/publications.php>).

Hard copies (with CD) are for sale at \$17.00 plus postage (cash only). Please contact the UDRH at (03) 6324 4000 if you would like to purchase one. Hard copies are also available at UTAS Library.

Regener8 meets the Prime Minister

Photo courtesy of the Hon Dick Adams



Dick Adams discussing *Regener8* with the Prime Minister at the PM's suite

UDRH Honorary Associate Dr **Rosa McManamey**'s book *Regener8: Stories and Impressions of the Tasmanian East Coast Bushfire 2006* has travelled to Canberra and Limerick, Ireland to meet interesting and influential audiences

including Prime Minister **Kevin Rudd**.

The Hon **Dick Adams**, MP, Federal Member for Lyons, presented the book *Regener8* to the Prime Minister in Canberra, to remind him of his

visit during the fire period. The book showcased the resilience of the communities despite the difficulties they have faced.

According to Mr Adams, Mr Rudd was very happy to receive the book and was impressed with the quality and content of the publication. The Prime Minister sent his congratulations to all the people involved.

Dr Rosa McManamey, editor of the book, travelled to Limerick, Ireland to present a paper entitled "Arts, Health, Resilience and Healing after a Natural Disaster" on this community led regeneration project. The paper was presented at the PENR3/PASCAL 2008 Conference: Learning Regions' Role in Regional Development and Re-Generation held on 28-30 May 2008.

PASCAL is an international research and policy development alliance, which aims to develop, communicate and explain new and emerging ideas about place management, social capital and learning regions.

UDRH/TILES project showcased in leading youth journal

UDRH Research Fellow Dr **Clarissa Hughes** is the leading author of a new article that has been accepted for publication in *Youth Studies Australia* (<http://www.acys.info/journal/overview>), a peer reviewed journal which is issued quarterly by the Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies. The journal provides interdisciplinary, research-based information and analysis on issues affecting Australians from early adolescence to young adulthood.

Dr Hughes and co-authors Associate Professor **Roberta Julian**, Inspector **Matthew Richman**, **Ron Mason** and **Gillian Long** are very pleased that their article entitled "Harnessing the Power of Perception: Exploring the Potential of Peer Group Processes to Reduce Alcohol-Related Harm among Rural Youth" will be appearing in the July edition of *Youth Studies Australia*. The journal is not only a high quality peer reviewed publication, it also has a diverse readership including researchers, policy makers and workers in the youth field.

The article calls for a more sophisticated understanding of the ways in which young people's drinking is influenced by their peers – including a recognition of the *positive* contribution of peer groups. It provides an overview of SNAP – the

Social Norms Analysis Project – which is the first Australian trial of the Social Norms approach.

Funded by the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation, SNAP is presented as a theoretically informed model for reducing alcohol related harm in youthful populations by utilising the complex and often positive contributions peer groups make to adolescent health and wellbeing.

"While we've been really pleased about the preliminary results, we certainly don't regard the Social Norms as a 'magic potion' that will miraculously solve the problem of youth drinking," said SNAP Project Director Dr Clarissa Hughes.

"However, the approach has a sound evidence base and young people themselves have been pretty receptive to the project. It is helping them to question some of their taken for granted assumptions about alcohol and is opening up opportunities for them to discuss the issues with their teachers, parents and friends.

"From the number of enquiries we get about the project, it is quite clear that people across the country are eager to find out about this useful addition to the 'health promotion toolkit'. We are



Dr Clarissa Hughes

finalising a how-to guide called *4Real* and hope to establish a website, and consultancy and training services in the near future," added Dr Hughes.

If you would like to find out more about social norms, SNAP or the *4Real* guide, please email tiles@utas.edu.au.

A time to inspire and a time to celebrate!



Dr Lisa Dalton

Autumn is the season which magically changes the land and life into a poetic paradise for many people. For the UDRH Graduate Research team, it is also a time

to celebrate a wonderful achievement: **Lisa Dalton's** success with her PhD.

Warmest congratulations to Dr Lisa Dalton and her supervisors, Drs **Rosalind Bull**, **Erica Bell** and **Peter Orpin**.

The title of her PhD thesis is "Professional Socialisation and Identity Formation in Rural Health Education".

The thesis aimed to describe, interpret and explain the way rural clinical education impacts upon the way undergraduate medical, nursing and pharmacy students construct knowledge and the ways this knowledge is used to shape their sense of professional identity.

We are very happy and proud to know that Lisa's thesis received wonderful comments and recommendations from the examiners.

Rural Health chapter for high-profile textbook

UDRH Research Fellow Dr **Clarissa Hughes** has been invited to write a chapter on Rural Health for the latest edition of *Second Opinion: An Introduction to Health Sociology*, edited by Dr **John Germov** and published by Oxford University Press. This highly successful textbook, which is currently in its 3rd edition, is widely used in a range of undergraduate health science and sociology courses at universities both within Australia and overseas. The forthcoming 4th edition (due to be published in 2009) is the first edition to include a chapter dedicated to "rural health" issues. It is wonderful that Rural Health is being recognised as an interesting and topical field of enquiry. It is also a great privilege for Dr Hughes' name to be added to the list of respected authors who have contributed to this quality publication.

Rural health partner: Older Persons Reference Group, Northern Tasmania

The Older Persons Reference Group (OPRG) is a reference group set up by the Launceston General Hospital now with the Department of Primary Health division. The objectives of OPRG are to develop an awareness of the needs of well and frail older people, to promote positive ageing and to provide a two-way communication between the reference group and the Department of Primary Health.

OPRG's current president is Mrs **Mollie Campbell-Smith**, MBE. Members of the OPRG are representatives of various health and ageing government and NGO associations, health professionals and service providers.

The UDRH is represented on the OPRG by Dr **Rosa McManamey** and Dr **June Hazzlewood**.

The OPRG meets on the first Monday of the month at the Kings Meadows Health Centre and welcomes groups with related interests. Minutes are exchanged with other groups as requested and guest speaker topics are closely related to health and ageing and range widely as requested by the members.

Some current concerns of members of the OPRG are listed below to indicate the breadth of the health and ageing representation.

TASMANIANS WITH DISABILITIES: The Launceston Safer Communities Partnership, carers' privacy laws covering inefficiencies in services, the need for subsidised mobile phones for home and car, and the lack of action on promised training for carers on issues around medication and managing emotional impacts.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF LAUNCESTON (NCWL): Many carers are working too many hours because there are so few of them. The NCWL informal primary carers quantitative and qualitative research project grant is being conducted by Dr **Peter Orpin**, UDRH Senior Research Fellow, with input from Carers Tasmania.

TASMANIAN RECIPIENTS OF GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE (formerly Pensioners Union): Brochures into doctors' surgeries and the development of website is reported. Currently investigating concerns expressed by residents of retirement villages for those on pension incomes.

FLYING SOLO: New brochures provided for distribution by OPRG members to let groups know they provide support to the bereaved and an opportunity for participants to be heard and understood.

ALZHEIMERS AUSTRALIA:

Announced receipt of funding for their "Mind your Mind" sessions and for "Minding the Minders", which is a program to help support groups in rural areas.

COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION:

Distributing funding from Woolworths and the federal government for activities including social contact "pampering days" for rural women living in drought conditions.

CARERS TASMANIA: There is a massive increase in the number of informal primary carers. A recently published book on carer stories will be released shortly.

ASPIRE: Sage Hill's Family and Friends Service, a division of ASPIRE, is a new service for carers of people with mental illness, covering Launceston and the North West coast.

RICHMOND FELLOWSHIP: Supporting programs are aimed at enabling people discharged from Ward 1E to resume responsible community living.

THE LAUNCESTON GENERAL HOSPITAL CONSUMERS REFERENCE GROUP: Working on a privacy audit and signage in the hospital. It also expressed concern at the lack of consistency with nursing employment across hospitals.

News from the Rural Clinical School

Enhancing North West health research opportunities

The Primary Health Care Research Evaluation and Development (PHCRED) team visited the North West coast recently to share their research knowledge and wisdom as part of the Rural Clinical School's Health Research Matters Program. It was the team's second visit to the region this year.

The one-day visit included a two-hour workshop on "Rigorous Evaluation". Afternoon Research Clinics allowed 13 health professionals to enhance their research skills and to discuss their individual research projects with experienced researchers on a one-to-one basis.

PHCRED team researchers **Theresa Doherty**, **Dr Peter Orpin** and **Danielle Williams** were kept busy with individual 60-minute consultations during which

practitioners from seven different disciplines gained assistance in developing instruction and insight into their individual project proposals.

For **Dr Ciara Farley**, North West Regional Hospital Paediatric Registrar, the Research Clinic provided her with a better understanding of analysing current data and helped to develop a research framework that was meaningful to her clinical work.

The PHCRED team will return to the RCS in October for another workshop in support of building health research capacity on the North West coast. The Health Research Matters Program will continue to offer monthly meetings to promote and support the work currently being undertaken by health practitioners in the North West.



Paediatric Registrar **Dr Ciara Farley** (left) discusses her research proposal with Health Research Matters Coordinator **Maree Gleeson** and Senior Research Fellow **Dr Peter Orpin**

For more information on the monthly forums, please contact **Maree Gleeson** on 6430 4553.

Youth policy work wins international recognition

What research approaches work to help develop whole-of-systems policy for at-risk youth?

This question lies at the heart of a paper by lead author and UDRH researcher **Dr Erica Bell** which has just won a place in the prestigious international *Journal of Youth Studies*. The UK-based *Journal of Youth Studies* is a high-impact journal that is the key multidisciplinary journal for research into youth and adolescence. Publication in this journal is sought after by the world's leading researchers in this field.

"My co-authors **Dr Reg Allen**, Professor **David Hogan** and **Carissa Martinez** made different kinds of contributions to a paper that brings both quantitative and qualitative perspectives to bear on the challenge of getting a big-N dataset to

speaking to policy makers," said **Dr Bell**.

"I was also lucky enough to have critical feedback on the draft by Professor **Joan Abbott-Chapman** who has published a number of papers in this journal and is an international leader in adolescent research based here in Tasmania. Special mention should also be made of staff of the Department of Health and Human Services **Margie Nolan** and **Simone Zell** who provided excellent support for the consultancy.

"Framed by the literature on research-policy transfer, this paper explores a 'real world' task of translating adolescent risk-taking data into 'whole-of-system' services development in Tasmania. It aims to explore challenges and opportunities in using large-N quantitative data analyses of such complex constructs as risk-taking to inform holistic policy making.

The paper offers a translational research-into-policy model developed using analyses of a dataset of 5,122 Tasmanian students in Years 8 and 10. This model provides three levels of translation of the data analyses aimed at meeting the needs of holistic policy making: broad directions for how services could be linked and/or be separate; multi-service directions targeting particular risk-

taking behaviours; constellations of interventions for specific risk-taking areas. The translational model is described with reference to specific policy decision-making challenges that are about re-imagining what services should stand alone and what could be brought together, in what ways, to what end.

Dr Bell hopes this work can be helpful to rural health because it faces major challenges of whole-of-systems service development to meet holistic health challenges, from chronic disease in older individuals to substance abuse in youth.

"Many of these holistic health challenges require policy makers to develop services that are responsive to a complex set of interacting factors that cut across disciplines such as health and education," **Dr Bell** said. "The translational research challenges of designing a policy framework for at-risk-youth here in Tasmania really mimic the kinds of challenges you see in other areas where rural researchers work.

"The model simplifies a complex process, however, it offers a basis for exploring why traditional research approaches to complex challenges like adolescent risk-taking may not do enough to meet the needs of policy makers."

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.

Research into West African refugee health



Andrew Harris

UDRH Masters student **Andrew Harris**, together with **John Quee Nyagua**, has had a paper published in *Rural and Remote Health*, volume 8 2008. The paper's title is "West African Refugee Health in Rural Australia: Complex Cultural Factors that Influence Mental Health" (<http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/subviewnew.asp?ArticleID=884>).

John and Andrew met while working in the Phoenix Centre for Torture and War Trauma Survivors in 2004. Since that

time they have talked at length about the issues facing Africans coming to Australia, and collaborated on a number of projects. While John has continued to work in the area at the Migrant Resource Centre in Launceston, using his extensive experience and expertise in Primary Health to ease the transition to Tasmania for people from all countries, Andrew has been engaged in a Masters research project looking intensively at ways to assist African men.

Early in 2007 they co-presented cross cultural awareness training for nursing students at UTAS, and the lecture notes that John had compiled sparked a conversation which led to this paper. John is one of many African entrants to Tasmania who have high level skills and broad ranging experience of primary health issues, and this paper presents some of that experience as it applies to complex cultural issues affecting Africans arriving in Tasmania.

It is hoped that this paper will help build an expectation for interdisciplinary and intercultural learning and understanding. In the words of one of Andrew's respondents: "You people have everything already. But when you get more people, you get more ideas. What you are gaining...you have not seen it and you have not been there...but you are getting it from me because I am here with you!"

Good News for the UDRH!

In a recent letter from the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing regarding the UDRH Tasmania progress report for the period July – December 2007, the UDRH was commended for its success in increasing the number of allied health students and achieving its highest number of student placement weeks in the allied health discipline.

The UDRH also showed a significant increase in the number of collaborations with other organisations during the period and it continues to perform well with regard to the number of publications. The 2007 Career Taster Day was particularly noted as innovative in promoting the range of health careers.

In addition, in the latest annual report of *Rural and Remote Health*, an international electronic journal of rural and remote health research, education, practice and policy, a paper by UDRH researchers Associate Professor **Sue Kilpatrick**, **Susan Johns**, Dr **Patricia Millar**, Dr **Quynh Lê** and **Georgina Routley** was ranked 6th of the top 10 articles accessed most often over the period July 2006 – June 2007. The paper is titled "Skill Shortages in Health: Innovative Solutions Using Vocational Education and Training" (<http://www.rrh.org.au/articles/showarticlenew.asp?ArticleID=623>).

Who's Who of Australian Women

Achievements of UDRH Director Associate Professor **Sue Kilpatrick** will be listed in the 2008 edition of *Who's Who of Australian Women* and *Who's Who in Tasmania*.

Sue has over 20 years of experience in academia and is a renowned researcher in health, social capital, rural leadership and vocational education and training in regional Australia. She has published extensively in these areas besides working as a consultant and researcher with rural communities at the local level. She is particularly interested in researching the processes through which rural communities can develop effective partnerships with local health and education services to help their regions prosper, and to build community capacity.

Sue has worked in various capacities at the University of Tasmania. She

is Director of the UDRH Tasmania and a director of the Australian Rural Health Education Network since 2005. She was Program Director (2004-05) of the Bachelor of Adult and Vocational Education at UTAS Faculty of Education; Director (2002-03) and Associate Director (1997-2002) of the Centre for Research and Learning in Regional Australia; Deputy Head (1997-2001) of the School of Secondary and Post-Compulsory Education; Senior Lecturer/Lecturer (1995-2004) in Adult and Vocational Education, School of Secondary and Post-Compulsory Education; Deputy Head (1993-94) of the Business School and Lecturer (1991-95) in Economics in the Department of Management.

In addition to her UTAS duties, Sue is also a board member of the Early Years Foundation Tasmania, a Board



Associate Professor Sue Kilpatrick

member of Family-Based Care North and a member of the Australian College of Educators.

Getting your PhD

Dr **Quynh Lê**, UDRH Lecturer, was invited to review a 224 page book titled *Getting your PhD: a Practical Insider's Guide* which was edited by **Harriet Churchill** and **Teela Sanders** from SAGE Publications: London 2007. The book reflects the British discourse of graduate research but the advice and illustrations given in the presentation do apply to other institutions in the world. Australian students will find this book useful in many aspects relating to the information and study guides given by their own institutions.

There are three important aspects of graduate research: completing the thesis, building a research profile and networking. Many publications on doctoral studies tend to ignore social networking and focus on thesis writing. This book provides a wider scope. It covers various aspects of the PhD life experiences including networking. Traditionally, supervisors are the only source of students' interaction. This book examines the benefits of social and professional networking which brings two important advantages: enhancing professional life in the future and maintaining emotional health.

Although there are variations among institutions in terms of expectation, resources, regulation and pathways, Quynh thinks that graduate research students will find this book a useful guide to accompany their research journey.

Going green

Did you know that every year an estimated 10 billion plastic pens worldwide are thrown out and end up in landfill? A plastic pen can last for 50,000 years.

With these and other environmental issues in mind, the UDRH has decided to hold its first Green Week from 16-20 June. This will provide an opportunity to share knowledge and ideas about being "green" and acknowledge efforts made by staff in engaging in environmentally sustainable practices.

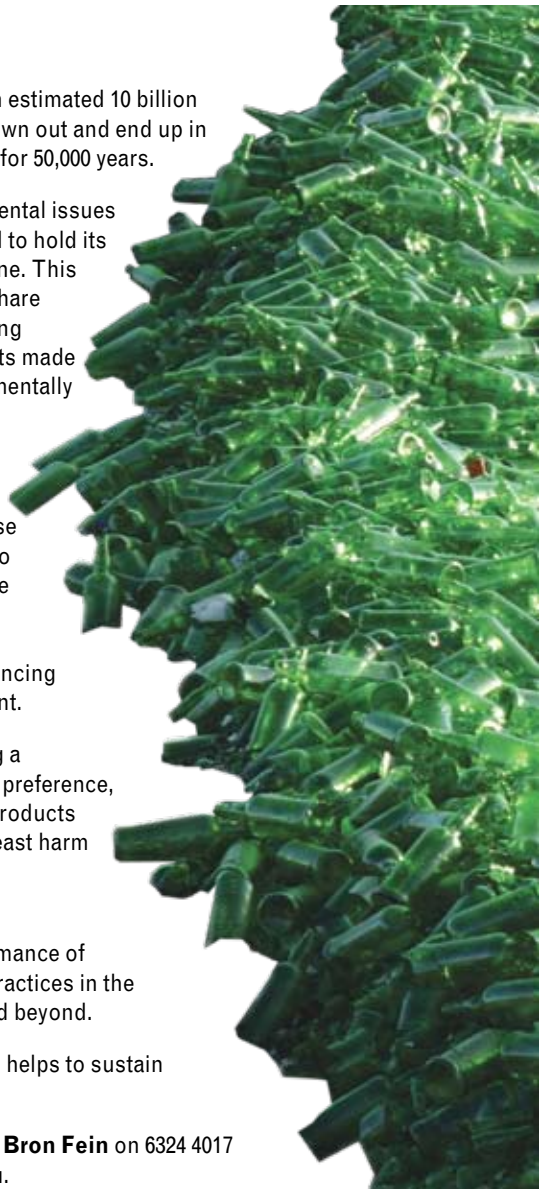
During Green Week, each day will have a different environmental focus such as use of paper, stationery, travelling to work and recycling. Many waste minimisation measures cost nothing but yield large results in terms of protecting and enhancing our local and global environment.

The UDRH is also commencing a purchasing policy that will give preference, as far as practicable, to those products and services which cause the least harm to the environment.

Overall, we aim to increase the environmentally friendly performance of the UDRH and promote such practices in the wider University community and beyond.

After all, a healthy environment helps to sustain a healthy life.

For further information contact **Bron Fein** on 6324 4017 or email bron.fein@utas.edu.au.



From quality we learn

UDRH Lecturer and PhD candidate **Shandell Elmer** gave a presentation at the First Annual ATDC Conference organised by the Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council of Tasmania (ATDC) in Hobart on 28 – 30 April 2008. The title of the conference was Alcohol Tobacco and other Drugs practice, Integration and Development.

Shandell's presentation "Developing Organisational Capacity: From Quality We Learn" focused on the evaluation of the implementation of a quality improvement program within the non-government organisations funded through the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP).

Assuring and improving quality are significant pre-occupations within health and human service organisations. Tensions exist between a compliance



Shandell Elmer

approach enforced by funders and an organisational development approach underpinned by continuous quality improvement (CQI) principles. However, it is evident that quality has become a central, rather than discretionary, function of health systems.

Quality initiatives, such as embarking on a quality improvement program like that offered by the Quality Improvement Council (QIC), can assist organisations to provide assurances of quality to their stakeholders and develop their organisational capacity. The paper provides an overview of the QIC program which is based on the features of a quality organisation, delivered in a modular approach and implemented through a process of CQI.

Shandell's paper discussed the interim evaluation results including an exploration of how the process of engaging with the QIC program supports the development of the SAAP funded NGOs as learning organisations. The findings of the evaluation have relevance to other non-government organisations which are considering quality improvement initiatives.

Lorraine Smith to research the role of pharmacists



Lorraine Smith

Rural Health postgraduate research student **Lorraine Smith** has had the preliminary plan of her Masters of Medical Sciences study approved.

Lorraine's research subject is "The Role of the Pharmacist in the Health Care Team Supporting Patients with Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease in regard to Sexual Dysfunction: What are the Implications for Professional Practice, Training, Pharmacy Layout; and Rural/Regional and Metropolitan Differences?".

Sexual dysfunction (SD) is a significant problem in the male population affecting approximately 18% of men, and the

prevalence approaches 50% in the 40-70 age group and continues to rise with age. The major organic causes of SD are vascular and neurological disorders, most often stemming from diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Standard drug therapy for these conditions include beta blockers, digoxin and thiazide diuretics and these drugs may worsen SD owing to the medication side effects. This in turn may lead to non-compliance (in order to maintain satisfactory sexual activity) hence secondary worsening of the condition, i.e. treatment failure.

According to Lorraine, community pharmacy plays a primary role as a

centre for health education of the population and patient education is essential to ensure optimum outcomes for pharmacologic treatments for SD.

Disease state management information, medicines information and consumer medication information are all integral tools used by a pharmacist during normal pharmacy practice. The pharmacist who is both competent and comfortable discussing sexual function and dysfunction with patients can make positive contributions to a patient's therapeutic outcomes as well as their quality of life.

Lorraine's study will investigate:

- What factors about pharmacy practice and/or the pharmacist might influence the use of these tools with regard to sexual dysfunction?
- What might be the most appropriate means of getting this information to the patient?
- What circumstances would make the patient feel more comfortable about talking about sexual dysfunction to the pharmacist?

Lorraine hopes the information gathered from both male patients and from pharmacists may lay the ground work for some changes which might need to happen to facilitate this broader role of the pharmacists and make the community pharmacy setting a more comfortable environment for the giving and receiving of sensitive information.

"Winding down of life and limb" or "A time for action"?

Two candidates have joined the UDRH under the 2008 Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation and Development (PHCRED) Researcher Development Program. One of them is **Emily Shepherd**.

Emily's research project is about the discussions in the print media on physical activity in the later years of life, investigating how the media produces and reproduces constructions relating to older adults and their participation in physical activity.

She will conduct a media analysis of Tasmanian newspapers and popular magazines, looking for advertisements

and articles that discuss older adults, particularly whether they are described as being capable of participating in physical activity or whether old age is promoted as a time for "winding down" with youth being promoted as superior to the aged.

The project commenced in January 2008 and will be completed in December 2008. The project may lead on to further study around how media constructions act as a barrier or enabler to physical activity participation in older adults.

UDRH Lecturer Dr **Lisa Dalton** is Emily's supervisor.



Emily Shepherd

Handling emotional intelligence in intercultural healthcare



Dr Quynh Lê

Dr **Quynh Lê** had another full paper entitled "Handling Emotional Intelligence in Intercultural Healthcare" accepted for presentation at the Diversity in Health, Strengths and Sustainable Solutions Conference in Sydney in March.

In this paper, Quynh examined the concept of "emotional intelligence"; issues, implementation in relation to its use; and interpretation in intercultural healthcare.

Emotion, particularly in the health context, is often negatively associated with pain and misery such as in the context of poor health and death. It is a common phenomenon across cultures.

Since the introduction of the term

"multiple intelligences" by Gardner (1983) and "emotional intelligence (EI)" by Mayer and Salovey (1990), the concept of EI has attracted a great deal of attention in education, management and health care.

The new interest in EI in healthcare focuses on the following two aspects: EI as a skill and competence; and EI in interpersonal interaction and health management. Quynh suggests that in an intercultural healthcare context, emotional intelligence is an emerging theme as the population is becoming more culturally divergent. It is therefore important to include some intercultural awareness and skills in healthcare training to deal with patients of diverse cultural backgrounds and their families.

Rural Tasmanian volunteers are hiding their light under a bushel

UDRH researchers are finding that rural Tasmanians bring many more skills to their volunteering work than they realise.

"We have found that there are many skilled people volunteering in rural Tasmania. They start community enterprises, work to solve social problems and organise around sport and hobbies," said leader of the research team Dr **Christine Stirling**. "And yet because they may not have formal training, they often do not know how skilled they are."

The research, a collaboration between the UDRH and Volunteering Tasmania, is looking at the sustainability of volunteering in rural areas. The research team includes UDRH researchers Dr Christine Stirling, Dr **Peter Orpin**, Associate Professor **Sue Kilpatrick** and **Suzanne Crowley**. To date, the researchers have found that while all communities have a wide range of volunteering activity, they are very different in the range and type of activity. So far 70 people have been interviewed to find out about their own volunteering experiences and what they think about the future of volunteering in their field.

The team has interviewed volunteers in areas such as emergency services, health services, sports, arts and crafts.

Christine commented: "By the end of the research project, we want to be able to let people know the full extent of

volunteering in rural Tasmania because we believe it is partly hidden from view.

"We also need to know how volunteer groups are managing in our changing world – are they thriving or struggling? If we can find answers to these questions we can help volunteer groups, organisations, and politicians to plan for the future."

Other key areas of interest to the research include understanding how the ageing of our population is affecting volunteering, and whether businesses and corporations in Tasmania support volunteering.

The researchers have launched the second stage of their research which is a statewide survey of small volunteer groups and private businesses.

"We really hope Tasmania's volunteers get behind us with the survey," Christine said. "The more people who fill in and return the survey to us, the more information we will have about the extent and viability of volunteering in Tasmania."

If your volunteer group or program has not received a survey and you would like to participate, please contact: Suzanne Crowley on (03) 6226 7374 or email Suzanne.Crowley@utas.edu.au.



Fire drill by the New Norfolk Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade

Social engagement of adolescents and young adults with intellectual disability



Helen Zournazis

Helen Zournazis has joined the UDRH under the 2008 Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation and Development (PHCRED) Researcher Development Program.

Helen has a background in nursing and an interest in Primary Health Care, completing a Master in Primary Health in 2002. She has had an interest in developing her research skills.

Since taking up the position as a junior researcher, she has identified a project which aims to explore the engagement and maintenance of social relationships of adolescents and young adults with

intellectual disability living in rural environments; and the benefits to their health and well being from a parent carer's perspective.

This proposed project will be recruiting participants from rural northern Tasmania, outside the greater Launceston area and within the '63' telephone directory. At present, this project is going through the ethics approval process.

According to Helen, the support and guidance that UDRH researchers **Martin Harris** and Dr **Peter Orpin** have provided her has been invaluable.

UDRH seminar – University-Health service partnerships

More than 60 health professionals interested in higher education qualification attended a seminar presented by Rural Health Professor **Judi Walker** on 29 April 2008 on University-Health Service Partnerships: Developing an Educational Response to Health Workforce Needs. There were two other co-discussants at the seminar: Dr **Stella Stevens**, senior lecturer, and **Jo Osborne**, Academic Policy and Planning Analyst, both of the Faculty of Health Science.

The purpose of this seminar was to discuss the reasons for the development of a postgraduate program, to be introduced in Tasmania in 2009, that aims to enhance the quality of clinical supervision and clinical leadership through a health focussed leadership program.

The changing nature of health service delivery and the evolution of Australia's health workforce prioritise the need for effective clinical leadership and governance across our health system. National and international studies have demonstrated repeatedly the benefits, in terms of reduced risk and better quality care, flowing from strong clinical leadership and well designed clinical systems that are subject to regular multidisciplinary reviews of outcomes.

While management training courses are generally available at a variety of educational levels culminating, for instance, in MBA qualifications, educational opportunities in clinical supervision and clinical leadership are limited. The clinically-based

supervisor or preceptor has a critical role in implementing organisational change and strengthening service quality, but currently lacks a clear pathway of progression to formalised qualification through the development of context-relevant team leadership, and workplace-based project management and supervisory knowledge and skills.

Professor Judi Walker holds the inaugural Chair of Rural Health at UTAS. She has overall responsibility for the Faculty of Health Science's academic rural health portfolio. She is Chief Executive of the University's Rural Clinical School and also the Faculty's Deputy Dean. Professor Walker is recognised for scholarship and related academic activities in rural health, primary health care and medical/health professional education, particularly innovation in health service delivery and healthcare workforce.

Prior to joining the Faculty of Health Science, Dr Stella Stevens was with Griffith University lecturing and researching in health services management and public health. Stella is particularly interested in clinician leadership, health systems and policy, the socio-economic determinants of health and the role of multidisciplinary approaches to addressing current and emerging health issues.

Jo Osborne is responsible for providing support to the Deputy Dean and Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning) in the facilitation and reporting of short-term academic projects and policy development.

Intercultural issues in healthcare qualitative research

UDRH Lecturer Dr **Quynh Lê** had her refereed paper entitled: "Intercultural Issues in Conducting Healthcare Qualitative Research" accepted for presentation at the Association for Qualitative Research (AQR) Conference on Professionally Speaking: Qualitative Research and the Professions in November 2007. This paper was also selected to be published in the *AQR Journal* in 2008.

This paper examined intercultural issues which need to be considered in the conduct of healthcare qualitative research and potential problems in the treatment of health qualitative data.

Traditionally healthcare research is often valued on evidence-based criteria which is dominated by statistically motivated quantitative research. However, the increasingly popular use of qualitative methods in general, and health research in particular, has provided a different kind of research evidence, which reflects real life issues in social contexts.

Though healthcare qualitative research has provided healthcare workers, policy makers and the public valuable insights into various aspects of population health, there are issues and problems regarding conducting qualitative research in an intercultural discourse. Sociolinguistic and cultural factors are the main causes of problems facing researchers and policy makers. For example, concepts such as confidentiality and security are culturally constructed.

Sharing Rural Health Week experiences with mainland universities

Community engagement is an integral component of a primary health care approach to health service planning and delivery. Health promotion and primary health care were the two cornerstones of last year's Rural Health Week, a statewide health promotion event organised by the UDRH.

It is within this context that **Stuart Auckland**, UDRH Assistant Director and Lecturer, will present a paper entitled "Supporting a Primary Health Approach to Rural Health through University Community Engagement in Rural Health Week" at the forthcoming Australian Universities Communities Engagement Alliance (AUCEA) National Conference to be held on the Sunshine Coast in July this year.

The paper analyses the multiple level partnerships that initiated and

facilitated the inaugural Tasmanian Rural Health Week in 2007. In particular, the paper examines Rural Health Week within the context of the World Health Organisation's Alma Ata Declaration on Primary Health Care. Key elements of the Declaration were reflected in the community engagement strategies applied in the planning and delivery of Rural Health Week. These strategies included ensuring that Rural Health Week activities involved the first level of contact with the health system; were close to where people live and work; universally accessible; involved community in decisions; and were part of social and economic development.

The AUCEA conference will provide an opportunity to further integrate rural health into the university community engagement agenda and provide an opportunity to share the Tasmanian



Stuart Auckland

UDRH experience and knowledge about community engagement with mainland universities.

UDRH seminar – Foetal alcohol spectrum disorder

The UDRH would like to thank the Drug Education Network for bringing to Tasmania two renowned US academics on Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, who shared with local health workers their knowledge and experiences. This very informative seminar titled Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and the USA Experience over 30 Years took place on 30 April and was available via video conference at 13 different locations in Tasmania with about 110 participants.

International FASD incidence is variously predicted at 9:1000 live births. Australia has some medical awareness of Foetal Alcohol Syndrome, the most visible outcome of prenatal exposure to alcohol. However, the majority of FASD affected individuals have disabilities that are invisible.

Professor **Larry Burd**, Department of Pediatrics, University of North Dakota School of Medicine, presented an overview of 30 years' experience in the development of a statewide diagnostic system for FASD in the USA which covered diagnosis, treatment/management, referral, outreach services for families with children living with FASD; referral mechanisms; and funding for the system. He also discussed how to link prevention efforts to other clinical activities and how these might be adapted for Australia.

Dr **Therese Grant**, Director of the Fetal Alcohol and Drug Unit, University

of Washington, focussed on working with at risk women and families; the challenges of community public health interventions; neurodevelopmental effects of prenatal exposure on infants; families affected by alcohol and drug abuse; and intervention for high-risk mothers in order to prevent future alcohol and drug exposed births.

Larry J Burd, PhD, is a Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of North Dakota School of Medicine. He is the Associate Director of the Child Evaluation and Treatment Program, and Director of the North Dakota Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Center. The North Dakota FAS Center has served the entire state of North Dakota for 18 years and the Clinic sees 150 new patients each year from across North Dakota and surrounding states.

In the past 21 years, Dr Burd has evaluated and developed intervention programs for children with developmental disorders. He has published over 100 professional papers on development and behaviour in children and adolescents, and has written the book *Handbook for Parents and Teachers of Children with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome*.

Dr Therese Grant is the Director of the Fetal Alcohol and Drug Unit, University of Washington. Her strong interests in teratology and in the challenges of community public health intervention

began in 1987, when cocaine abuse during pregnancy became an alarming public health problem. She collaborated with Dr **Ann Streissguth** to study neurodevelopmental effects of prenatal exposure on infants. Over the course of that study she observed first-hand the complex problems of families affected by alcohol and drug abuse. For her, a compelling challenge evolved: to develop an intervention for high-risk mothers in order to prevent future alcohol and drug exposed births.

Dr Grant has directed the Parent-Child Assistance Program (PCAP) since 1991. Research findings have demonstrated the model's efficacy, and PCAP is now an award-winning program funded by state legislative appropriation with sites in six Washington State counties (King, Pierce, Yakima, Grant, Spokane, Cowlitz) and the capacity to serve 450 families. The PCAP model has been replicated at numerous other sites in the USA and Canada. Therese has used the PCAP model as a platform from which to further examine research questions on prevention and intervention, with a particular focus on foetal alcohol spectrum disorders. In 2005, PCAP collaborated with Community Psychiatric Clinic to build and operate a new transitional housing facility in Seattle ("The Willows") for PCAP mothers who have co-occurring substance abuse and mental health disorders, and their children.

Sharon Hetherington shares her Tai Chi study with other researchers in Japan



Sharon Hetherington

The 7th World Congress on Aging and Physical Activity will be held at the University of Tsukuba, Japan from 26 - 29 July this year. The congress is held every 4 years by the International Society for Aging and Physical Activity (ISAPA)

which produces the *Journal of Aging and Physical Activity*. Tsukuba City is located 50 km northeast of Tokyo and is a major Japanese research centre, home to more than 50 government research institutes and centres.

UDRH PhD candidate **Sharon Hetherington** will travel to the conference this year to present a paper from her honours project. The paper is titled "The Social and Functional Benefits of Low Intensity Physical Activity for Older People: The Efficacy of Tai Chi for Older Australian Adults".

In her study, Sharon investigated the physical and psychosocial benefits older adults might accrue from increased levels of physical activity. Specifically, she found that previously inactive older adults who participated in regular Tai Chi classes improved in measures of leg strength and balance confidence. Further, these participants had increased their levels of regular physical activity when tested following participation in the Tai Chi classes.

Sharon is looking forward to meeting with other researchers in her area at the congress and sharing ideas and directions for future research.

PHCRED updates

It has been a busy start to the year for the Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation and Development (PHCRED) program. In February, the "Introduction to Research and Evaluation in Practice" workshop series in Burnie, Launceston and Hobart attracted around 50 participants.

Also in February, PHCRED held an orientation day in Hobart for the 2008 Researcher Development Program (RDP) junior fellows. Miriam Herzfeld, (UDRH RDP fellow 2007) joined us to share her PHCRED experiences with Emily Shepherd and Helen Zournazis, the UDRH RDP fellows 2008.

In March, PHCRED held "Searching the Literature" workshops in Launceston and Hobart and advertised the first round of travel bursaries for 2008. The successful UDRH recipient will be announced soon and will receive \$1,500 to attend a conference or to bring a national or international primary health

care researcher to Tasmania to conduct research capacity building activities.

PHCRED also announced the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Primary Health Care Research Scholarship for 2008. This \$3,000 bursary is intended to assist a current DHHS graduate allied health / primary health care practitioner to further their research interest in the field of primary health care. Applications closed on 25 April 2008.

PHCRED has also conducted the first of the Northwest "research clinics" for 2008. This was held at the Rural Clinical School, Burnie, where the reception is always warm and enthusiasm for primary health care research is high.

For more information on PHCRED, visit us at <http://www.phcred.utas.edu.au/> or contact **Theresa Doherty**, statewide facilitator, on 62264803 or email PHCRED.Tas@utas.edu.au.

Rural health discourse in the eyes of overseas-born health professionals

UDRH Dr **Quynh Lê** and Associate Professor **Sue Kilpatrick** had their full paper entitled "Australian Rural Health Discourse in the Eyes of Overseas-born Health Professionals" accepted for presentation at the Diversity in Health, Strengths and Sustainable Solutions Conference in Sydney in March 2008.

The conference's aim was to build on clinical and community models and partnerships, which promote health and wellbeing for diverse population groups. It challenged all delegates who attended; provided a unique experience focussing on the strengths in research, community development practices and the strength of diversity; and reviewed how these can be used in creating sustainable solutions in the area of health. The conference also looked at developing new conceptual frames of reference which reflect the social, economic and cultural world in which we live.

Quynh and Sue's paper explored the experiences of Australian trained, overseas-born health professionals living and working in rural Australia. Migrants from diverse cultural backgrounds have contributed a multicultural dimension to Australian society.

Many migrants who were born overseas have chosen healthcare as their profession in Australia. The health professions are highly valued by overseas-born migrants of the younger generation who have acculturated into Australian society. However, most migrants tend to settle in metropolitan areas and young health professionals may find working in a rural or remote place in Australia a big challenge, culturally and professionally.

There is a shortage of health professionals in rural and remote Australia, and associated good opportunities for career advancement. The paper's findings showed that the acculturation process was affected by the quality of their perceived "social and cultural capital". Some common social strategies such as collaborating, distancing, adjusting, repairing and accommodating were used by overseas-born health professionals to deal with new challenges in adapting to a new rural discourse.

Evaluating health science students' attitudes to interprofessional learning experiences

The Annual Asia Pacific Medical Education (APME) Conference is recognised internationally as one of the premiere medical education conferences in the region. Recent globalisation has influenced medical education on several fronts: knowledge beyond borders, patients beyond borders, doctors beyond borders, and diseases beyond borders. The 5th APME conference in Singapore on 24 – 27 January 2008 attracted several world renowned medical educators to address these challenges, review major issues relating to globalisation of medical education, and to run workshops at the conference.

Dr **Quynh Lê**, **Judy Spencer** and **Jessica Whelan** had their joint abstract "Evaluating Health Science Students' Attitudes to Interprofessional Learning Experiences" accepted for presentation at the conference. This abstract was also shortlisted for the best oral communication award.

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

RIPPER is an educational program developed collaboratively by an interprofessional team from the Schools within the Faculty of Health Science, University of Tasmania.

The assessment validity and reliability of the questionnaire involved three 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 interprofessional 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 interprofessional learning experiences.

June Hazzlewood appointed an advisor to National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre

Dr **June Hazzlewood**, OAM, UDRH Honorary Associate, has been appointed to the Research Education Advisory Committee to the National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre in Canberra. The Centre is a partnership of National Seniors Australia, the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing and the University of the Sunshine Coast. The role of the Committee is to provide direction and advice concerning the development of the Centre's research agenda.

June is also State and National Adviser on Ageing in the National Council of Women and is listed in the 2007 and 2008 editions of *Who's Who of Australian Women*.



Dr June Hazzlewood

UDRH seminar – Playing nicely together

The UDRH seminar series is an effective forum for health professionals, policy makers, academics and researchers to share their knowledge, present their research and exchange ideas.

At the seminar *Playing Nicely Together: Early Years Collaborations in Tasmanian Rural Communities* held on 18 March, UDRH Junior Research Fellow and PhD candidate **Susan Johns** presented the preliminary findings from her ongoing PhD research. The seminar attracted over 40 participants in six locations across the state.

Susan is researching the development of early years (birth to 4) collaborations involving government agencies and non-government organisations in three rural Tasmanian communities. Non-government organisations are defined broadly to include small locally-based groups as well as larger externally-based organisations.

The research is timely, given the increasing focus on the early years at a state, national and international level. At the seminar, Susan highlighted how three different rural Tasmanian communities are dealing with issues related to the provision of support and services to best meet the needs of pre-school children and their families. Factors that impact on the development, sustainability and community outcomes

of these partnerships were discussed.

Susan also asked the participants to reflect on their own experience of collaborations between non-government and government organisations, and how these contributions differ according to context. The seminar discussed the role of schools in rural communities, in terms of the provision of support and services for the early years. This role is changing in light of a substantial injection of government funding for the provision of birth to 4 programs by the education sector.

Susan Johns is currently a PhD candidate and Junior Research Fellow with the University Department of Rural Health at the University of Tasmania. Prior to this she managed one of the Australian-government funded Communities for Children projects in Tasmania. She has experience in educational and health research in rural Australia.

Susan's PhD builds on her MEd research into the community development role of school-community partnerships in rural Australia. Her PhD studies are funded from a Partners in Health scholarship, provided jointly by the Faculty of Health Science at the University of Tasmania, and the Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services.

Medication Management Packages for Enrolled and Registered Nurses re-accredited for 3 years

The UDRH has been administering and distributing the Medication Management Packages for Enrolled and Registered Nurses since 1999. During this time the UDRH has worked in partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), TAFE, Northern Group Training (NGT) and the UTAS School of Nursing and Midwifery (SNM) to update and redevelop the packages for subsequent accreditation by the Nursing Board of Tasmania. Both packages, including a new stand

alone Intravenous Management Module, have recently been re-accredited by the Nursing Board of Tasmania for a period of three years.

UDRH program manager for the packages **Judy Spencer** would like to extend her gratitude to the review team/committee consisting of representatives from DHHS, TAFE, NGT and SNM for their commitment, support and hard work. The 2008 packages will be available in CD Rom format in late July.

Pay a Visit to the Rural Health Training Events Home Page

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

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

Briefs . . .

Please help us welcome **Helen Zournazis** and **Emily Shepherd** as Researcher Development Program (RDP) recipients for 2008. The RDP program is a part of the Primary Health Care Research, Evaluation and Development (PHCRED) initiative of the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. Both Emily and Helen are based in Launceston.

Andrew Harris leaves the UDRH after a very successful year as a member of our Mental Health team. However, Andrew will not be too far away as his new position as Clinical Services and Integration Manager for headspace Northern Tasmania will keep us in

touch with Andrew as the UDRH is a signatory to the headspace initiative. headspace North is a consortium formed for Community of Youth Services to ensure improved access to services and to enable continuity of care for young people across the various service components of the headspace platforms.

Professor **Joan Abbott-Chapman**, an Honorary Associate of the UDRH, was recently engaged by the UTAS Faculty of Education as Professor of Education. We congratulate Joan on this achievement.

Karla Peek has recently had a shift in focus. Karla now has a split position, retaining her previous position as Student Support Officer three days per week, but has picked up an Associate

Lecturer position (2 days per week) honing her academic skills after successfully completing her Honours degree.

Natalie Edwards has joined the UDRH in the front office for the next few months, ably assisting both **Bron Fein** and **Donna Campbell**. Natalie will provide general administrative support to the many workshops, seminars and events conducted by the UDRH.

And last but not least we congratulate lecturer **Sue Whetton** who was recently awarded a UTAS Teaching Merit Certificate in the Individual category. Sue, currently on study leave, is the Coordinator for the e-Health (Health Informatics) Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma at the UDRH.

Upcoming training opportunities

UDRH Seminar Series

Subject: Grief Explored and Making a Memento; and Walking Through Grief
Presenter: Fiona Jones, Specialist Palliative Care Social Worker and UDRH Masters student
Date: 17 June (Tuesday)
Time: 12:15 - 1:30pm
Venue: Telehealth Studios in Burnie, Hobart, Latrobe and Launceston (Other locations by arrangement)

For details, please contact **Cecilia Walters** (tel: 6324 4028, email: Cecilia.Chiu@utas.edu.au)

UDRH Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Program

For details of the CPD Program, please contact **Karla Peek** (tel: 6324 4012, email: K.Peek@utas.edu.au)

Subject: Mental Health First Aid
Presenter: Jean Dalglish, Australian Red Cross
Date: 7, 14, 21, 28 August
Time: 9:00am - 12:00noon
Venue: Anne O'Byrne Centre, cnr Howick and Charles Sts, Launceston

Subject: Understanding the Risk Trajectories for Suicide
Presenter: Martin Harris, UDRH Lecturer
Date: 2 June, 4 August, 6 October
Time: 9:30am - 4:00pm (Lunch will be provided)
Venue: Room 315, Level 3, Anne O'Byrne Centre, cnr Howick and Charles Sts, Launceston