

# CENTRE FOR RURAL HEALTH BULLETIN

DECEMBER 2017

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## Grant recieved for Approach to Dementia and Dementia Care by the Aboriginal Community at Circular Head



From left: Dr Lyn Goldberg, Di Baldock and Dr Terry Cox (absent: Drs Andrea Price, Ha Hoang and Merylyn Cross)

The Circular Head Aboriginal community will receive support to improve its dementia knowledge through the University of Tasmania's Bachelor of Dementia Care, thanks to a recent grant of close to \$835,000.

The funding will enable 10 members of the Circular Head Aboriginal community to study in the Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre's online Dementia Care Program and complete a TAFE Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing, Home and Community) in their own community. Most importantly, students will gain the knowledge to support their community in the area of dementia care and education to address concerns expressed by the Circular Head Aboriginal community about the need for greater dementia education amongst its members.

The Department of Health, Dementia and Aged Care Services grant was secured by the University's Wicking Centre (Dr Lyn Goldberg & Andrea Price) and Centre for Rural Health (Drs Terry Cox, Ha Hoang & Merylyn Cross) in partnership with Dianne Baldock, the Chief

Executive Officer of the Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation (CHAC).

"The Wicking Centre and the Centre for Rural Health are just so proud to be working with this Tasmanian Aboriginal Community in the area of dementia education," Dr Goldberg said.

"And the Circular Head Aboriginal Community has been so incredibly welcoming."

The two-year project, which also has the potential to improve pathways into higher education for community members, follows a just-concluded University of Tasmania study by Drs Goldberg, Cox, and Hoang, working with and guided by CHAC, to gauge the level of dementia knowledge in the Circular Head Aboriginal community.

Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation CEO Di Baldock said she hoped the project would also be the next step in further healthcare developments in the community and provide a model for use in other communities.

As part of the funding, each student will receive a stipend of \$25,000 a year, for two years, to support living expenses and purchase a laptop. Students will begin their studies in Semester 1, 2018.



### Further Information

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## Evaluation of Healthy and Resilient Communities Project

The Centre for Rural Health, Tasmania was commissioned by Rural Alive and Well Inc (RAW) to conduct an evaluation of Rural Alive and Well's Healthy and Resilient Communities program (HaRC). The Healthy and Resilient Communities program is one of two mental health and suicide prevention programs delivered to rural Tasmanian communities by RAW. The goal of the HaRC program is to enhance mental health and wellbeing community protective factors such as coping capacity, resilience and connectedness, to better equip rural Tasmanian communities to react to challenging life experiences. Using an internationally recognised community resilience survey tool, the evaluation explores the notions of community strength, preparedness and resilience in four distinct rural Tasmanian communities, namely Bothwell, Huonville, George Town and the Tasman Peninsula.

Specifically, the evaluation seeks to identify:

- The community characteristics that may act as enablers or barriers to successful rural mental health and wellbeing support interventions;
- Community engagement "approaches" that support enabling particular communities at the discreet phases of capacity building from preparedness through to the establishment of self-sustaining community structures.

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# NEWS & ACTIVITIES

## Health Practitioners Research Development Program

The 2017 Health Practitioner Research Development Program has been run over two rounds. Our offices are buzzing with enthusiastic health practitioners, who have come to the CRH with diverse and exciting health backgrounds, and each practitioner is making substantial and meaningful contributions to a range of CRH projects.



### Practitioner Steph Thompson Tea and cake on Thursdays

On a number of Thursdays during August and September, Dr Stephanie Thompson and Dr Pauline Marsh commenced interviews for the 'Living Loving Dying: Experiences of Palliation on the Tasman Peninsula' project. This a collaborative project with local General Practitioner Craig Brown, from the Huon Regional Care Practice at Nubeena and was developed out of conversations between Craig, Stephanie and Pauline earlier in the year. The aim was to understand palliation on the peninsula from the perspectives of people who have cared for someone until their death, within the last three years, with the intention of helping others in the future.

We have been overwhelmed by the openness and generosity of the participants, all of whom are grieving the recent death of someone important to them. We were eased through sad, confronting and heart wrenching stories by tea, cakes, biscuits, and warm winter sunshine.

We are now coding and analysing transcripts, and preliminary findings reflect the diversity of caring and grieving also found in the literature. Within the broad array of experiences there are, nonetheless, themes emerging suggestive of factors that assist in tilting caring and grieving toward smoother terrain. The stories we have heard are too rich for one journal article. Instead we have decided to publish a series of smaller vignette style pieces, across different journals, to do the research and the participants, justice. We are starting to plan replica projects in other areas of Tasmania, and are investigating funding options to enable this to happen. Please get in touch if you would like further information or would like to be involved in any way.



### Practitioner Josephine de Deuge

As a practitioner, Jozie is working on a project led by the Centre for Rural Health, to evaluate Rural Alive and Well (RAW)'s Healthy and Resilient Communities Program (HaRC). The primary goal of the HaRC program is to boost community resilience and build the capacity of Tasmanian communities to react to challenging life experiences as individuals, families, and whole communities. The CRH is conducting the evaluation in four rural Tasmanian communities (George Town, Bothwell, Huonville and the Tasman Peninsula). Jozie has been instrumental in the roll out of this project, collecting data through surveying residences and conducting focus group with community stakeholders.



### Practitioner Tamara Reynish

The recipient of a Health Practitioner Research Development Program Scholarship, Tamara is a counsellor interested in gaps in mental health services for marginalised populations in rural and remote areas. In addition, Tamara has research interests in trauma, people who have experienced sexual assault, and the LGBTI population. Tamara has two Master's degrees: Social Work and Intellectual History, a Bachelor's degree in History and Russian Studies, and several diplomas related to counselling and mental health.



### Practitioner Stephanie Dunbar

Stephanie Dunbar is currently working with Dr Ha Hoang and A/Prof. Tony Barnett on a project titled "Rural Pharmacies and Oral Health in Tasmania". Stephanie has been working with Dr Hoang to analyse qualitative interview data and presented a paper at the Allied Health Symposium in Hobart on the 10th of November. The study investigated the roles that pharmacists in rural and remote Tasmania play in providing oral health care. People living in rural and remote areas of Australia have poorer oral health and less access to oral health services than those in metropolitan areas. In the absence of a resident dentist, rural dwellers often present to non-dental primary care providers (e.g. pharmacists) with oral health problems. This research adds to the scant literature surrounding how rural and remote areas adapt to limited access to services such as dentist.



### Further Information

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## Australian Academy of Science High Flyers Think Tank

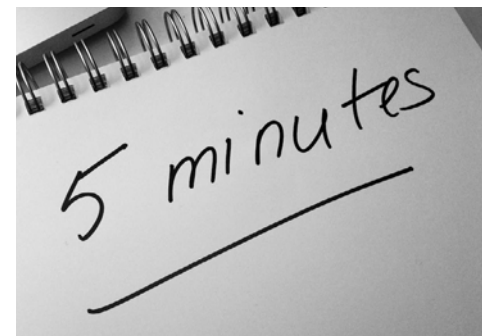
Dr Katherine Kent was an invited delegate at the 2017 Theo Murphy High Flyers Think Tank, 'Rethinking food and nutrition science', held on 26-28 July in Perth, hosted by the Australian Academy of Science. The think tank engaged early and mid-career researchers to collectively brainstorm novel solutions to the major barriers facing the future of nutrition science in Australia. In addition, it was a unique opportunity to network with peers and senior experts with a view to forming interdisciplinary collaborations. Katherine participated in two 'think tank' seminars, contributing to critical multi-disciplinary discussion regarding the "Critical evaluation of food and nutrition science" and "Effective Governance for the Future of Nutrition". The findings of the Think Tank are currently being written up to inform the development of a long term strategic planning process for the research discipline of nutrition in Australia.



## Young Tall Poppy



Dr Katherine Kent has been awarded the prestigious 2017 Tasmanian Young Tall Poppy Scientist of the Year on behalf of the Australian Institute of Policy and Science. Katherine was presented the award by Professor Brigid Heywood at the UTAS Vice Chancellors 2017 awards dinner. The Tall Poppy Campaign recognises and celebrates Australian intellectual and scientific excellence in younger Australians. The award winners, 'Tall Poppies', participate in education and community outreach programs in which they become role models to inspire school students and the broader community about the possibilities of science. This involves a range of other science promotion activities for school students, teachers and the broader community, including visits to schools, educational seminars, workshops, public talks and other activities.



## Five Minute Research Pitch (5RP)

After being awarded first place prize winner of the University of Tasmania Five Minute Research Pitch (5RP), Katherine Kent went on to represent the CRH and UTAS for the 'Group 1 Sciences and Health' category in the National final held in Melbourne on 21 November. The 5RP is an opportunity for researchers to showcase their research to a National audience and are required to deliver a punchy five minute presentation of their recent research with the aid of three PowerPoint slides. Katherine's talk, entitled "Flavonoids for thought", gives an overview of the potential health benefits for dietary flavonoids for cognitive and cardiovascular health. We are very pleased to announce that Katherine was awarded second place in the National final and WINNER of the People's Choice award.

### Article continued from page 1

The evaluation of the HaRC program, is an important step in understanding the changes needed in moving towards an effective community based model of rural mental health service delivery that takes account of the way that rural and remote communities function.

The evaluation was conducted over a six month period between May 2017 and November 2017 with funding made available through the Ian Potter Foundation. Outcomes from the evaluation will be used to refine programming, including the assessment of new HaRC sites and delivery of services. Findings from the study will also feed into the recently announced National Suicide Prevention trial of which Tasmania is one of 12 selected study sites.

### Further Information



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## Psychology Week Picnic

Psychology Week aims to increase public awareness of how psychology can help Australians lead healthier, happier and more meaningful lives. Psychology Week is an initiative of the APS (Australian Psychological Society). This year's theme was 'Thriving in the digital age'.

In supportive participation of the week, the Centre for Rural Health team took some time away from their computers and phones to have a picnic in the sun with their colleagues.

Good food, sun, beautiful surroundings and pleasant conversations, for even a short time, can make a big difference in how we feel. Thank you to everyone who supported this event.



## Rural Art Show Unique exhibition promotes positive mental health

The *Rural Art Roadshow* is an annual collaboration between the University's Centre for Rural Health and mental health service provider, Wellways. The exhibition, aimed at creating conversations that promote positive mental health in rural communities, commenced its journey around Tasmania on Tuesday, 31 October.

Building on the not-for-profit's recent *Minds do Matter* exhibition in Launceston, around 40 selected works from the showcase created by people affected by mental health, toured rural communities during November.

Each township hosted an official opening event, attended by an exhibiting artist, who shared their personal experience, alongside mental health workers.

Centre for Rural Health Director, Dr Tony Barnett, said the artwork was a way of beginning conversations around mental health that could

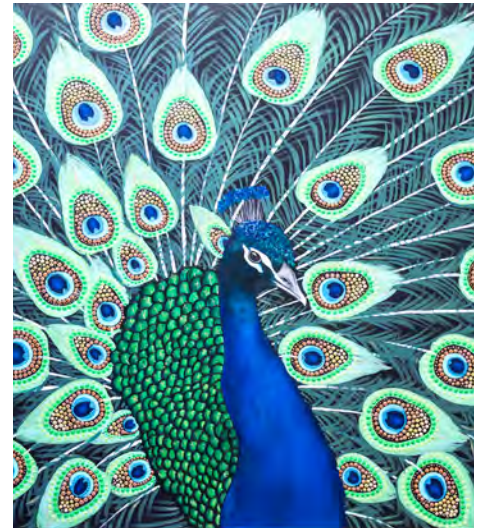
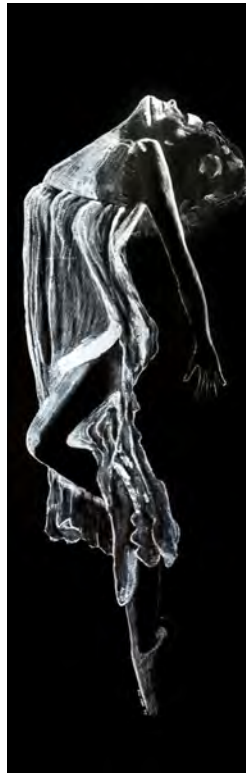
importantly continue outside each community's gallery.

"The exhibition aims to build resilience, reduce stigma and promote a positive image of mental health in rural Tasmania by showcasing art submitted by community members who have been impacted personally or indirectly," Dr Barnett said.

"Through the conversations it will foster, we can begin to create rural communities which are more welcoming and understanding about mental health."

Mr Darren McKay from Wellways said the project significantly expanded the reach and benefit of the *Minds do Matter* exhibition into rural Tasmanian areas.

"This exhibition explores the relationship between art and wellbeing by celebrating art's power to be life-enhancing and life affirming," Mr McKay said.



### Further Information

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## NEW STAFF



### Fiona Proudfoot

Fiona has a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) with the School of Social Sciences, University of Tasmania. She

has recently submitted her PhD where she explored how social housing officers in Queensland understood the relationship between their racialised identity and their professional practice in an intercultural context, especially in relation to Indigenous service users.

This research was supported by a three year topup scholarship awarded by the Australian Housing Urban Research Institute (AHURI). Fiona is a sociologist who has worked in various roles as a sessional academic for the past six years. These have included unit coordination, tutoring and workshop facilitation. Currently, as part of her Master of Social Work practicum, Fiona is working on the New Graduates Workforce Project alongside Belinda Jessup and others. Fiona is a qualitative researcher with a strong interest in social justice and human rights issues



### Sarah Skromanis

Sarah joined the CRH as a Research Assistant for Dr Jon Mond in February 2017. Prior to this she was employed as

a Disability Support Professional with St Giles.

Sarah completed her Honours in Psychology at UTas in 2016 and is currently completing the Master of Professional Psychology degree, also through UTas.

Sarah works two days a week with Dr Mond on a broad range of projects, including, currently, a study of international students' gambling behaviour, an evaluation of a Tasmanian suicide prevention program and a study of pathways to rural placements for Master of Professional Psychology students. Sarah has a particular interest in neuropsychological impairment and the impact of this on the mental health of individuals affected and their families. She hopes to develop her interest in this area, both clinically and in a research capacity.

In her spare time, Sarah likes to travel and spend time with her family and friends.



### Terry Purton

Terry joined the CRH as a Research Assistant for Dr Jon Mond in June 2017. Prior to this she held another Research

Assistant position at UTas, in the Department of Psychology, and was also employed as a tutor for second year cognitive psychology. Terry completed her Honours in Psychology at UTas in 2016. Terry has a particular interest in the relationship between gut function and mental health, and hopes to undertake a PhD in this field in the future.

She works two days a week with Dr Mond on a broad range of projects, including, currently, a study of international students' gambling behaviour, an evaluation of a Tasmanian suicide prevention program and various projects relating to the health and wellbeing of resettled refugees in Tasmania.

In her spare time, Terry likes to cook, read, and practice yoga. She is planning to spend most of 2018 travelling in Asia and Europe.



### Grant Todd

Grant is an Accredited Exercise Physiologist who currently works part-time in his own business,

The Active Health Company, in Launceston and on the East Coast of Tasmania from Avoca to St Helens. He embarked on a career change nearly 11 years ago, going back to university as a mature aged student to complete a Master of Clinical Exercise Physiology (Rehabilitation) from Charles Sturt University, Bathurst.

Grant has worked in the Tasmanian Health Service in Cardiac & Pulmonary Rehabilitation within the hospital setting; at Falls Prevention and Podiatry in the community setting; and with Primary Health Tasmania in a 3 year funded 'Strength 2 Strength Exercise Treatment Program' for those over 60 years and/or with chronic conditions. He has also worked in two private Physiotherapy practices in rural settings – Exeter and St Marys, St Helens, and now continues this rural work on the East Coast in his own business. As 0.6 FTE in the Lead Facilitator role, Rural Professional Experience Placements (PEP), Grant will be focusing on engaging with Exercise Physiology and mainland Allied Health Disciplines to improve their experience and support while on placement and increase placement opportunities to include previously untapped private providers.



### Carl Cooper

Carl Cooper is a registered Pharmacist with post graduate qualifications related to both pharmacy practice

and education. Additionally, Carl has an extensive teaching background within the secondary and tertiary education sectors. He shares the role of Lead Facilitator - Rural Professional Experience Placements (PEP) with Grant Todd. This new role supports the placement activities of all allied health professions across the rural areas of Tasmania with particular emphasis on the North West Coast.

There are opportunities for students enrolled in all universities across Australia, to experience their rural professional experience placements with Tasmanian Health Professionals and be supported by this project. Carl hopes to improve the experiences of all students in their formative education and help to nurture the retention and development of the Allied Health workforce in the State.



### Laura Smith

Laura Smith joined the CRH in April this year as a Research Assistant working with Dr Lyndsay Quarmby and A/

Prof Tony Barnett on the Social Attention and Communication Study – Revised (SACS-R), looking at the developmental surveillance of Autism in Tasmania.

Laura is a researcher interested in child development including the impacts of childhood trauma on a child's developmental trajectory. In addition, Laura has research interests in personality psychology, public health and the mental health of minority populations and specific demographic groups. These groups include children, mothers, New Australians and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. Laura has worked in a number of research and data analyst related roles in government organisations across Australia, including the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Laura has a Masters degree in Public Health from the Australian National University, undergraduate degrees in Arts, Commerce and Philosophy through UTAS and Macquarie University (Psychology majors) and a Diploma in Counselling.

Most recently, Laura was the recipient of a Health Practitioner Research Development Program Scholarship. This award involves working with Dr Jon Mond, other members of the CRH team, and staff from the Migrant Resource Centre, on several projects addressing health and mental health issues among New Australians' who have resettled in Launceston and surrounding areas.

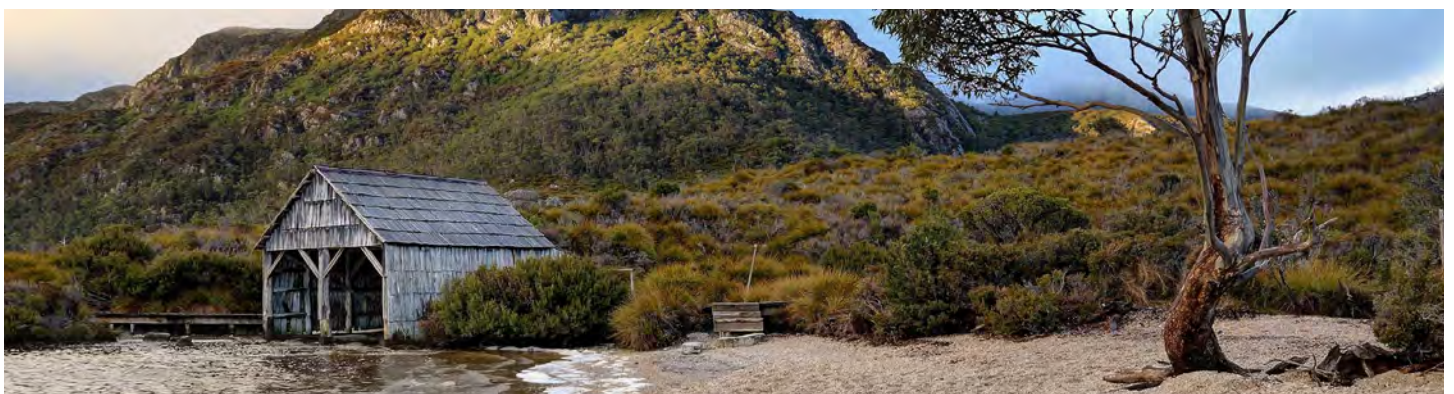


### Dr Sandra Astill

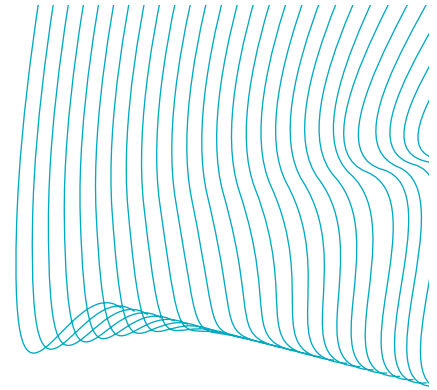
Dr Sandra Astill is a human geographer whose research interests, to date, have centered on the impact of policy

on more vulnerable communities located on the cyclone-prone coastline of Far North Queensland. While completing her Honours research in the cyclone affected beach-front community of Cardwell, she noticed many of those impacted were elderly females. This observation led to her PhD project, which examined the impact of the ageing population on the self-sustainability of ten Far North Queensland remote coastal communities, and their future abilities to remain resilient when faced with intense cyclones.

Sandra's Honours and doctoral thesis provided a number of contributions to the literature, both nationally and internationally, particularly in the area of gerontology, emergency management practice and disaster medicine, as well as invitations to speak at national and international conferences focusing on natural hazards, the ageing population and researcher trauma. Despite not having a health background, Sandra's qualitative research methods, experience with focus groups and face-to-face interviews and thematic analysis techniques provide valuable skills to the Rural Professional Experience Placement Project. In addition, her past research into population ageing has provided a pathway to her tutoring position with the Wicking Centre's Bachelor of Dementia Care. Sandra is now a very proud Tasmanian, loving her new life in beautiful Launceston.



# GRADUATE RESEARCH



As the year progresses, our Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students at CRH also progress well with their research. They have shared their research with local and international conferences and proudly walked on the stage at the graduation ceremony to receive their academic degrees.



#### Further Information

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#### Conference presentations

Two PhD candidates, Drs Jacki Goode and Shah Khan presented their research at the 57th Annual Scientific Meeting of the IADR ANZ Division. The meeting took place at the University of Adelaide on 25th-27th September 2017.

Eight PhD candidates (Sangeeta Khadka, Shep Chidarikire, Lorraine Walker, Melissa Kirschbaum, Ali Morse, Sancia West, Peter Mulholland and Jacqueline Goode) shared their research at the Rural Health and Collaborative Research Symposium 2017. The event hosted by Centre for Rural Health on 7 June was well attended by more than 70 participants. The symposium featured two keynote speakers (Professors Greg Peterson and Nuala Byrne), a research workshop by Prof Dominic Geraghty and more than 35 diverse and innovative research presentations from our colleagues, research students and collaborative partners. The symposium also provided a great opportunity for the attendees to meet, network and collaborate.



#### Graduation

Three of our PhD candidates have recently graduated. Dr Thao Doan investigated the relationship between health literacy and social support and the self-management of health in community dwelling rural older adults. Thao was supervised by A/Prof Tony Barnett, Dr Quynh Le (former CRH senior lecturer) and Dr Simone Lee. Dr Diana Godwin examined the factors that influenced the rural recruitment and retention of dental practitioners. Diana was supervised by A/Prof Len Crocombe (CRH), Dr Ha Hoang (CRH) and A/Prof Leigh Blizzard (Menziess Research Institute). Dr Lucio Babo Soares investigated the oral health of children in the district of Dili, Timor-Leste. Lucio was supervised by A/Prof Len Crocombe, Dr Silvana Bettiol (School of Medicine) and Dr Penny Allan (Rural Clinical School).

**BIG Congratulations to Thao, Diana and Lucio and their supervisory teams. We wish our graduates all the best for their future endeavours!**



# PROJECTS

## RHMT nursing and allied health student expansion project

### Whole of Community Facilitator Program

The Faculty has engaged part-time Whole of Community (WOC) Facilitators in rural and remote communities across Tasmania to provide local support for students to gain the most from their rural placement and to enjoy the opportunity to live and work in our community. They are providing learning support, resources and assisting with access to these, as well as social support in connecting students with the community. Inter-professional learning is a key feature of the project.

Lead facilitators, Grant Todd and Carl Cooper, are responsible for building capacity and enhancing placements in rural communities that will ultimately increase the rural workforce. They are actively expanding placement opportunities and enhancing existing professional experience placements in designated rural and remote locations, with a focus on the NW coast, by building relationships with allied health professions within these disciplines.



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### Student experience: future career opportunity in rural practice

Hannah Kouw, a 3rd year nursing student, has completed her six weeks professional experience placement (PEP) at New Norfolk District Hospital. She received support from her Whole of Community Facilitator, Anne Clark and preceptors who provided her with a plethora of experiences. Hannah Kouw summarised her placement as follows:

“My clinical experience of ... rural PEP has been extremely positive and diverse. Throughout my 6-week PEP at the New Norfolk District Hospital I was really able to immerse myself in the roles associated with being a Registered Nurse in the rural acute setting, which are much different to major city hospitals. The sense of community in rural settings is much more present and involved in the holistic

patient care, and patients feel more welcomed and comforted being in their home town when unwell, rather than in the busy hustle of a metropolitan hospital. The community sense is a major part of the cultural and spiritual care of the patients, which also extends to the nursing staff and multidisciplinary team creating a friendly, welcoming environment.

The role of the Registered Nurse in the rural setting is greatly expanded, involving greater leadership opportunities, skill advancement and a deeper clinical reasoning development, due to the absence of on-site doctors and less resources of a major metropolitan hospital. I really enjoyed this aspect of PEP as it allowed me to develop my clinical reasoning skills to a high level and encouraged the accountability involved in being a Registered Nurse in the rural setting. Overall, my experience of rural clinical placement has greatly encouraged my time management skills, clinical development and appreciation for the power of community in patient healing. I hope to have the opportunity to continue employment in a rural setting in my future career.”



### Student's meet each other at Pizza Meet and Greet event at Latrobe

Eighteen students from nursing, physiotherapy, pharmacy, radiotherapy, medicine and social work came together to meet and greet on 9 October at the Rural Clinical School, Mersey Community Hospital Latrobe. The students were presented with information about RUSTICA and H+R plus. They were able to chat with students from other disciplines and with key staff from Centre of Rural Health and the RHMT student expansion project.

## Supervision Training for psychology, nursing and allied health supervisors

To expand the availability of supervised psychology placements in rural and remote areas of Tasmania, Psychology Board of Australia (PsyBA) approved training was offered to rural and remote practitioners, particularly those in the North West of the State.

Christine Senediak, PsyBA supervisor and trainer, facilitated the training for 18 participants on 30 and 31 August for full training and 12 participants on 1 September for the Master class. This included supervisors from psychology, nursing, pharmacy, exercise physiology and occupational therapy. The participants enjoyed the interactive activities, particularly the role playing scenarios.



Christine Senediak and Matt Tyson, Supervision Training

## Promoting Rural Health Careers



A rural health career is often not considered whilst students are still in high school. Myf Sutton, the Whole of Community Facilitator, supported by nursing students on placement at Oatlands Multipurpose Centre, informed years 11 and 12 students from Oatlands District High School about career pathways available to them. Following the event, the Lead Teacher at the high school stated, "You all did a great job ... at our Years 11/12 parent information evening last night. One of our students was talking to the UTas rep about further info for Nursing". Exciting!

## Aboriginal Staff Alliance (ASA)

The ASA had a face to face meeting at the UDRH in Lismore, NSW, on the 16th and 17th of November. The decision to meet in Lismore was to support the community and staff after the large floods in March 2017. Part of the meeting was to visit sites of cultural significance and to share programs and future planning of the ASA. The ASA discussed potential collaborative projects and the cultural programs related to health and the promotion towards wellbeing. The ASA membership has doubled for 2017 and new members were welcomed. A continued focus for the ASA is student engagement and support. The meeting followed the presentation of the ASA Poster at the 6th Annual NHMRC Symposium on Research Translation co-hosted by the Lowitja Institute and NHMRC in Brisbane on the 14th and 15th of November. The ASA Poster highlighted the work that the ASA do in the UDRH's across Australia.



## Bowel Cancer Screening Participation in Rural Tasmania



Bowel cancer is a preventable condition, yet it is the second most common cancer after prostate cancer, with one in 12 Australians developing the disease by age 85. If found early, 9 in 10 people diagnosed with bowel cancer can be cured.

One way to detect bowel cancer before it becomes a problem is through the use of a home screening kit. The Australian Government has distributed free kits to eligible age groups since 2006, through their National Bowel Cancer Screening Program (NBCSP).

Participation in the program is currently quite low (39% Australia-wide), and in Tasmania, participation rates range from 28% to 47% depending on the Local Government Area.

The Bowel Cancer Screening Participation in Rural Tasmania study aims to find out why there are such large differences in uptake of

bowel cancer screening across Tasmania. Four local government areas were chosen as case studies; Latrobe and Break O'Day (with high participation rates) and George Town and West Coast (with low participation rates).

Community participants aged 50–75 who had received a NBCSP kit, were invited to share their personal views and experience around bowel cancer screening, regardless of whether or not they had used the kit. Health professionals were asked if and how they supported bowel cancer screening, and what might enable them to better promote uptake of the Program. All participants were asked to comment on their Local Government Area screening rates; why they were high/low, and what could be done to increase these rates.

Qualitative analysis of the interviews will offer an insight into the differences between these four rural communities, and hopefully provide strategies for improving bowel cancer screening participation in rural Tasmania.



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## Networking event for supervisors and organisation managers

On 25 August, supervisors from health organisations, including aged care, acute health facilities and rural regions, were invited to meet each other and staff from the University of Tasmania. Several participants highlighted that it was great to meet University staff face to face after all these years and join in discussions with other organisations.



NUM Beaconsfield Health and community Service

# Supplemental Rural Placement Allowance for Allied Health students

The Centre for Rural Health, provides a range of support initiatives to assist health students undertake clinical placements in rural Tasmania. Health students include University of Tasmania students as well as students studying at interstate universities who choose to undertake a supervised clinical placement in Tasmania as part of their course. The Centre provides health students with a 'placement allowance' (funds) to reduce out-of-pocket expenses when they undertake placements outside of Hobart and Launceston. The Rural Placement Allowance is not available to students receiving financial assistance for placements from their school, university or through a scholarship scheme. The Centre also manages a range

of student accommodation facilities in twenty rural and remote locations across Tasmania (including King and Flinders Islands). This accommodation is free to students whilst on placement and helps off-set some of the costs associated with a rural placement. A limited (short-term) supplemental placement allowance is now available to support Australian students enrolled in an allied health course to encourage them to undertake a placement in an area of (allied health) workforce shortage in rural Tasmania. Placements must be a minimum of two weeks duration – longer placement lengths (> 5 weeks) are strongly encouraged. The maximum amount allocated to each student is \$2,500.



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## The Circular Head Aboriginal community's approach to dementia and dementia care project

This project was initiated by Aboriginal community leaders who saw the need to have a clearer understanding of dementia and dementia care. The project gained momentum through a collaboration with Dianne Baldock, CEO of the Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation, Terry Cox and Ha Hoang from the Centre for Rural Health and Lyn Goldberg from the Wicking Dementia Centre. Seed funding from the UTAS 'Better Health' cross-disciplinary research scheme allowed the project to proceed.

Studies conducted with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities around Australia illustrate rates of dementia at between 3-5 times higher than other Australians and with an earlier age of onset. Based on available literature, this is the first Tasmanian based study to examine the experiences of Aboriginal people and their carers living with dementia, their knowledge of dementia and their ideas for appropriate dementia care.

Extensive consultation with community members informed the project methodology towards a targeted knowledge/meaning approach to understanding dementia and dementia care. On invitation, researchers discussed the project at two community events, where

50 community members contributed to the project by completing the Dementia Knowledge Assessment Scale (DKAS), a survey developed by the Wicking Dementia Centre. Participants included 38 women and 12 men who ranged in age from 22-85 years ( $M = 46.4 \pm 16$ ) from various socio-economic backgrounds. Twelve of the 50 participants further added to the project by sharing their dementia care experiences in series of individual interviews.



The survey results illustrate that 26% (13 of 50) of community members had provided care for a family member living with dementia; with 8% (4 of 50) having any formal dementia care training; while 88% (44 of 50) of participants self-assessed having 'no, little or average' knowledge of dementia'. The findings portray a significant demand for dementia care, but little knowledge or confidence in the quality of care provided to family and community members.

A cluster analysis of survey data highlight stronger trends in areas of general care, communication, depression and increased dependence; but poorer trends with identifying dementia symptoms, life expectancy and known modifiable risk factors.

The interview participants provided rich insights into their lived experiences of caring for people living with dementia. Their comments illustrate a key concern to stay connected to family and community while living with this condition. They drew on cultural metaphors to give meaning to dementia in terms of family members 'fading away' (loss of identity and relationships) and carers 'covering up' (compensating for difficult behaviour) and 'hiding' (disengaging). Interview themes also raised the community's desire to better understand dementia and receive dementia education opportunities so they can provide community members with optimal and appropriate care.

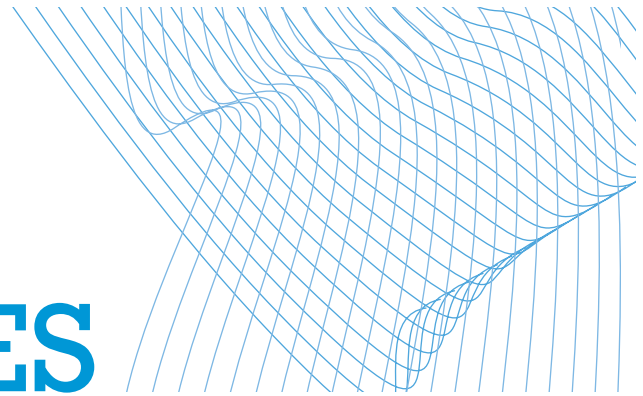
This evidence provided the foundation for our successful Department of Health, Dementia and Aged Care Services (DACs) grant for Aboriginal community members to undertake an innovative within-community University and TAFE program in dementia education and care. The Hon Ken Wyatt, Minister for Aged Care announced our grant in mid-2017.



## Further Information

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# EVENTS /AND/ CONFERENCES



## CRANAplus Conference

**35TH ANNUAL CRANA CONFERENCE 'THE FUTURE OF REMOTE HEALTH AND THE INFLUENCE OF TECHNOLOGY,' BROOME, AUSTRALIA OCTOBER 18-20, 2017**

The core business of CRANAplus, the Council for Remote Area Nurses plus other health professionals, is to educate, support and advocate for all health professionals working in remote areas in Australia. The 35th annual CRANA conference, held in Broome, was attended by approximately 200 participants from a range of health backgrounds including Aboriginal Health Workers.

The two keynote speakers, Dr Keith Suter and Ms Shellie Morris provided uniquely provocative papers.

Dr Suter's paper was entitled 'Listening for the faint signals of change: How new technology may affect remote area health'. Contextualising his paper in terms of Technology representing the fourth industrial revolution, he raised issues about IT literacy, access, sustainability, artificial intelligence, obsolescence of higher education, redefining health care work, health professional roles and future treatment options.

Shellie's paper, entitled 'Increasing connectivity in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' drew on her personal life story that transcends white and Aboriginal family life, community, country and language. Shellie interspersed her narrative with guitar and song which culminated in getting everyone to join in singing 'I belong, You belong, We belong.' She received a standing ovation.

Key announcements during the conference included the appointment of the first National Rural Health Commissioner, Emeritus Professor Paul Worley, the presentation of the award-winning Bullying App called the CRANAplus App and

a new function that can be accessed from the CRANAplus dashboard. 2017 Award Winners were announced at the conference dinner.

Attending this conference provided an opportunity to demonstrate how the UTAS CRH is utilising technology to prepare undergraduate students for placements in rural, remote and Aboriginal health, to network with colleagues navigating the tyrannies of distance, isolation, lean staffing and fiscal constraints and to learn about what others are doing to bridge these challenges and promote rural/remote health outcomes. The conference ran smoothly despite the temperature ranging from 38–42 degrees and the Kimberley being without phone or internet access for 13–15 hours the day before the conference. Four conference delegates were from Tasmania; two of whom were Directors at CRH Rural Health Teaching Sites and all were well connected to the CRANAplus community. The conference provided a mechanism for me to re-engage with remote area clinicians from other states, CRANAplus organisers, hear about the rural and remote careers and lives of past graduates and to discuss CRH/UDRH activities with academics from other University Centres/Departments of Rural Health (James Cook, Flinders and Charles Darwin).



### Further Information

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## Connection with Community

**REPORT ON THE AUSTRALIAN PALLIATIVE CARE CONFERENCE, 6-8 SEPTEMBER 2017, ADELAIDE CONVENTION CENTRE**

This year's Palliative Care Conference was a gathering of clinicians, researchers, policy makers and community members each of whom had an interest in the role of the community in end-of-life care. The conference focus comes at a very interesting time for Palliative Care. Shortly, a new National Strategy will be released, as well as updated National Standards, and community-based care will be integral to these policy documents.

The keynote speakers were experts in whole-of-community approaches to death and dying. Dr Alex Jadad from Toronto presented a confronting and moving account of the global inequities in death, and challenged us to each take action to reduce the imbalance. He works outside the box: prescribes foot massages, and opioid smoothies – and he asked us to consider seriously what our work would look like if we had no fear? Liese Groot-Alberts, NZ based, gave a warm and inspiring talk that focussed on embracing death and grief wholeheartedly. Her approach foregrounds principles of hope, serenity and creativity. Both speakers received standing ovations and reminded us all of the privilege of working in this area.

The remainder of the three days was an eclectic collection of speedtalks, workshops and plenary sessions. My own involvement in the speed talks sessions was gratifying. I presented briefly on the findings from the Walking Each Other Home Project (2016) and then delved into meaningful and insightful discussions with the participants at each of the 7 tables. It felt like time well spent, and I came away with some great connections and a sense of encouragement.



### Further Information

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## Australian Therapeutic Landscapes Conference

**ADELAIDE 2017**  
**FRIDAY 13th OCTOBER**  
**BACK TO GREEN 2017**



**The highlight of my academic year was attending the Australian Therapeutic Landscapes Conference in Adelaide in October. I was fortunate to be able to present findings from the first six months of the DIGnity project, with colleague and co researcher Occupational Therapist Jessie Bynon.**

This was a gathering of around 200 diverse folks, brought together by a shared interest in the therapeutic possibilities of nature, gardening, and gardens. The two key note speakers were particularly impressive: Amy Wagenfeld and Daniel Winterbottom, both from the US.

Throughout the day we heard from many incredible people doing brilliant things:

Social Care Farming in South Australia, Therapeutic gardening in hospitals across the globe, "forest bathing", walking programs for mental wellbeing and home-based garden sharing programs. Both the keynotes and the raft of local speakers reinforced for me the importance of creating therapeutic spaces, and of going the next step to ensure that they are accessible to all in our community.

The DIGnity program was very well received, and we had excellent feedback from the audience. The combination of research and practice in this area is exactly the type of work that Amy Wagenfeld was advocating, so she had introduced us perfectly. When she described how we rethought our relaxed approach to safety, put some additional supports in place, but then kept going

with the program allowing people to take risks, the audience cheered and applauded.

Currently, a team is establishing the Australian Therapeutic Horticulture Association. In 2018, I plan to establish the Tasmanian branch of this organisation. Who can imagine the great potential of such an organisation? I welcome anyone who is interested in helping to set this up to get in touch.



### Further Information

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# GRANTS / RESEARCH

## Social Attention and Communication Study – Revised (SACS-R) 12-months in Tasmania



**The Social Attention and Communication Study - Revised (SACS-R) surveillance tool has been developed and researched over the past 10 years in Australia by the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre at La Trobe University and monitors the social attention and communication development in children aged 11 to 30 months.**

The SACS-R is currently being rolled out across the Child, Health and Parenting Service in Tasmania through a collaborative partnership between the Centre for Rural Health - U Tas, the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre at La Trobe University, the Tasmanian Health Service (THS) and the Autism Cooperative Research Centre. The results from the SACS-R study will contribute to this growing body of evidence, supporting the use of the SACS-R as a community based developmental surveillance approach to monitor young children and allowing for additional unique comparisons within a rural and regional state.

Twelve months into the SACS-R, Child Health and Parenting Service (CHaPS) nurses at the THS, have completed around 4,500 SACS-R consultations within their routine Child Health Checks. Children identified as 'at risk' are being referred on to a community organisation

(St Giles) for a comprehensive developmental assessment. This study marks the first in the new partnership between the Tasmanian Government and the Autism Cooperative Research Centre that was officially launched in October 2017.

Dr Lyndsay Quarmby presenting 'SACS-R 12-months in Tasmania' at the Statewide CHaPS nurses training day on the Wednesday 18 October 2017.



### Further Information

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## Rural Pharmacy Liaison Officer (RPLO) update

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia has funded a Rural Pharmacy Liaison Officer (RPLO) in its present form since the Fourth Community Pharmacy Agreement. It was initially established as the Pharmacist Academics at University Departments of Rural Health (PAUDRH) as part of the Third Community Pharmacy Agreement in 2000. The role of RPLO is to promote intra-professional collaboration and facilitate professional development and networking opportunities for pharmacies, pharmacists and pharmacy students.

I travel to all corners of our beautiful state and visit pharmacies almost every week. In the short time I have been in this position I have visited over 50 pharmacies from as far as Smithton in the North-West, Georgetown in the North, St Helens on the East Coast and Nubeena and Dover in the South. Many of these visits have been timed to coincide with pharmacy students on placement. University Open Days and careers days are also on my list to attend and I work closely with the Centre for Rural Health academics to promote and support rural pharmacy.

Rural pharmacies face many challenges. Stories of workforce shortages have been many and this is the major concern of many rural Pharmacists. The shortages are in full-time, part-time and casual positions and extends the length and breadth of the State. The more isolated pharmacies also have the added challenge of a diminishing pool of available Pharmacists the further they are from metropolitan areas.

Professional education is also a challenge in rural areas, as often Pharmacists are sole practitioners and locums are not available to relieve for attendance at face-to-face events. On-line and distance courses are appropriate and in my travels I have discussed this with many rural pharmacists.

I have met some amazing and innovative Pharmacists and have seen very professional pharmacies providing a full range of clinical services. Tasmania should be very proud of its rural pharmacies and Pharmacists and I look forward to continuing to support them in their practice.

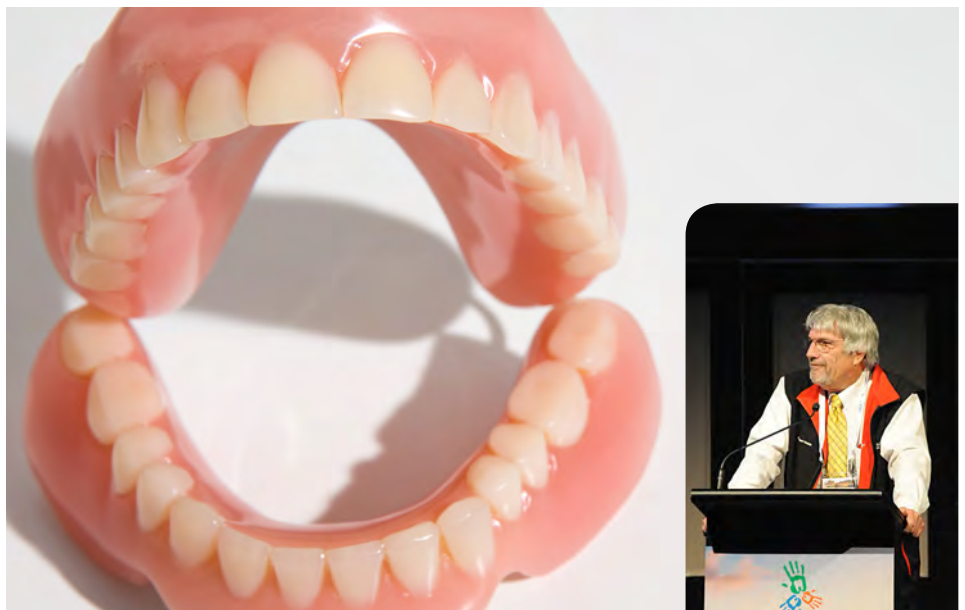


### Further Information

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## Tackling the worsening aged care oral health crisis

Prof Crocombe said, "Aged care oral health is already in crisis and it's going to get much worse unless we tackle the problem now. The crisis is worsening the fastest in Tasmania because we have the oldest and sickest population, and the worst adult oral health of any State in Australia."

"Poor oral health disrupts speech, sleep and productivity, erodes self-esteem, psychological and social wellbeing, and impacts on relationships", he said. Poor oral health can result in malnutrition, behaviour changes, more severe comorbid medical conditions, decreased strength, particularly of swallowing and lung muscles, and aspiration pneumonia.

"More and more links are being found between oral and general health. Examples include aspiration pneumonia, diabetes, coronary heart risk, and rheumatoid arthritis."

"Tasmanian research shows that evidence-based oral care strategies exist but they are not implemented or sustained."

Prof Len Crocombe, Associate Professor of Oral Health, Centre of Rural Health at the University of Tasmania, has been granted a \$179,118 NHMRC Translating Research in Practice (TRIP) Fellowship to ensure evidence-based practices occur in Residential Aged Care Facilities to maintain the residents' oral and general health.

"These strategies include oral health screening when admitted for care, brushing teeth for at least two minutes after each meal or cleaning dentures daily and removing them for sleep, removing dental plaque

regularly, providing access to preventive and palliative dental treatment when needed, strengthening and coordinating swallowing ability, increasing mobility and thus lung function, increasing independence in oral care and eating, and reducing the use of multiple medications", he said.

Starting in Aged Care Facilities in Tasmania, Prof Crocombe in collaboration with Dr Lyn Goldberg from the Wicking Centre for Dementia Research and Education, will encourage these oral health strategies by establishing innovative Community of Practices, education of nurse-carer champions, ongoing education and training of all point-of-care staff by nurse-carer champions, working with dental/oral health therapy students supported by online resources; implementation of daily evidence-based oral care by staff, and regular audits of daily oral care by nurse-carer champions and students to ensure sustained implementation.

NHMRC TRIP Fellowships provide support for health care professionals, researchers and health policy makers to translate evidence into health care and public health improvements.



### Further Information

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Associate Professor Tony Barnett

# DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Federal Government Department of Health has accepted our 2017 mid-year progress report for the Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training (RHMT) Program that covers the period 2016-2018. The report was a combined report from the CRH, the Rural Clinical School and Faculty's Professional Experience Placement expansion team and indicated that across the board, good progress had been made toward achieving program objectives. The primary focus of the RHMT is to help support the recruitment and retention of health care professionals in rural and remote areas.

A particular challenge with the program has been to increase (actually double) the total number of placement weeks that nursing and allied health students undertake in rural areas. Half-way through this 3-year funding cycle we look well on track to achieve this goal.

**CRH staff have been actively engaged in a number of new, externally funded projects. Grants recently received include: \$834,757 from the Department of Health, Dementia and Aged Care to establish and evaluate the approach to dementia and dementia care by the Aboriginal community in Circular Head.**

The project is a collaboration between the Centre for Rural health (Dr Terry Cox, Dr Ha Hoang, Dr Merylin Cross), the Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre (Dr Lyn Goldberg and Dr Andrea Price) and the Circular Head Aboriginal Corporation (Ms Diana Baldrick).

**Congratulations also to A/Prof Len Crocombe, who has recently been awarded a NHMRC TRIP (translating research into practice) Fellowship (\$179,320).**

The TRIP scheme aims to provide support for health care professionals to translate evidence into health care and public health improvements. Len will be working with Lyn Goldberg and others to improve oral health for the residents of aged care facilities in Tasmania.

**Congratulations to Dr Katherine Kent who won the UTAS Grand Final for the Science and Health stream of the 5-Minute Research Pitch (5RP) and then presented and did very well at the national final in Melbourne, winning the 'people's choice' award. Katherine was also recently awarded the 2017 Tasmania Young Tall Poppy Scientist of the Year by the Australian Institute of Policy and Science for her work examining the health benefits of flavonoids, a naturally occurring compound found in many fruits.**

We have welcomed a number of new staff members – Dr Belinda Jessop (Speech pathology) and research assistants: Laura Smith (SACS-R project), Fiona Proudfoot (new graduates workforce study), Terry Purton and Sarah Skomanis – who are both working on various projects with our senior research fellow Dr Jon Mond. We have sadly farewelled Dr Chona Hannah as our administrative officer, though very pleased that we have successfully recruited Terri Stevens to this role. Terri will work with everyone at the CRH and Elvie Jean, who has been appointed as the business manager for the RHMT program.

Welcome also to some of the professional experience placement expansion staff: Carl Cooper, Grant Todd and Sandy Astill who have joined us at the CRH in Newnham. Also, some movement for our Hobart-based staff and students who have relocated from "Advocate House" to the The Old Railway Building (ABC) on 1-7 Liverpool St, Hobart and are settling in well.

The CRH-Health research Practitioner Development Program provides busy practitioners some time out from their mainstream job to learn new skills and to work with CRH staff on research, student learning and quality improvement projects. In the latter half of this year, 15 practitioners joined the scheme. Each person is on a short term (6 month) part-time secondment to gain skills in research that they can then apply within their professional and local work environments. We extend a very warm welcome to: Dr Stephanie Thompson, Sharon Dodds, Josephine de Deuge, Stephanie Dunbar, Madeleine Gardiner, Abhinav Acharya, Emily White, Marina Campbell, Tanya Linden, Rosy Green, Hannah Fielder, Laura Smith, Tamara Reynish, Ashley Hoogester and Lisa Kelly.

## A/Prof Len Crocombe

awarded a NHMRC TRIP (translating research into practice) Fellowship (\$179,320)



The Mental Health Rural Art Roadshow hit the road in November. The roadshow is a research and community engagement activity run by the CRH in partnership with Wellways. It aims to increase awareness and encourage discussions around mental health in (smaller) rural communities. We displayed over 30 works of art from people who have had experience with mental illness. This year, the event was very capably organised by Stephanie Dunbar, Jozie de Deuge and Robert Boldkald and visited Smithton, George Town, St Helens and Fingal.

Our national body, the ARHEN – plans to hold its 2018 regional meeting in Tasmanian. This will be the first time the network (representing the growing number of university departments of rural health spread across Australia) and its special interest groups have met in Tasmania since its formation. We look forward to both planning and hosting the event which is likely to take place in mid-September next year.

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I thank each and every member of staff at the CRH for their good will, hard work and many achievements over the last 12 months. I also extend my sincere thanks to our supporters and partners who have all been important to this effort. I wish you, your family and friends a safe and happy festive season.

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## Welcome to new staff





# Bereavement Care Network

**FIND OUT MORE**  
[www.bcntasmania.org.au](http://www.bcntasmania.org.au)



## WHAT IS BEREAVEMENT?

Bereavement encompasses the entire experience of family members, carers and friends in the anticipation, death, and subsequent adjustment to living following a death. Bereavement care is a continuum of care from informal and formal approaches to care provided by health and community care practitioners. Grief is normal, natural and an integral part of living. Although people have different responses to grief, most seek out and are adequately supported by their existing networks such as friends and family. A small proportion of those who are bereaved do experience complicated grief which requires clinical/professional intervention.

