

AUSTRALIAN ROTARY HEALTH

RURAL YARN



July, 2009

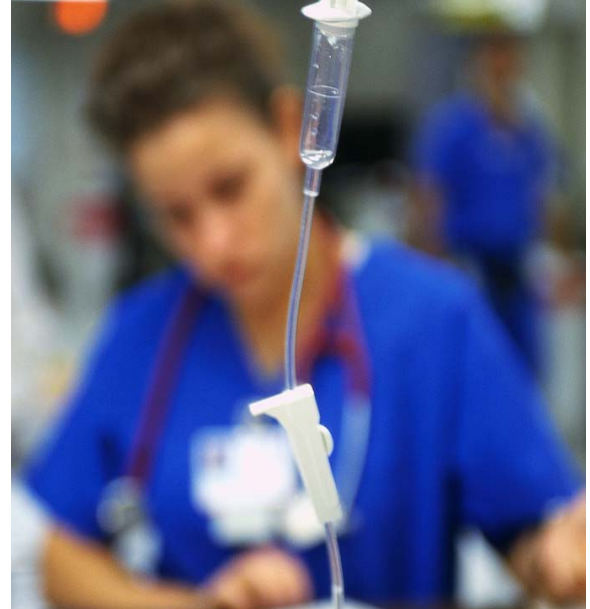
ABOUT OUR RURAL HEALTH SCHOLARS

Volume 1 Number 2

Caring for the Country Rural Doctors Association (NSW) Inc

Australians who live in the city are generally able to access all required health services within a short distance from home. This is not the case for those who live in the bush and, rather than improving, the situation has become worse as many rural hospitals have been downgraded and rural doctors and other health professionals have left rural practice and have not been replaced. The following statistics say it all:

- 50% of all rural maternity units in NSW (and indeed across rural Australia) have been closed in the past decade, forcing many pregnant women to travel hundreds of kilometres to distant centres to give birth;
- Health outcomes are poorer the further you live from a major capital city—rural Australians have higher rates of chronic disease and lower life expectancy than their urban counterparts;
- Per capita health spending is lower the further you live from a major capital city;
- At least 16,000 additional rural health professionals are urgently needed to provide even basic access to healthcare in the bush—including 1,000 additional rural doctors, 5,400 additional nurses, 600 additional midwives, 1,000 additional Aboriginal Health Workers, 1,700 dentist and over 6,100 additional allied health professionals;
- There is no nationally-coordinated training program to provide adequately trained rural medical, nursing and allied health professionals. Because they work in the bush (usually many hundreds of kilometres from major tertiary hospitals), these health professionals must be multi-skilled.



AUSTRALIAN ROTARY HEALTH'S 'PARNELL RURAL & REMOTE NURSING SCHOLARSHIP'

AUSTRALIAN ROTARY HEALTH is offering up to four Scholarships—in country NSW and in country Queensland.

The aim of the Scholarships is to provide incentives for nursing students to complete their 3rd year major clinical placement and graduating year in a rural/remote area.

This will encourage and influence the nursing students to consider pursuing a nursing career in rural/remote Australia upon graduation. This Scholarship gives the benefit of enjoying the fellowship of Rotarians and also exposes the candidate to aspects of rural community life.

Each Scholarship is valued at \$12,500

Applications open Monday 18th May, 2009

Applications close Friday 7th August, 2009

Interviews will be conducted in early

September 2009

For the application and more details visit

Website: www.australianrotaryhealth.org.au

Contact: Cheryl Deguara, Program Co-Ordinator

Phone: (02) 8837 1900

Email: cheryldeguara@australianrotaryhealth.org.au

Rotary Club of Carlingford to sponsor a Rural Nurses Scholarship in 2009/10

The Rotary Club of Carlingford has always been a great supporter of programs such as Indigenous Health Scholarship, they have now turned their hand to sponsor a Rural Nurse in Rural NSW. Applications are currently open for applicants—IPP Joy Pogson is eagerly waiting to meet the student they are sponsoring over the next 15 months.



Pictured: Alan Gregoire, President Joy Pogson, Programs Co-Ordinator Cheryl Deguara, John Allsopp



**PARNELL RURAL AND
REMOTE NURSING SCHOLARSHIPS
2008/2009 Recipients:**

Sarah Makepeace, University of New England, Armidale
Dahna Henry, University of Newcastle, Callaghan
Zoe Ross, University of New England, Armidale
Jodie Larard, University of South Queensland
Rhonda Robinson, James Cook University, Townsville

**PARNELL RURAL AND REMOTE NURSING
SCHOLARSHIPS 2009/2010 APPLICATIONS ARE OPEN**

RURAL NURSING SCHOLARSHIPS—MAY REPORTS

Dahna Henry

"I couldn't believe that all the hard work had paid off and I was finally a registered nurse. February 2009 was something to look forward to and in the first week of orientation I discovered I was going to be completing my first rotation on the surgical ward at Manning Base Hospital, Taree. Although very nervous I was anxiously looking forward to starting my career as a nurse.

The surgical ward at Manning base is a very busy ward. Patients who are awaiting surgery are brought to the ward, patients who have had surgery are brought to the ward and basically anything else to do with surgery happens on this ward. This means that people are continuously coming and going. The ward works on a patient load basis and each shift you are allocated up to 6 patients each and for the duration of your shift you are expected to do everything for your patients. It took me a couple of weeks to settle in and to familiarise myself with the routine and fast pace of the ward.

After three months on the ward I have had so many opportunities to develop my nursing skills. I have taken several drains out, dressed many wounds, witnessed a cardiac arrest, developed many therapeutic relationships with patients, learnt of many different health conditions and worked really hard on my time management skills. I feel that being in a rural hospital allows you to experience many different situations first hand. Being a registered nurse is more than I imagined. Instead of watching and being a student you are part of a team and given guidance and education on how to better yourself. Level three was a real challenge for me and although at times I felt way beyond my comfort zone I look back now and am glad that I was put there for my first rotation. My confidence grew beyond recognition and I am now able to make informed decisions in regards to my nursing care."

Rhonda Robinson

"Now that I'm nearly through my first six months I can **almost** breath! I feel that I have risen to the challenge, expanded my knowledge and am beginning to be a competent, capable registered nurse. I work in one of the most supported wards I think you could find. As a new graduate I am fortunate enough to have a post-graduate support nurse on almost every shift. These nurses are there to assist in the nursing process from achieving competencies, teaching new procedures/practices, clinical supervision, and the odd debrief along the way. These nurse "resources" would not be available though without the fantastic management team in the medical ward. In addition to the post-graduate support nurses the nurse unit manager and two other ward nurse educators are the backbone of the ward. I have been fortunate enough to work in part of a fantastic, supportive team, which offers ongoing encouragement, learning and support. I am very fortunate that I have had the opportunity to consolidate my skills in such an environment.

On another note, working in a rural community has made me even more aware of the limited services that are available in rural communities. Patients and their families are certainly disadvantaged in many ways if they need to travel away from home for medical treatment. No matter how good the team of doctors, nurses and allied health are patients physical and emotional health is negatively impacted on by the lack of resources and specialists available in the area.

I now have less than 2 months left on medical before I move on to the mental health unit. I alternate between feelings of excitement in anticipation of the new challenge and regret that I will be leaving such a wonderful team."

RURAL NURSING SCHOLARSHIPS—MAY REPORTS

Sarah Makepeace

"After my two weeks of induction training and super-nummery days in January, I hit the ground running. Working in a smaller rural hospital, our beds regularly fill up in no time, very commonly with people from nursing homes who require full nursing care, needing assistance with their activities of daily living such as walking, eating and showering. Heavy workloads such as this are often met with understaffing issues, which can make a shift a very long one. But you learn to take everything in stride and work as a team.

During these first few months, I have been allocated between 4-9 patients to care for during a shift, and occasionally I am the only registered nurse on my ward, which can be a little unnerving, but I have a very good support team. Everyday I learn something new, whether it involves something small, such as fully completing appropriate paperwork, or something much bigger, such as inserting a nasogastric tube. I have also learnt to administer blood transfusions, care for patient's pre and post operatively, and independently dressing complex wounds.

As my hospital is situated in Far North Queensland, I also have to deal with different tropical diseases, such as Leptosperosis and Dengue Fever which are more commonly found in areas such as Papua New Guinea. It's a real eye opener. In the next few months I will begin my rotations through the Accident & Emergency Department, Operating Theatre, and Community Health. I am really looking forward to experiencing the other areas of nursing that a smaller facility has to offer.

I am definitely enjoying my time working in a rural hospital, and continuing to live in a small community. I find my work very rewarding and enjoyable. The people I work with are extremely supportive and continue to encourage me to build on my skill levels.

Zoe Ross

"I am writing to you to give you an update on how things are going in Bourke. Everything is going really well. I am enjoying my work; all the staff are really supportive and welcoming. The first two days were my orientation days and I was shown the different parts of the hospital and how things were run which was very helpful but daunting as well.

The first few weeks were very daunting but great. Once I settled into a routine and got more familiar with the hospital and where everything was I felt much better and more confident. I think the hardest thing was all the different medications that the patients are on and all the different names for each medication, I feel like I am forever looking up each medication to find out what it is.

All the staff are very patient and willing to show me different things which is great, I am learning a lot of different things. There is a theatre course coming up which I am hoping to be selected to do, and then I can work in theatre which will be a different experience. The course will be run sometime in the middle of the year I am told so I can't wait for that. The Nursing Unit Manager is currently organising for me to do a month placement at Dubbo Hospital so I was see what a bigger hospital is like and so I can learn some different skills. I am waiting for a date for when I go, I am excited about that and I think it will be really beneficial for me."

Jodie Larard

"My first hospital in my post graduate program was the Surat Hospital, in South West Queensland, town population approx. 454. The hospital is a 12 bed ward with 5 long stay beds for aged care patients; it is staffed by one registered nurse and an enrolled nurse per shift. During my time there with the other staff member we carried out the daily cares of the aged care residents and as the registered nurse on the shift I managed the out patients department and pharmacy for medication dispensing.

I really enjoyed my three month rotation in this facility, all the staff were very supportive and the enrolled nurses (as they were who I worked closest with) gave brilliant education and assistance on all areas of the hospitals workings, as well as guidance with patient care and management. The pace of this facility allowed me to build my confidence and skills, I now am able to collect bloods, cannulate and have completed the pre-hospital trauma and life support (PHTLS) course. These skills I think will prove invaluable through out the rest of my graduate year.

I am now based at the Roma Hospital for my next three month rotation and am really enjoying the new challenges this larger facility brings, it is proving to be a great opportunity to continue widening my scope of practice."



RURAL MEDICAL SCHOLARSHIPS

University of Queensland Rural Clinical Division

Emily Rickman - Hervey Bay
Phillipa Brook - Toowoomba

Rural Clinical School of Western Australia and The University of Notre Dame Australia

Tulene Kendrick - Geraldton
Verity Stirling - Carnarvon

Flinders University Rural Clinical School

Miriam Whitten - Millicent
Sharon Gerlach - Mt Gambier

The Spencer Gulf Rural Health School

Sara Le - Clare

Ellen Horner - Port Augusta

University of Melbourne School of Rural Health

Sarah Heynemann - Wangaratta
Ashling McNally - Shepparton

Monash University School of Rural Health

John Denness - Warragul
Lauren Nisbet - Warragul/Traralgon

University of Tasmania's Rural Clinical School

Rosemary Wylie - Burnie
Hannah Ward - Burnie

University of NSW Rural Clinical School

Samantha Mooney - Albury
Kristen Lindsay - Coffs Harbour

University of Sydney School of Rural Health

Nicola Benwell - Dubbo
Nicholas Stewart - Orange

Flinders University - Northern Territory Rural Clinical School

Dayton Walker - Alice Springs/Nhulunbuy
1st Semester

Gabrielle Diplock - Alice Springs
1st Semester

Joseph Garcia - Nhulunbuy/Alice Springs
1st Semester

Ferencz Baranyay - Alice Springs/Nhulunbuy
2nd Semester

ANU Rural Clinical School

Yin-Lan Soon - Goulburn
Kristen Overton - Young

University of Newcastle Rural Clinical School

Chloe Fletcher Waston - Tamworth
O'Neil Maharaj - Tamworth

James Cook University Rural Clinical School

Rebecca Taylor - Mackay
Esha Wijenayake - Mackay

Wollongong University Rural Training

Sarah Lazar - Bowral

Students half yearly reports are due now and snippets will be in the next edition of 'Rural Yarn'. In this edition I have included some of the thoughts of the current students on why they have chosen a rural placement.

"Rural placement gives me the greatest opportunity to interact one-on-one with the doctors and patients and learn much more than I would in a larger tertiary hospital." **Rebecca Taylor—James Cook University—Mackay**

"I am very keen to get involved in the community in as many ways as I can so I not only learn lots of medicine while on placement but become integrated into the community as well." **Sarah Lazar—Wollongong University—Bowral**

"Being on placement is not just about turning up at the hospital; it encompasses healthcare and involvement in the wider community—the Rotary Health Scholarship provides an important link to the Community." **Miriam Whitten—Flinders University—Millicent**

"I love the diversity of people and medicine seen in these settings, and the problem solving challenges demanded due to distance and the reduced availability of some services and resources as opposed to city practice." **Sharon Gerlach—Flinders University—Mt Gambier**

"I hope that one day, I can be involved in bridging the gap between country and city health." **Ferencz Baranyay—Flinders University NT—Alice Springs**

"Although I have grown up as a city kid, I have always had a suspicion that I wouldn't stay there. Undertaking a year of my medical studies in Orange was to stick my toes in the water, to get an inkling of whether it fits. My experiences so far, both within and outside the hospital have affirmed that suspicion." **Nicholas Stewart—University of Sydney—Orange**

If your club would like to sponsor a Rural Doctor or Rural Nurse

Please contact Cheryl Deguara—Programs Co-ordinator
Phone: 02 8837 1900 Email: cheryldeguara@australianrotaryhealth.org.au

Rural Doctor Scholarships are \$5,500 per year
Or
Rural Nursing Scholarships are \$13,750 Post Grad Year in Rural Placement