

Speaker biographies & Synopsis of each presentation

Ministerial Rural Health Forum -24 July 2009

Key note Speaker

The work of the National Preventative Health Taskforce

Professor Rob Moodie – Chair, Preventative Health Taskforce:

Rob Moodie is Professor of Global Health at the Nossal Institute at the University of Melbourne. Between 1998 and 2007 he was the CEO of VicHealth. He is the chair of the National Preventative Health Task Force, and acting chair of the Commission of AIDS in the Pacific.

Presentation Synopsis:

In 2008 the Minister of Health, Nicola Roxon established the National Preventative Health Taskforce. This presentation will outline the Taskforce's progress to date and present key themes, opportunities and challenges for the National Preventative Health Strategy.

Contact for interested parties:

- Dr Moodie prefers to be contacted via email in the first instance: r.moodie@unimelb.edu.au

Concurrent Session No 1

Chair - Dr Robert Grenfell, Senior Advisor Preventive Health (DHS Public Health)

1. Municipal Public Health Planning in the Glenelg Shire

Adele Kenneally - Group Manager, Community Development, Glenelg Shire:

Adele has been employed as the Group manager for Community Development with the Glenelg Shire Council since 2005. This includes responsibility for Aged and Disability, Child and Family, Youth, Recreation, Library, Arts, Culture, Community Strengthening and Environmental Health Services. Prior to this position she was the Chief Executive Officer of the Glenelg Regional Library Corporation. Adele holds qualifications in librarianship, business management, and research. She is currently undertaking a PhD in Management with RMIT.

Rosie Rowe - Director, Community Services and Allied Health, Western District Health Services - Southern Grampians and the Glenelg Primary Care Partnership:

Rosie Rowe is the Director of Community Services and Allied Health at Western District Health Service in Hamilton. Rosie has held senior positions in both the public and private sectors in community education, regulatory compliance and partnership programs. Prior to working in health, Rosie worked in natural resource management and telecommunications. She has a Bachelor of Natural Resources, an MBA and is a Research Fellow with the University of Melbourne.

Presentation Synopsis:

This presentation outlines the consultation process, the contents of the Municipal Public Health Plan and how it links to the Council planning processes and other health plans in the Shire.

Contact for interested parties:

- Adele Kenneally can be contacted via email at keneallya@glenelg.vic.gov.au
- Rosie Rowe can be contacted via email at rosie.rowe@wdhs.net

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2. Saving our Bacon - Improving health through workplaces

Dr Shelley Bowen - Senior Public Health Advisor (DHS Public Health):

Shelley has worked in public health, health promotion, primary health care and policy development, with and within Government - mostly across the NSW Health System, and more recently in Universities in England and Australia.

At NSW Health, Shelley held a number of senior policy and management positions ranging from Manager of Community Health Services in a rural region to Policy Advisor in health promotion. Recently she spent two years in the United Kingdom working with Professor Margaret Whitehead coordinating an international health policy and equity research project. Prior to coming to Victoria she held the position of Director, Getting Research into Policy and Practice with the Sax Institute in Sydney. She graduated with a PhD in December 2007 from the University of New South Wales, having explored the relationship between evidence and healthy public policy.

Shelley came to Victoria late 2007 to take up the position of Principal Policy Manager, Chronic Disease Prevention Unit at DHS. Shelley moved into a newly-created position in 2009 as the Senior Public Health Advisor, Research and Policy in the Office of the Director of Public Health.

John Sawtell - Castlemaine Community Health:

John Sawtell is currently Allied Health Team Leader and Community Development Worker at Castlemaine District Community Health. The organisation has been involved in outreach health promotion for a number of years. This has included facilitating various workplace programs. He recently completed his Masters in Public Health examining the experiences of volunteers engaged in rural refugee resettlement.

Presentation Synopsis:

This presentation provides an overview of how Victoria is making sense of the national prevention agenda in Healthy Workers. Case studies and lessons from Central Victoria will be provided as well as an overview of the importance of research in our work.

Contact for interested parties:

- Dr Shelley Bowen on (03) 9096-5209 or via email at shelley.bowen@dhs.vic.gov.au
- John Sawtell via email at jsawtell@cchc.com.au

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3. Myth Busters - Implementing Water Fluoridation in Regional Victoria

Dr John Carnie - Chief Health Officer (DHS Public Health):

Dr John Carnie is the Chief Health Officer for Human Services Victoria. He has expertise and experience in a range of public health issues including communicable diseases, environmental health, and food safety, and is a Fellow and Past President of the Australasian Faculty of Public Health Medicine.

Presentation Synopsis:

Collaborative partnerships and the importance of evidence-based resources are key success factors in implementing this important public health initiative.

Contact for interested parties:

- Call the fluoridation information line on 1800 651 723, or go to the following website address: www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/water/fluoridation.htm

Concurrent Session No 2

Chair – Vicky Mason, Assistant Director, Health Development Unit, DHS Public Health

1. Refugee Resettlement in Regional & Rural Victoria: A report on Impacts & Policy issues

Dr Brooke McDonald-Wilmsen - Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture Inc and the La Trobe Refugee Research Centre:

- Brooke McDonald-Wilmsen is a Research Fellow at the La Trobe Refugee Research Centre, formerly the Refugee Health Research Centre at La Trobe University. She is currently working on a joint research project with the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture titled "Refugee Families and Settlement" which is investigating the impacts of the Australian Government's family reunion policies on the settlement of refugee communities in Victoria. She has a PhD from the University of Melbourne and has a particular interest in the areas of forced displacement and resettlement.

Sue Casey - Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture Inc:

Sue Casey is Health Sector Development Manager at Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (Foundation House). Her responsibilities include training, the Victorian Refugee Health Network and Foundation House rural services that are provided by health services, community health and family support services in rural & regional areas. Foundation House also provides broader support for health sector development in rural & regional areas.

Presentation Synopsis:

Ten per cent of newly arriving refugees now settle directly in rural Victoria each year. This presentation will provide an overview of the findings of the report 'Refugee Resettlement in Regional and Rural Victoria: Impacts and Policy Issues' that was published in 2008, with reflections on particular implications for rural health services.

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Contact for interested parties:

- Brooke McDonald-Wilmsen can be contacted via email wilmsenb@foundationhouse.org or phone (03) 9389-8938.
- Sue Casey can be contacted via email caseys@foundationhouse.org.au or phone (03) 9389 8911.

2. Indigenous Health Issues & Rural Victoria

Dr Jon Willis - School of Public Health, Department of Health and Environment, Latrobe University (Bendigo)

Dr Jon Willis is a public health anthropologist who has worked extensively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the NT, Queensland and Victoria. He now heads the Department of Public Health and Environment at La Trobe University in Bendigo, as well as being a Senior Research Fellow at the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society. He has conducted research and published in areas that include renal disease, environmental health, communicable disease, palliative care and research methods.

Presentation Synopsis:

My presentation looked at key demographic and health issues affecting rural indigenous communities in Victoria, and summarised current COAG-led approaches to reducing Indigenous disadvantage.

Contact for interested parties:

- Jon can be contacted via email at jon.willis@latrobe.edu.au

3. Improving the sexual health of rural Victoria

Associate Professor Jane Tomnay - Director, Centre for Excellence in Rural Sexual Health, School of Rural Health, University of Melbourne.

Jane Tomnay has worked in sexual health for the past 20 years, most of her working life has been in the area of prevention of sexually transmissible infections where she has published in peer reviewed academic journals and presented her work at International and National conferences. She has recently taken up the position of Director, Centre for Excellence in Rural Sexual Health, at the School of Rural Health at the University of Melbourne.

Presentation Synopsis:

Highlighting the issues related to access to sexual health clinical and health promotion services in rural Victoria.

Contact for interested parties:

- Jane can be contacted via (03) 58234527, or email at jtomnay@unimelb.edu.au

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Concurrent Session No 3

Chair – Jan Bowman, Assistant Director, Environmental Health Unit (DHS Public Health)

1. Challenges and impacts of natural emergencies on rural and regional Victoria

Craig Lapsley - Director Emergency Management Branch, Department of Human Services:

Craig Lapsley brings over 25 years experience in the emergency management sector to his role as the Director of Emergency Management for the Department of Human Services. This position oversees and manages a number of state emergency management responsibilities across the health and community services sector. The department's responsibility in the coordination and management of State Recovery arrangements for emergencies was evident especially during the recent bushfires.

Presentation Synopsis:

Craig's presentation outlines Victoria's emergency management responsibilities as it relates to the health and community sector, highlighting the importance of an integrated approach to emergency management in all phases (ie before, during and after an incident).

Contact for interested parties:

- Craig Lapsley may be contacted via email craig.lapsley@dhs.vic.gov.au or phone (03) 9096-7996

2. Heatwave Response Planning – Policy and Practice

Julie Hoy - Manager Community Health Risk program, Environmental Health (DHS Public Health):

Julie Hoy is the Manager, Community Health Risk program in the Environmental Health Unit of the Victorian Department of Human Services. Julie's main areas of work have been in biomedical research, health promotion, and environmental health.

The Community Health Risk program is responsible for policy implementation, programs and emergency/incident response where there is potential for human health impacts as a result of environmental factors. This includes climate change and human health, land and air contamination, and during emergencies such as the recent bushfires. A major recent initiative has been the development of a heatwave planning guide for local government with the aim for all councils to undertake heatwave-response planning before the 2009-10 summer.

Stephanie Garoni – c/o Wodonga Council:

Stephanie works as a facilitator for local community projects. She has experience in working in both local government and state government departments. She lectures casually at Charles Sturt University and has a master of education. Her special interest is in how to improve community outcomes through innovative models of service delivery.

Presentation Synopsis:

Julie outlines the issues and policy direction for heatwave response planning in Victoria. Stephanie provides a case study for planning from the City of Wodonga.

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Contact for interested parties:

- Stephanie can be contacted via email at garoni@westnet.com.au
- Julie Hoy can be contacted via phone (03) 9096-65105 or via email at julie.hoy@dhs.vic.gov.au

3. Climate Change Adaptation Framework for Local Action

Rosie Rowe - Director, Community Services and Allied Health, Western District Health Services (Southern Grampians and the Glenelg Primary Care Partnership):

Rosie Rowe is the Director of Community Services and Allied Health at Western District Health Service in Hamilton. Rosie has held senior positions in both the public and private sectors in community education, regulatory compliance and partnership programs. Prior to working in health, Rosie worked in natural resource management and telecommunications. She has a Bachelor of Natural Resources, an MBA and is a Research Fellow with the University of Melbourne.

Presentation Synopsis:

The Southern Grampians and Glenelg Primary Care Partnership has developed a planning Framework for local adaptation to climate change. These are strategies that make good sense at any time not just in a changing climate. This presentation overviews the Framework and progress underway with a local community project with research linkages beyond Australia.

Contact for interested parties:

- Rosie Rowe can be contacted via email at rosie.rowe@wdhs.net

After lunch wrap-up

Jim Hyde, Director Public Health (DHS Rural and Regional Health and Aged Care Services):

Jim Hyde has been Director, Public Health in the Victorian Department of Human Services since April 2007. In this role he is responsible for strategic and policy advice to the Victorian Government on a range of Public Health issues including health protection (environmental health, food safety and communicable disease prevention and control), health advancement (health promotion, primary prevention and chronic disease prevention), and health intelligence (monitoring, surveillance and evaluation). He has also led national negotiation regarding the prevention agenda and relevant national agreements.

Wrap up of the key themes from the day's presentations:

The key themes that emerged from the day included:

- the need to understand the diversity of rural and regional contexts as a top priority for implementing effective preventive health in Victoria
- the need to establish links to local champions and existing networks is key to success
- the need for a better understanding of rurality as a factor in health and wellbeing. In other words, is health in rural areas due to disadvantage or is there something about living in a rural area which impacts upon health and wellbeing? To be able to do this we need quality and accessible public health data.

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- resources and skills in rural areas are an ongoing challenge especially in the context of the effects of the global financial crisis
- selling the benefits of working upstream to a non-health workforce can be a barrier to progress.

Victoria's experience of H₁N₁ Swine flu

Professor Chris Brook - Executive Director (Rural and Regional Health and Aged Care Services Division, DHS):

Presentation Synopsis:

Professor Brook provides an overview of Victoria's experience with the recent H1N1 swine flu pandemic.