

# Rural health news

**Issue 19, August 2008**

## **A message from the Director**

Welcome to the August 2008 edition of Rural health news. The last few months have gone by quickly and numerous events have taken place since our last issue.

Many of you attended the 3rd Rural Health Conference hosted by the Department of Human Services in Bendigo from 30 April to 2 May. The conference focused on chronic disease including current issues and strategies for rural health services. Presentations from the conference are available from our rural health website at [www.health.vic.gov.au/ruralhealth/news/conf](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/ruralhealth/news/conf)

At the 16<sup>th</sup> Ministerial forum in July, the Minister for Health, Secretary and health service representatives discussed the Cancer Action Plan 2008-2011. Notes from this forum are at: [www.health.vic.gov.au/ruralhealth/news/forums](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/ruralhealth/news/forums)

The 2008 board appointment round for rural public healthcare agencies is complete and Board appointments commenced from either 1 July 2008 or will commence on 1 November 2008.

On an administrative note, the Rural and Regional Health Services Branch has become the Rural Health Branch. This name change more clearly reflects our role within the context of the Department of Human Services.

Overall, the financial activity and performance of the rural health sector remains positive and I would like to thank all board members, management and staff for their continuing commitment to providing excellent services in their communities.

Maree Guyatt  
Director  
Rural Health Branch

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## **VICTORIAN BUDGET 2008-2009 COMMENTS**

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The Treasurer presented the State budget on 6 May 2008.

Rural Victoria was allocated an extra \$135.8 million to upgrade hospital, community health, aged care and ambulance facilities across Victoria including:

\$9.5 million for the redevelopment of the Bendigo Hospital emergency department.

\$70.1 million for Stage 2 of the redevelopment of South West Healthcare's Warrnambool Hospital campus.

\$4.5 million for Rural Ambulance Victoria to upgrade facilities at Avoca, Ballarat, and Neerim South as well as providing capacity for service expansion at Anglesea, Colac, and Timboon.

\$8.1 million to expand dental chair capacity in Mildura and Wodonga;

\$21 million for a new community health service building in Morwell.

\$1 million to commence detailed planning for the redevelopment of Alexandra District Hospital.

\$13.6 million for a new 60 bed Bendigo Residential Aged Care facility to replace the outdated Stella Anderson nursing home.

\$8 million to redevelop the Trentham campus of Hepburn Health Service to redevelop the 15 high care residential aged care beds and primary care services, and the refurbishment of the existing low care residential aged care facility at Trentham.

\$5.5 million to reconfigure the mental health Adult Acute Unit at Ballarat Hospital to improve access and client amenity and to refurbish the Queen Victoria building to accommodate Community Mental Health facilities.

Recurrent funding totalling \$8.3 million over four years to deliver 20 additional ambulance paramedics in rural Victoria.

\$780,000 in 2008-09 (\$3.24 million over four years) to establish a demonstration centre of excellence in sexually transmitted infections prevention and management in the City of Greater Shepparton.

More detailed information about recurrent funding allocations to health services can be found in the acute and mental health policy and funding guidelines for 2008-09 which were published in early July. These guidelines are available at: <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/pfg/>

## **BUDGET INFORMATION**

The fact sheets and media releases are available from: [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/budget/](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/budget/)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Victorian Health Boards Governance Program

This year, the Victorian Health Boards Governance Program will include more foundation workshops, advanced workshops and new team building workshops. Each team building workshop will be for three to four boards and boards should ensure that at least 4 of their members can attend to make the most of the training.

Boards can access information on foundation, advanced and team building workshops and register at [www.health.vic.gov.au/ruralhealth/](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/ruralhealth/).

## RURAL HEALTH BRANCH NEWS

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### Rural health conference 2008

The third biennial Rural Health Conference was held in Bendigo from 30 April to 2 May. The focus was on chronic disease as a key health issue and a priority of state and federal governments.

Over 450 delegates attended from rural Victoria and as always it was a good opportunity for delegates to be informed and to meet others in the rural sector.

### New faces in Rural Health branch

Tony McNamara has joined us from Kingston City Council as Manager, Budget Management and Reporting in the Funding and Financial Performance Unit. Tony has a background in finance and financial management positions and has more recently been working on health and local laws with Kingston. Prior to that Tony worked with the Australian Centre for Moving Image.

Megan Somerville is on the management residency program and joins Rural health branch until Christmas. For more information on hosting a rural management resident or applying for the program, contact David Webb, Australian College of Health Service Executives Victorian state manager on 8843 2224.

Loong Teo joined the Budget Management and Reporting team in June for his second placement as part of the 2008 Graduate scheme. He joins us from the Department of Transport, and in September will move on to Department of Treasury and Finance for his final graduate placement.

Tim Austin has rejoined the Budget Management and Reporting team as an analyst. Tim previously worked in the branch through the Graduate Scheme, so will be familiar to many.

## Bush nursing centre site visits

Elise Sullivan, Senior Nursing Advisor and Sue Leyland visited Victorian Bush Nursing Centres to meet with each Remote Area Nurse. The site visits provided an opportunity to view Bush Nursing facilities and discuss nursing issues.

## Remote Area Nurses Emergency Guidelines 2008/09

Fifty Remote Area Nurses (RANs) employed by Bush Nursing Centres began their distance learning workbook materials in February 2008. All have successfully completed their workbooks and will undertake the 2008/09 Emergency Care Update Competency Based Program. The program runs over 19 hours in Melbourne.

During an emergency, each RAN assessed as competent will be able to apply the 2008/09 Remote Area Nurse Emergency Guidelines. The training enables RANs to respond to emergency incidents when they are unable to access a medical practitioner. The training is provided by Rural Ambulance Victoria (RAV) and has been endorsed by the Royal College of Nursing. The program has been allocated twenty five Continuing Nursing Education Points. For any additional queries email Jan Pannifex on [Jan.Pannifex@dhs.vic.gov.au](mailto:Jan.Pannifex@dhs.vic.gov.au)

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## OTHER NEWS

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### Kyneton District Health Service Receives State and National Award

Midwives at Kyneton District Health Service have just been awarded the Johnson & Johnson Midwives Hospital award. This is a unique award resulting from community and client recognition, as midwives were nominated by the women and families that they provided care for.

Sue Thornton, Technical Medical Representative of Johnson & Johnson and Patrice Hickey, President of the Australian College of Midwives (ACMI) presented two awards to Kyneton District Health Service on Friday 16th May, 2008. They were: The winner of most nominations versus birth-rate for Victoria; and The National hospital winner of the most nominations versus birth-rate.

Director of Nursing Tracey Hynes said "This is a fabulous achievement for the hospital and the community. To be awarded both the State and National award for the most nominations is a privilege and shows that the women in the community are pleased with the care they receive".



### **Bush Nurse Receives Top Award**

Dingee Bush Nursing Centre Inc Manager Vivienne 'Viv' Fazulla was selected as the 2008 HESTA Victorian Nurse of the Year. Vivienne was also a finalist for the 2008 HESTA Australian Nurse of the Year.

Viv has worked as the nurse manager of the Dingee Bush Nursing Centre Inc for the past 30 years.

The award nomination was for the delivery of a positive outcome in service provision or patient care in the face of adversity or other challenges. Viv's work with the drought affected community certainly fitted this category. Viv initiated many community forums throughout 2007 to bring the community together and enable them to move forward with their lives.

In addition to her work as a bush nurse, Viv is one of a handful of Victorian Remote Area Nurses (50 + in the state). Remote Area Nurses in Victoria undergo annual competency based training in conjunction with RAV. This training enables them to provide first line emergency care and stabilisation in the event of a medical or trauma emergency.

All in a days work for the Dingee Bush Nurse: community work, health promotion, and all aspects of district nursing including emergency care!



Vic Gordon, Regional Director, Loddon Mallee congratulates award finalist Viv Fazulla.

### **New Rural Intern Program**

A new rural medical intern program commenced in January 2008. The program has been funded by the Commonwealth Prevocational General Practice Placements Program (PGPPP) and the Department of Human Services.

The program is a truly collaborative effort between Gippsland Education and Training for General Practice (GetGP) and two consortia of health service providers: Peninsula Health, Bass Coast Regional Health and the Wonthaggi Medical Group; and Northern Health, Gippsland Southern Health Service and the Korumburra Medical Centre.

The first intern commenced at Bass Coast Regional Health and the Wonthaggi Medical Group general practice in January 2008. There will be two other interns who will rotate from Peninsula Health later in the year. An intern will also commence with the Northern Health/Gippsland Southern Health Service/Korumburra consortium during 2008.

The new program has a number of objectives but first and foremost it will give new doctors a taste of what working in a rural setting is all about. The current intern is working under the supervision of a general practitioner and moves between the general practice and the hospital environments.

Interns within the program will have many opportunities to participate in hands on procedural activities both in the general practice and in the hospital. The program offers exposure to rural medical practice in general. The first intern is already assisting in theatre with anaesthetics and a range of surgery.

Because the local doctors work between primary and secondary care settings, interns will get an understanding of continuity of care between those environments. In addition, the interns will get exposure to a range of community-based services provided by the hospital, including the opportunity to participate in continence clinics, diabetes education and cardiac rehabilitation.

So far, our first intern is enjoying a breadth of experience along with the ability to follow patients through from general practice to surgery and back again. She is also finding her participation in a range of community based multidisciplinary services both an interesting experience and a great learning opportunity.

Our prime objective of course is to etch this placement very positively in the memories of the interns so that when they are making their career decisions down the track, they will decide to come back to the country.

Lea Pope, CEO, Bass Coast Regional Health

**SPOTLIGHT ON  
LEA POPE  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
BASS COAST REGIONAL HEALTH**

Lea Pope began as Chief Executive Officer at Bass Coast Regional Health in September 2007.

Lea was most recently Manager, Continuing Care & Clinical Service Development in the Metro Health Division of DHS where she worked in a policy and program development capacity in subacute services, chronic disease programs and a range of service development projects.

Lea had previously spent five years at Bayside Health, which included three years as general manager of the Alfred and two years as general manager of Caulfield. Her roles have been extremely varied including rehabilitation, aged care, management and physiotherapy.

Lea has never worked rurally before and is enjoying the different challenges that a small rural health service faces and is looking forward to working with the Bass Coast community as the health service grows and develops in the coming years.

She is also delighted to have an office overlooking gardens, which sees an endless variety of bird life flying past her window!

**OFFICIAL OPENINGS**

**Rural Northwest Health**

The new Hopetoun campus was opened on Tuesday July 15 2008 by the Hon. Candy Broad, MP (Member for Northern Victoria Region). The development includes; aged care residential, acute medical services, a range of primary health and community based services, and a new ambulance station.

**Goulburn Valley Health**

Ambermere, a new \$6m mental health service for Shepparton was opened on Thursday July 17 2008 by the Hon. Lisa Neville, MP (Minister for Mental Health).

**East Grampians Health Service**

A new \$7.6 m aged care facility was opened in Ararat on Friday April 11 2008 by the Hon. Joe Helper, MP (Member for Ripon).

**Rochester & Elmore District Health Service**

Stage One of the Rochester nursing home and support services redevelopment was opened on Friday 1 August 2008 by the Hon. Daniel Andrews, MP (Minister for Health).

**Echuca Regional Health**

A new Community Rehabilitation Centre was opened on Friday 1 August 2008 by the Hon. Daniel Andrews, MP (Minister for Health)

**Please send your feedback and suggestions for future editions of *Rural health news* to:  
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