

## Rural and Remote Interest Group Newsletter

*Celebrate Rural Resilience*

**Edition 11 March 2008**

RRIG website [www.psychology/units/interestgroups/rural](http://www.psychology/units/interestgroups/rural)

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### RRIG Convenor's Report

Greetings to all RRIG Members.

It is wonderful to have you all with us, as we now have nearly 200 members! Lameroo, Parap, Kingaroy, Kyogle, Katherine, Mackay, Cairns, King Island, are just some of the places represented. All have our members creating professional input in a myriad of ways.

Whilst 2007 was most successful from the perspective of our committee, we plan that 2008 will be even more significant. Here are some of the unfolding plans:

#### *Member Survey*

We will be conducting a further survey of members' needs very soon. We will be able to compare data from a previous survey, discern progress made towards our original goals and then set new goals and objectives. So please complete the survey as soon as you receive it.

#### *APS Annual Conference in Hobart*

Our theme this year for the RRIG forum at the conference is 'Of Droughts and Flooding Rains'. The APS annual conference each September is an excellent time for our group to come

together to share research, practice and networking. I hence encourage each and everyone of you to consider attending. We will host fora which address matters of national interest to our group. Papers generally come from around the nation, often from students, but sometimes from practitioners, and this year we are again planning to present a wide range of professional work.

#### *PD and Library*

Some informal discussions have been held with us about creating a much needed text and resources library. We do believe that such a collection is necessary and welcome comments from you. In the meantime, we do want to advance the use of technology for distance professional development. After our success in launching video-conferenced PD last year we seek to build on this to meet the needs of members.

#### *News from Members*

In the meantime, please send us in some professional stories from your experience, or a review of a book or a new test instrument or other professional resources. We would all enjoy hearing from you. Don't be shy!

### *Newsletter Editor*

We have just learned that Elsa Germain is no longer available to assist us with the production of this newsletter. If you would like to help us with this task, please contact me on 0419872532 or any of the committee members.

We thank Elsa for her time with us and wish her well with her busy set of demands.

With best wishes,  
Ailsa Drent Convenor RRIg

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## **Vale John H. Champness, BA PhD MAPS**

One of RRIg's longest -standing and committed committee members Dr John Champness died suddenly in August last year. We have appreciated his wise counsel over the years and have missed his constructive input during the past months.

Below is his obituary, which appeared in the Raplink Newsletter late last year.

RAPlink has lost one of its staunchest champions. Dr John Howard Champness, co-founder of RAPlink with Roger Scales and Elizabeth Murphy, died peacefully at age 86, in Geelong, Victoria, on Wednesday 22 August 2007.

John was born in Kaniva in the Wimmera district of Victoria, the eldest of three boys. He was part of a farming family, and maintained an active interest in the family sheep and cattle grazing and breeding property at Mt Moriac, near Geelong, all his life. He was always a serious thinker and academic, and became a psychologist with clinical and teaching experience and an ongoing interest in rural and remote psychology, health psychology and organisational psychology. He pursued his career in

Australia, England, Germany and Canada.

His love of fine music was well known, but what was less well known was that he could have made a career as a pianist, and particularly as an accompanist, himself. He spent time during and after the Second World War in the Army and then the Air Force, and had a great sense of service to his country.

He liked physical challenges, and in his fifties went trekking in Kathmandu, climbed the Anapurnas, and experienced white water rafting. He was a keen skier for many years. The latter part of his working life was spent in teaching aspects of organisational psychology at Deakin University's Geelong campus.

John Champness and Elizabeth Murphy (then Manning) first met in the course of work for Qantas in Sydney in 1959. After he retired from Deakin, John assisted Elizabeth in training courses in Canberra, Cooma, Melbourne and Fiji, and they then both met Roger Scales who was keen to help reverse the trend for small rural towns to die and disappear. This vision led to John's preparation in 1999 of a rural lifestyle pilot survey which showed significant gaps in rural town living standards and expectations. As a result of this survey, Roger, John and Elizabeth formed in 2000 a group then known as RAP (Regional Australia Partnership), soon to be renamed RAPlink (Regional Action Partnership link) in 2001 with Roger as its first President, and John its second.

RAPlink's mission remains as it was then -- to be the link between small (often rural) communities and the information or resources they need to help them implement their local community projects.

John maintained his interest in psychology throughout his retirement, serving on several committees, speaking

at psychology conferences, and acting as national liaison officer for regional branches of the Australian Psychological Society and for RAPLink, particularly in relation to rural and remote psychologists.

John was a member of the APS from 1950, and was declared APS inaugural Life Member in 2004. In September 2006, he received the honour of the College of Organisational Psychologists' Award of Distinction at a ceremony in Melbourne. Among his fond associations with Canberra, John was a member of the Emeritus Faculty of the Australian National University, a member of the Friends of the Canberra Symphony Orchestra, and a supporter of the arts in general in Canberra.

John's voluntary work for RAPLink has been unstinting and enthusiastic. He never ceased encouraging people to join or get on the newsletter mailing list. He provided many opportunities for RAPLink to be seen and heard at a long string of conferences and seminars in Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney and Adelaide, as well as several regional centres in Victoria, and accompanied Elizabeth on tours up and down the eastern side of Australia, between Tasmania and Queensland, to visit small communities and to hold discussions with community leaders. He had a particular interest in projects that aimed to improve the chances of young rural people who wanted to undertake academic pursuits, and supported RAPLink's efforts in these areas, particularly the RuStiC (Rural Students in the Community) project and more recently the Country Education Foundation of Australia. He will be missed.

John Howard Champness: 9 June 1921 to 22 August 2007; President of RAPLink Inc 2002-2003.

(Written by Elizabeth Manning Murphy, member of RAPLink committee and

Professional Affiliate member of the APS, 5 September 2007, with acknowledgment to material prepared by Denis Flores FAPS, Past National Chair, College of Organisational Psychologists, for Award of Distinction presentation 2006).

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## Raplink (Regional Action Partnership Link) Newsletter February 2008 Edition

The following stories are in the latest edition of the Raplink newsletter

- Woolworths Drought Action Day
- Men's Shed stuff
- RuStiC project
- Productivity in the community

For the full reports go to <http://www.raplink.org>

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## National Rural Health Alliance

Membership of *friends* of the Alliance

Join *friends* and receive your free copy of the CD 'Rural and Remote Health Papers 1991 – 2007'

The CD is a valuable resource for students, academics, researchers and policy writers in the field of rural, regional and remote health. The 2,000 authored documents contain around 20,000 pages of information and are searchable by key words and phrases.

The CD contains:

- Full proceedings of the 9th National Rural Health Conference, Albury, 2007
- Full proceedings of all other National Rural Health Conferences

- Full proceedings of the Infront Outback Rural Health Scientific Conferences
- PARTYline newsletters
- The Australian Journal of Rural Health 1992 - 2006
- The Alliance's Annual Reports since 1997
- All Alliance position papers, policy documents and submissions

The CD is provided free of charge to all *friends* of the Alliance. If you would like to receive the CD fill in the membership form on their website and return it with payment to:

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 Fax: (02) 6285 4670  
 Email: nrha@ruralhealth.org.au

Web: [www.ruralhealth.org.au](http://www.ruralhealth.org.au)

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## Dates for your Diary

*APS National Conference and RRIG Forums*  
 23rd-27<sup>th</sup> September 2008 in Hobart  
 Go to <http://www.apsconference.com.au/>  
 for further details and registration.

*National Rural Health Conference*  
 The 3rd biennial Rural Health Conference, hosted by the Department of Human Services, will run from 30 April to 2 May in Bendigo. The conference will focus on chronic disease including current issues and strategies for rural health services.

Conference themes will include:

- The role of health services in health promotion and the prevention of chronic disease

- How to respond to chronic disease as a coordinated health system
- Workforce implications of chronic disease prevention and management

Speakers will include, Professors Andrew Morris, Kerin O'Dea, Peter O'Leary, Boyd Swinburn, Bob Thomas and a consumer presentation by Sandra Slatter. The Victorian Premier and the Minister for Health will also be addressing the conference. The conference will be facilitated by Dr Norman Swan.

The conference will be relevant for anyone with an interest in the prevention and management of chronic disease, including board members and senior managers of rural health services, consumers, policy makers, health professionals, academics and peak organisations.

Go to <http://www.ruralhealth2008.com.au/> for further details.

*Health Professionals Conference*  
 In its inaugural year the Health Professionals Conference will be held in Port Fairy from Monday 5<sup>th</sup> May until Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2008. As the focus of the conference this year is mental health it will have particular relevance for psychologists.

For further details and the registration form please email Alanna Scanlon at [alanna@genr8.com.au](mailto:alanna@genr8.com.au)

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