

# AUSTRALIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY LTD

## Rural and Remote Psychology Interest Group Newsletter

*Celebrate Rural Resilience*

*Edition 8 June 2006*

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### **RRIG Convenor's Report**

Our year has commenced with the AGM and the welcoming of one new committee member Dr Helen Stain. In the election and re-election process we were sad to receive the resignation from the Treasurership of Debbie Birkett.

Debbie did a great job for our group-managing matters that would have baffled us all. So a very big thankyou from all is given to Debbie and a formal presentation from the Committee is being planned. Not deterred by the challenge, Robyn Bradbury has offered to fill the breach and maintain the treasure!

We have a great team again- including yours truly at the convening helm, Sue Burney Secretary and Newsletter Editor, Robyn Bradbury as Treasurer, Geraldine Larkins as website wizard, and John Champness and Helen Stain as committee members.

Plans are underway to commence video-conferencing opportunities. Certainly the material available is growing steadily. We will be talking with other stakeholders to find practical ways of achieving this. If you have links, or experience or ideas for this project, please contact any of the committee members.

We also have plans to create and develop an occasional magazine for allied health professionals and the community at large to inform them of research findings in rural psychology.

In order to achieve these goals we are working closely with Prasuna Reddy, Convenor APS Social Issues.

We need and welcome all of the assistance we can muster, ideas generated, newsletter contributions. We are sure we have much to learn from each other.

Ailsa Drent  
Convenor

RRIG website

<http://www.psychology/units/interestgroups/rural>

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### **RRIG Heroine in Beaconsfield**

Congratulations are extended from RRIG to Bev Ernst, for her outstanding work with the two miners who were trapped underground for 13 days in the gold mine at Beaconsfield. Bev is an RRIG member who has a private practice in Launceston Tasmania. When Bev recovers from her ordeal (and the many requests from the press!) she hopes to send us an article describing this work.

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### **Scholarships through SARRAH (Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health)**

SARRAH is now the administering organisation for two Australian Government funded scholarship programs. These programs, which are funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, are for practitioners living in rural and remote areas.

### **Australian Rural and Remote Health Professional Scholarship Scheme (Postgraduate)**

The Australian Rural and Remote Health Professional Scholarship Scheme (ARRHPSS) is a scholarship program to support qualified allied health professionals living and working in rural and remote Australia to undertake continuing professional development activities. These postgraduate activities can include short courses, individual clinical placements to enhance and expand on clinical skills, formal tertiary postgraduate qualifications and attendance at relevant professional conferences.

### **Rural Allied Health Undergraduate Scholarship (RAHUS) Scheme**

This is a new initiative of the Australian Government commencing in 2006. This undergraduate or graduate entry level allied health scholarship program will provide a scholarship of \$10,000 per annum.

Scholarships for 2007 will be open for application in July 2006.

Information about these scholarships schemes can be found at <http://www.sarrah.org.au/scholarship/aboutus.asp>

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### **NSW Rural Allied Health Scholarships and Clinical Placement Grants**

As part of its ongoing commitment to maintain and improve the health status of rural communities, NSW Health provides financial assistance to allied health students via the NSW Rural Allied Health Scholarships and NSW Rural Allied Health Clinical Placement Grants.

They will call for Semester 2, 2006 NSW Rural Allied Health Clinical Placement Grants in July 2006. Grants of up to \$650 (or up to \$1000 for placements in Broken Hill) are available to assist both rural and urban allied health students with expenses associated with clinical placements in rural

areas. Semester 2 refers to any placements occurring between the period of July 2006 and January 2007.

URL is [www.health.nsw.gov.au/policy/ssdb/rural/allied\\_health](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/policy/ssdb/rural/allied_health)

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### **RAPLink Newsletter Highlights**

Past President John Champness who has been nominated for an Award of Distinction by his fellow psychologists.

Government initiative sees 'Connect Australia' helping to improve internet and telephone facilities for isolated parts of Australia.

A women's forum in Murrindindi, Victoria, is providing a networking opportunity for residents and a welcome to newcomers.

Read about Outward Bound through the eyes of one of its senior personnel, former Police Commander Lloyd Worthy.

RAPLink's future - it's time to put the question to members: Should we wind up, having achieved our mission and now retire gracefully with a fine record of community links to be proud of? Or will someone emerge who would like to take up the reins and move it forward in new directions?

Special members' meeting to consider and vote on this question scheduled for Thursday 29 June in Canberra.

Go to <http://www.users.tpg.com.au/raplink> for the June RAPLink newsletter.

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### **Research Article**

This article was recently published in the International Journal of Rural and Remote Psychology.

Vella-Brodrick, D., Judd, F., Scannell, E., & Burney, S. (2006). Relative contributions of rurality and community connectedness to subjective well-being in Victorian coastal regions.

The aim of this research was to identify features of place of residence that contribute to subjective well-being (SWB). Rurality (Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia; ARIA), community connectedness, and sociodemographic factors were examined. Participants were 355 residents from the Gippsland Region of Victoria, Australia, who completed quality of life (QoL), satisfaction with life (SWL), psychological distress, community connectedness, social desirability and sociodemographic measures.

Hierarchical regression analyses indicated community connectedness (subjective ratings on community services, involvement and support), not rurality (ARIA), was significantly associated with SWB. Perceived community support and satisfaction with community involvement were significantly associated with QoL. Satisfaction with community involvement and satisfaction with distance from services were predictors of SWL, and satisfaction with community involvement predicted psychological distress.

Sociodemographic variables such as illness/disability, age, relationship status and employment were also significant predictors of SWB. Results indicate the need to further examine the contributions of community connectedness to SWB more thoroughly at conceptual, empirical and practical levels.

Please contact Sue Burney if you would like a copy of this paper.

If you come across articles that might be of interest to our members please contact Sue Burney@med.monash.edu.au

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## Conference Dates for Your Diary

**National SARRAH Conference: Building Bridges. Crossing Borders 13-16**

## September 2006. Albury Convention and Performing Arts Centre, Albury, NSW.

The 2006 National SARRAH Conference is the 7th national conference for rural and remote allied health professionals. The conference is the ideal venue for those with an interest in and concern about the delivery of allied health services in rural and remote communities to come together.

The conference will provide a forum for the rural and remote allied health workforce to:

- Demonstrate allied health leadership for the future delivery of health services to meet the needs of an ageing population
- Drive the development and look of the future health professional workforce
- Have input and influence from the 'grass roots' into national and state health policy and service delivery
- Promote continuing education and professional development activities
- Promote good health and wellbeing through the delivery of allied health services to and by Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in rural communities

## Conference themes

- Building bridges to better health – the crux of the matter
- Building bridges to future workforce and health services
- Crossing borders: policy, funding, sectors, jurisdictions
- Building bridges from student to a supported and valued rural / remote practitioner

## Conference website

<http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/conferences/sarra2006/Home.htm>

**Creating futures: Influencing social determinants of mental health and well-**

**being in rural, indigenous and island peoples. September 4- 7th 2006, Cairns, QLD**

RRIG is supporting this conference, which is being hosted by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, the Royal Flying Doctor Service, University of Queensland/James Cook University, Public Health Association and the Australian Association of Social Workers.

Registration details can be found at  
<http://rrh.deakin.edu.au/news/shownewsnew.asp?NewsID=124>

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### **RRIG COMMITTEE CONTACT DETAILS**

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