

## AUSTRALIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY LTD

### Rural and Remote Psychology Interest Group Newsletter

*Edition 5 July 2004*

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#### **RRIG Committee Report**

Since our last report we have had several meetings to bring the test library into being. We have collated the results from the member survey and discussions with ACER have taken place. As a result of these activities we are hoping we can launch this service during the next three months or so. Perhaps at the APS National Conference in September? Thank you to all who completed the survey and encouraged us to continue working on this much needed initiative.

The APS is still pursuing the use of webcasting for the delivery of PD activities, and Ailsa and Sue have been involved in meetings and trials of various technologies. Unfortunately, the group has not yet been able to identify a system that is user friendly and inexpensive. The search continues! If you know of a technology/ies that you believe might be worthy of a trial please let Ailsa know, as she can ask the APS to investigate further.

As this goes to press it has been very encouraging to receive emails from a number of members about their needs as well as presentation offers for the forthcoming conference in Sydney. Thankyou! We are including communications from some representatives to that we can all learn much more about rural psychology research and practice, and warmly welcome your involvement.

We are very excited about promoting rural resilience in this year's psychology week in November. See article in this newsletter.

Ailsa Drent

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#### **Letters from RRIG Members**

Professional Development.

An email from Sunraysia District. To Alan Ralph at APS., and a copy to RRIG

7 June 2004

RE: Professional Development 2004 and Beyond

Dear A/P Ralph,

I write on behalf of the Sunraysia Psychologists Peer Support Group (SPPSG).

Thank you for your letter of May 2004 advising APS members of the new PD program requirements and information sessions for same. It was with concern that members of the SPPSG considered your information. Members of this group practice in the far north western corner of Victoria. The group expressed concern that geographical isolation may limit access to the education and training needed to meet PD point requirements. This concern was heightened by the PD program information sessions being offered only in capital cities.

Your feedback regarding the following would be greatly appreciated:

- a. Strategies the APS will implement to extend training and education opportunities to rural Psychologists
- b. Strategies the APS will implement to assist rural Psychologists in creating their own PD opportunities, and,
- c. How the APS will make PD Information Sessions accessible to rural Psychologists (Can the sessions be video-conferenced?).

Yours truly,  
Katrina Needham  
SPPSG Cluster Coordinator

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## **RRIG Annual General Meeting and Forum**

The RRIG Annual General Meeting and Forum will be held 8.30am- 10.30am Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September at the APS National Conference, Darling Harbour Sydney. The AGM should take about 30 minutes, as we won't be holding elections this year. (We only have to do this every second year.) This leaves approx. 90 minutes for presentations.

To ensure that the forum is topical and informative we are asking to present, or nominate others who may have something interesting and/or worthwhile to contribute. To get this organised as soon as possible the APS will email everyone asking for their ideas. As this will be your big chance to have your 15 minutes of fame, we hope you will respond positively! You may wish to present research or practice issues that impact on psychologists working and living in rural and remote areas of the country. If you work in a job that is different to most others or raises professional or ethical dilemmas that the group can assist with, then we would encourage you to contribute to the forum. It is only by sharing information at such events that the membership can provide much needed support and encouragement.

If you keen to present or wish to talk an idea over with someone before you commit yourself please contact Ailsa as soon as you can.



## **Psychology Week 7-13<sup>th</sup> November 2004 “Promoting Rural Resilience”**

The APS is holding the third annual Psychology Week 7-13<sup>th</sup> November. The aim of this activity is to promote the role of psychology in the community and to challenge the misconceptions that are commonly associated with the profession. To make this a successful event members are encouraged to organise activities in their local area or even within their organisation. The APS will assist you with the organisation of your

event/s if necessary and can supply some promotional products.

A website outlining the aims of Psychology Week and how you can be involved has been established at <http://www.psychologyweek.com.au> but the site is not active as yet. The APS has advised that it will be available in the next four weeks or so. As the role of psychologists generally seems to be less well understood in rural and remote areas compared to the city the RRIG is very keen to promote local activities around the country during Psychology Week. We have therefore decided to encourage RRIG members to contribute by awarding a \$100 prize for the most innovative and productive activity. Let us know what you have run in your area as soon as you can after the end of Psychology Week and the Committee will make the award soon thereafter.

The other contribution that the RRIG hopes to make to Psychology Week is the distribution of free promotional pens to those RRIG members who will be running events in rural areas. Printed on these pens will be the APS logo and the slogan we have adopted for this occasion, “Promoting Rural Resilience”. We have to get a quote for the production of these pens before we proceed but if, and when, they are available we will distribute them to interested individuals or groups to give away at their event/s. This will occur closer to the time.

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## **Sister Geraldine Larkins, RRIG Website Editor- A Profile**

Following is a profile of Geraldine one of the RRIG committee members and our Website Editor. We would like to include short biographies of members from time to time, so please send Sue a paragraph about yourself so we can share our interests and experiences through the newsletter.

I enjoy information technology and all it can provide and although I am not an expert I have used computers in my work for many years. Before completing my psychology studies I worked in several schools and was the computer coordinator for one of those schools. I now live in country Victoria in Rushworth a town of 1000 people situated between Bendigo and Shepparton. I work for the Catholic Education Office and have several roles. My major roles are to coordinate student services for 20 primary and three small secondary schools and lead the Pastoral Care Team. I also provide direct psychological service

to 11 primary and 2 secondary schools. Although some of my schools are quite small I am kept busy travelling up to 1000 kilometres per week. This can be tiring but offers great opportunity to admire the countryside and for reflection. The office employs two other psychologists part time, which provides a much needed service in areas where it is sometimes difficult to access professional help. We also find that parents feel more comfortable coming to school for help and are therefore more likely to access the service.

Geraldine Larkins (B.Ed, M.EdPsych, MAPS)

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## **Rural and Remote Conferences**

### **Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health (SARRAH) Conference 26-28<sup>th</sup> August 2004, Alice Springs.**

The conference program and call for papers can be found at <http://www.sarrah.org.au>

Abstracts will be accepted until 15<sup>th</sup> July.

### **National Rural Health Alliance 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**

**10-13<sup>th</sup> March, 2005 Alice Springs**

For details go to <http://www.nrha.org.au>

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## **RRIG COMMITTEE CONTACT DETAILS**

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