

AUGUST 2009 ISSUE

# DHAC Newsletter

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HCC seeks to enable consumers to have their say in the way that health services, policies and programs are developed.

Join Today!!

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## Welcome

Welcome to the August Issue of the District Health Advisory Councils (DHAC) e-newsletter.

Advocacy and consumer participation is an integral part of building and improving our Health Care systems. This month we have two articles providing insight into a small portion the Health Consumers involvement and facilitation of consumer advocacy. These are located on page 3 and page 6.

Technology is growing rapidly as information access becomes simpler and easy to access via the world-wide-web. This month we've included two useful websites noted by the Health Consumers of Rural and Remote Australia inc. (HCRRA) on page 4.

The Health Consumers' Council is inviting your DHACs to send through feedback, stories and pictures for consideration in the redesign of the DHAC e-newsletter.

**The most interesting idea, story or image sent through will be featured in the next issue of the DHAC e-newsletter.**

If you have any items of interest that you would like to share with other DHACs, please send them through to [cheryl.rugdee@hconc.org.au](mailto:cheryl.rugdee@hconc.org.au)

Also, please circulate this newsletter to other members of your DHAC.

Kind Regards,

Cheryl Rugdee, Consumer Participation Project Officer



The Health Consumers' Council

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## PILBARA PARTNERSHIP TO UPGRADE HOSPITALS, IMPROVE HEALTH SERVICES

LEE RONDGANGER,

August 13th

The State Government has announced a \$38 million funding partnership with businesses to improve health services in the rural Pilbara region.

Health Minister Kim Hames said the money would be used to improve emergency transport, employ rural paramedics and improve facilities at Karratha's Nickol Bay Hospital.

The paramedics will support volunteer ambulance services in Karratha and the Burrup Peninsula, Newman and Port Hedland.

An all-weather, 24-hour helipad will be built at Nickol Bay Hospital and the hospital will also receive a CT scanner, greatly reducing the need for patients to travel to Perth and Port Hedland for diagnostic tests.

"Advanced training programs will also be provided to staff to enhance the region's ability to respond to large-scale emergencies," Dr Hames said.

Emergency, surgical and paediatric specialists will be employed in the west Pilbara and a visiting ear nose and throat specialist service will be provided to Tom Price.

"A nurse practitioner will be employed at Newman Hospital to enhance primary care services, and additional Aboriginal Liaison Officers appointed to support Aboriginal patients attending emergency departments at the Newman and Port Hedland hospitals," Dr Hames said.

"Extra support to boost services would also be provided to sexual and family health workers in the region."

Newman, Tom Price and Paraburdoo will be refurbished or upgraded and extra staff accommodation at Newman will be built.

The Government will contribute almost \$33 million from its Royalties for Regions programme, while businesses such as BHP Billiton, Chevron Australia, North West Shelf Venture, Rio Tinto and Woodside will contribute just more than \$5 million towards the scheme over the next three years.

Regional Development Minister Brendon Grylls said the partnership would fund urgently needed services and equipment in the region, which had struggled to keep pace with the population pressure of a growing community.

"Health services in the region must be able to respond to emergencies such as cyclones and serious accidents," Mr Grylls said.

"This new partnership will make a major difference in meeting those needs."



# HCC Advocacy Training

As part of our support to District Health Advisory Councils in the various regions, HCC provides an advocacy training workshop catered specifically for each individual DHAC. The following topics are covered during the workshop and are delivered in an interactive manner, attempting to facilitate member's understanding of the DHAC role and how to assist their DHAC into engaging with advocacy.

- ⊗ Health Consumers' Council Background/Services
- ⊗ Rights and responsibilities of Health Consumers in Western Australia
- ⊗ Understanding Advocacy
- ⊗ Achieving Systemic Advocacy for your community
- ⊗ Planning future actions for your group

Being with HCC for the past few months, I have had the pleasure of working with two groups (Karratha Health Advisory Group and Western Wheatbelt DHAC) to learn from them as well as gear their minds towards systemic advocacy in their regions through this workshop. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for giving me this opportunity to better appreciate country area health services, and wish that the ideas and concepts derived from our discussion over those few hours will be considered during their next meeting and incorporated in the near future!

This workshop is at no cost to DHACs but is subjected to available funding. Contact me on 9221 3422 or [cheryl.rugdee@hconc.org.au](mailto:cheryl.rugdee@hconc.org.au) to find out more about how this workshop might assist your DHAC!

The next issue of the DHAC e-newsletter will feature information on one of the group's discussion and give you a snapshot insight as to what's happening with their region – so stay tuned!

Kind Regards  
Cheryl Rugdee  
Consumer Participation Project Coordinator

## **Perth Declaration for Patient Safety (5 August 2009).**

The Recent communiqué and the finalized Perth Declaration that came out of the Patient for Patient Safety Workshop which was held on the 7th of July to the 9th of July is now available on the Health consumer council website. <http://www.hconc.org.au/>

This is an inspiring and uplifting declaration that Health in WA is taking a step in the right direction. A huge thanks to all who participated in the 'Patient for Patient Safety Workshop' and those involved in the continuing work on this program.





**YOUR CHILDS  
HEALTH RECORD**

### Up to Date with Childrens' Health Records

Instead of waiting while various sub committees, taskforces and fact finding teams dither about over the next decade or so trying to decide how best to introduce a national system of electronic health records, canny consumers can now choose to get started a bit sooner. This fantastic website can be found at:

[www.yourchildshealthrecord.com](http://www.yourchildshealthrecord.com)

This website 'helps create an easily accessible, accurate and completely private and confidential online Personal Health Record for your baby and child'.

According to the site, users will be able to:

- Monitor their child's health
- Keep up with all major developmental milestones
- Share vital information with health care professionals and
- Access health information anytime/anywhere.

Let's face it. It can be a bit tricky remembering when all those vaccinations and boosters are due and this could well prove to be a very handy resource, especially for those living in rural and remote areas that may need to be a bit self sufficient.



### New Website for Allied Health Workers

A new training site for Allied Health workers wishing to work in rural or remote areas of Australia was launched this month by services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health Inc (SARRAH). Ministers Roxon and Snowden launched the site saying;

'This project will greatly benefit those who are moving to, working in or contemplating taking up practice in remote and rural Australia, as well as students undertaking a rural or remote clinical placement.'

Apart from interactive training modules the site offers practical advice, stories and information.

According to Mr. Snowden, 'Whether you are looking for the rewards of working in a remote Indigenous outstation in Central Australia, a coastal town in NSW, or a mining community in WA, the website gives allied health professionals the support and training to help them live and work in rural Australia.'

For further information go to:  
[www.sarahtraining.com.au](http://www.sarahtraining.com.au)



For further information or to read other articles, HCRRA newsletter can be accessed on their website: <http://hcra.ruralhealth.org.au>



Join friends for 2010 and receive a friends' sun hat Join or renew your friends of the Alliance membership for 2010 before Christmas to receive a friends' sunhat and pin.

Membership form is available on the friends page of the Alliance's website: [www.ruralhealth.org.au](http://www.ruralhealth.org.au)

Rural and Remote Health Papers 1999-2009 CD The Rural and Remote Health Papers 1999-2009 will soon be sent to all friends of the Alliance. Make sure your membership is up-to-date to receive your copy.

#### NRHA policy work

The Alliance has recently published a position paper on the rural and remote implications of a national e-health strategy.

Submissions have been made to the Health Workforce Committee on the proposed registration and accreditation scheme; and to the Department of Health and Ageing on the development of a new national women's health policy.

The Alliance and the Australian Conservation Foundation have developed a joint position paper 'Investing in rural communities and environments through the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme'. The paper has been sent to the Prime Minister and a media release issued on 7 August 2009.

We have also written to the Deputy Prime Minister regarding the impact of proposed changes to eligibility for student allowance on rural students. The positions papers and submissions are available in the 'Publications' section of [www.ruralhealth.org.au](http://www.ruralhealth.org.au)

The Alliance attended the launch by the Prime Minister and Minister for Health of the National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission's Final Report and we are developing a response to the Commission's recommendations.

#### Australian Journal of Rural Health

Issue 17(4) of the Australian Journal of Rural Health is now available online and to subscribers in hard copy.

Key topics include: chronic disease management plans in rural practice; treating mental illness and substance dependence in remote Indigenous communities; comparison between rural and urban hospitals; asthma management in rural New South Wales; and what stresses remote area nurses.

Access AJRH online at:

<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/118489045/home?CRETRY=1&SRETRY=0>

#### NRHA Fact Sheets

The Alliance's Fact Sheets on issues relating to rural and remote health are available in the 'Fact Sheet' section of [www.ruralhealth.org.au](http://www.ruralhealth.org.au). We hope you find them useful. We are happy to work in collaboration with other organisations on new Fact Sheets.



## Oral Health Reform at last for WA

One of the top issues of concern for communities in WA is the lack of access to dental services. This issue is raised in so many forums but so little has been done to address this 'too hard' problem. A year ago the Health Consumers' Council took on the Oral Health issue and started to push for reform through the Health Networks reform process, with little success. Last month a meeting was held at the Health Consumers' Council called *Time for Reform of Oral Health in WA*. A number of senior dental practitioners attended and there was unanimous support for something to be done to change the fractured and uncoordinated oral health service system in WA.

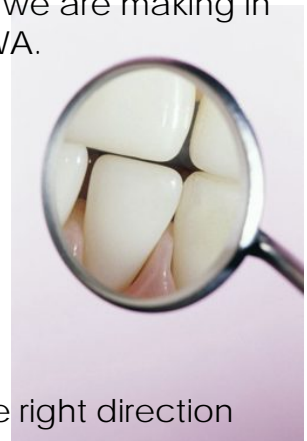
*Dental care is provided in the private system through patient payments and private health insurance. Dental Services of the state health system provide school dental services and dental clinics, as well as subsidising care with private dentists. Dental surgery is provided in hospitals, for children and adults. The Oral Health Centre at SCGH is run by UWA to train dental practitioners and to provide services to eligible people. Many, many Western Australians miss out on access to affordable care when they need it. Young people leave school and never see a dentist until they have a dental crisis. People in nursing homes have very poor levels of oral health and almost no access to dental services.*

It makes no sense to see dental health and other physical health as two different systems in the human body, but this is the situation that has evolved in WA and around Australia. Problems in the mouth reflect problems in the rest of the body, but for some reason we see different practitioners in different service systems to address these.

The Federal Government has started to address some of these issues by developing a *Denticare* program similar to Medicare, but on a limited scale.

Changes are in the air for dental care and the consumer voice is needed to guide what decisions are made in the way services are provided. We urge DHAC members and rural communities to become involved when opportunities present for comment. The Health Consumers' Council will keep you informed of progress we are making in pushing for reform in this very important area of health service in WA.

Maxine Drake  
Advocate



Looking in the right direction

## Seeking Input from DHACs

Dear DHACs, we are seeking an update of what is going on in your area so we can see if there is a trend of a problem occurring across the State. Can you send us the top three issues relating to health care faced by consumers in your region to include in next months update?

## Health Consumers' Council Membership

The Health Consumers' Council would like to encourage you to become a member. There are many benefits to becoming a member, besides the fact that it is totally free!

As a member of the Health Consumers' Council you will:

- Be kept up to date about health issues
- Be able to have your say on health policy and on the way that health services are delivered
- Receive free *Health Matters* magazines
- Be able to go on our distribution list so you can find out about all the events other consumers and the Health Consumers' Council are involved in

If you would like to become a member, please call Cheryl Rugdee on (08) 9221 3422 or Free Call 1800 620 780 and we will do our best to assist you.

The Health Consumers Council also has a website: [www.hconc.org.au](http://www.hconc.org.au) Visit the website today to find up to date health issues, relevant links and lots of interesting information.



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***Our mission***  
*To promote quality  
 health services in  
 Western Australia.*