

March/April 2011

# DHAC Newsletter

Health Consumers' Council WA Inc, Unit 13/14 Wellington Fair, 40 Lord Street,

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## Highlights in this Issue

- Opportunity for you to join our Speakers' Bureau Program
- Introduction to our new Consumer Participation Coordinator, Natalie Del Borrello
- Introduction to our new Advocate Christine Ryan
- Review of impressive articles from the 2011 National Rural Health Conference

Look to your health -- and value it next to a good conscience; for health is ... a blessing that money cannot buy- Izaak Walton



## Letter from the Editor

Dear DHACs

Welcome!

We hope that you all had a safe and enjoyable Easter!

This edition of the DHAC Newsletter updates you on the changes we have had amongst our staff and the recent happenings and upcoming events at the Health Consumers' Council.

This month we said a sad farewell to advocate Heather Taylor and welcomed our new advocate Chrissy Ryan to the HCC team. Caroline Rugdee is now the Coordinator of the HCC Speakers Bureau and taking over the position as Consumer Participation Coordinator is myself, Natalie Del Borrello.

The 2011 Rural Health Conference proved successful and Billy Trott from the HCC Aboriginal Consumer Participation Programme reviewed two of the impressive papers from the conference on page 5. Also included in this edition is;

- More information on how you can join our Speaker's Bureau Program and
- An invitation to young people to join our Discussion Forum on Facebook
- Media release regarding the 2011 National Rural Health Conference
- Our upcoming events calander

Enjoy!

Yours Sincerely,  
Natalie Del Borrello



The Health Consumers' Council

## Advocacy Corner – New Advocate

### Chrissy Ryan

My name is Chrissy Ryan and I recently joined the team of advocates at the Health Consumers' Council (HCC). I have been involved in health services both as a provider of health care as well as a consumer. I think that work of the HCC is extremely valuable and important. Every one of us should be able to access non judgemental quality health care regardless of whom we are or from what background or community we come from, regardless of our income. Unfortunately this may not always be the case. The tireless work of the Michele and the management committee and staff of the HCC, as well as the associated consumer groups, is instrumental in bringing about positive changes and growth in the health sector that ultimately improves health delivery to people in Western Australia.

Before commencing work at the HCC, I worked as a Hepatitis C Educator at the Western Australian Substance Users' Association (WASUA) for the four and a half years. This organization works at the coal face with drug users who often require health support, information and someone to advocate for them. (E.g. health and drug issues, housing, custody, legal issues). While working at WASUA, I referred some clients to the Health Consumers Council (HCC). I was impressed with the way the HCC operated their values and achievements and that they acted as the voice and advocate for the health consumer. I decided that if I ever wanted to work somewhere else, the HCC would be the place and here I am!

Prior to working at WASUA, for seven years I ran my own natural therapies business in Mount Lawley. Here I helped people take control of their own health and wellbeing by formulating health care plans that achieved the outcomes they desired. I have always believed health is our greatest asset and without it, life loses its lustre. Helping other people (and myself!) to improve their health and achieve a state of well being is often a rewarding path. I also worked as a social trainer, working with intellectually challenged people and I did my nursing training at Royal Perth Hospital.

Bureaucrats focus is usually around money and the reality is that health takes the back seat. The Health Consumers' Council is the voice of the consumer that reminds government and service providers that more focus is required on safe, equitable and quality health. Thank heavens for the HCC!

Chrissy Ryan  
Advocate

## Health Consumers' Council Advocacy Services

The Health Consumers' Council is an independent community based organisation representing the consumer's voice in health policy, planning, research and service delivery.

The Health Consumers' Council provides free assistance to consumers in Western Australia in order to resolve recent grievances related to health care. The Council will provide general advice, information, referral options and advocacy services in a manner that is helpful, timely and efficient. The Council has a toll free phone line for consumers who live in regional areas.

Our advocacy service consists of three advocates who are able to assist consumers who have a range of problems or challenges within the health system: The principal aim of the Advocacy service is to ensure that health consumers are always treated with dignity and fairness. Advocates may provide assistance to consumers in accessing health services to meet their needs, as well as assisting in making complaints. For example, advocates will assist consumers draft letters or complaints to address their concerns within the health care system, or will attend meetings or consultations with health consumers acting as an advocate or independent third party.

The Council also undertakes more systemic advocacy which involves action designed to achieve changes in policy, practice and attitudes towards health consumers in the WA health system.

Our goal is the improvement of health care systems leading to better health outcomes for consumers. We are ready to assist you in your dealings with consumers and we would be pleased if you would encourage consumers to contact us.

Accordingly, our advocacy brochures are available for your information and can be accessed by clicking on the following link: [http://www.hconc.org.au/ourservices/Advocacy\\_brochure/Advocacy1.pdf](http://www.hconc.org.au/ourservices/Advocacy_brochure/Advocacy1.pdf) . We have a toll free number for regional consumers which is 1800 620 780.

If you have any questions with regard to any of the above, please feel free to contact Michele Kosky at 9221 3422 or [michele.kosky@hconc.org.au](mailto:michele.kosky@hconc.org.au) .

## **My name is Natalie and I am the new Consumer Participation Coordinator at the HCC...**

I have a real passion for the health industry, helping people improve their health and learn how they can make a difference in their community. I completed a Bachelor's Degree of Health Science majoring in Nutrition and minoring in Health Promotion and am therefore an associate nutritionist. I am also a qualified Exercise Scientist after completing a Exercise and Sport science Degree.

I have done voluntary work experience for Nutrition Australia helping co-ordinate the cooking and healthy eating program aimed at elderly men called "Cooking for One or Two". I recently spent three months working in Nepal, aiding at the Nutrition Rehabilitation Home for malnourished children and their mothers, providing assistance and conducting research.

On a personal note I love staying active and especially play a lot of netball. I spent the last 14months travelling, working and volunteering abroad. I love to travel, meet new people and I am always aiming to learn new things! My latest addictions are photography and snorkelling and my next goal looks to be learning Italian, so I can actually understand half of what my family tries to talk to me about!

I am very much enjoying the excellent opportunity I have been given at the HCC and I look forward to future challenges and achievements. I hope to bring my best to the position to make the service the best it can be for you!

Natalie Del Borrello  
Consumer Participation Coordinator

## Speakers' Bureau Expression of Interest

Interested in promoting health rights to groups?



The Health Consumers' Council is forming a Speakers' Bureau to equip interested individuals with skills to promote health rights to consumers in Western Australia

We will provide:

**\* Training \* Support \* Promotion  
\* Print Resources**

**Training for Country participants will be held on 28/29 July 2011  
Travel allowance available**

If you are interested to become a speaker for health rights, please contact

**Caroline Rugdee  
Speakers' Bureau Project  
Coordinator**

**Tel: (08) 9221 3422  
Fax: (08) 9221 5435  
Freecall: 1800 620 780 (country)  
Email: caroline.rugdee@hconc.org.au**

We look forward to hearing from you soon!

**“The words you choose  
to say something  
are just as important as  
the decision to speak.”**

*Anonymous*

## Join the Health Consumers' Council Today!

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 involving HCC and other consumers!

If you would like to become a member, please call Caroline Rugdee on (08) 9221 3422 or Free Call 1800 620 780 and we'll help you out!

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.



## **Aboriginal Consumer Participation Programme 11<sup>th</sup> National Rural Health Conference 2011 Billy Trott's review on 2 impressive papers at the Conference**

### **Managing chronic disease in the heart of Western Australia:**

**By Annette Stokes, Samuel Stokes and Christine Jeffries-Stokes**

This particular talk was very inspirational and was based around the welfare of a lot of my own Wongi people in the Goldfields region of Western Australia. The project involves the authors work on kidney disease and the impact it has on remote communities in the Goldfields.

In this project, a number of trucks were fitted out like a clinic room and travelled in and round the heart of the Goldfields to provide the communities with services such as clinical check-ups, nutritional education and promotion of health services.

The team showed an animation video of how they communicated to the communities through sand writing. Sand writing has been around for countless years for Aboriginal people involving the writing of stories in the sand by the use of a hand or a stick in the years past. Nowadays this form of communication is made using a piece of wire and still proves to be an effective means in spreading the message to the many living in remote communities.

### **Helping an Aboriginal community heal themselves:**

**By Keeler Healing/ Suzanne Taylor & Garry Taylor**

This particular workshop was very interesting with a focus on how to heal a community that had a large number of issues ranging from the Stolen Generation to suicides within their community and how they are starting to come to terms with a lot of these issues.

They run various activities for community members like camps for the men where they take a group of men of different ages out to the bush and conduct workshops on alcohol and its effect on families. It also gives a lot of the older men a chance to go back to country which they have not visited for many years and a chance for the older men to teach the younger generation of men about their own culture which is not being taught back in the community because of all the other influences that surround their lives.

The women have workshops on art and crafts, which is a time where they would share their stories of some of the difficulties they had to face whilst growing up in the mission environment. Over the many weeks since the workshops commenced it has attracted quiet a few younger women with children from the community to join in on some of the activities and has brought the community a lot closer to try and deal with many of the issues that have plagued their community for many years.



## Media Release

**18 March 2011**

### **Politics promises progress for people of rural and remote areas**

At the conclusion of the 11th National Rural Health Conference this week in Perth, delegates had some reasons to be heartened about the prospects for action at national and state levels to improve rural and remote health.

Dr Jenny May, Chairperson of the Alliance, said there are good signs that in the time between now and the next biennial Conference much will be delivered by governments on the rural health front.

“For one thing, Nicola Roxon emphasised to us that the Government in which she serves understands the inequity currently experienced by country people and is determined to correct it. She emphasised that the Government was committed to this action even before the hung parliament in Canberra. Many of those at the Conference felt that the situation in Canberra will further strengthen the Government’s regional commitment.”

“Secondly, in her address the Minister confirmed the Prime Minister’s determination to make 2011 a year of policy action. The roll-out of Medicare Locals is evidence of this on the health front, and the way forward now looks more clear given the recent agreements on health at COAG, which included all jurisdictions,” Dr May said.

“And third, it was clear from the more politicised approach of many of the 1,100 delegates at the conference in Perth that the rural and remote health sector itself is in no mood to be denied. Several of our speakers spoke strongly of the need for the sector to leap forward through the current window of opportunity.”

The Alliance will continue to faithfully represent the interests of people of rural, regional and remote areas and will work collaboratively with Nicola Roxon and her colleagues to ensure that, despite the tight federal budget, the opportunities to progress towards equal health for country people are maximised in 2011. In the closing session, the Minister heard of the Conference’s focus on important principles which must underpin action on rural and remote health. First and foremost, people in rural and remote Australia want to be more empowered in relation to their health and their health services

“We often feel frustrated at the physical, emotional and intellectual distance that seems to exist between some of our political leaders and the issues we face in remote and rural areas,” Dr May said. Delegates also expressed the belief that the national health system is currently being managed without an overt, strong and appropriate values base.

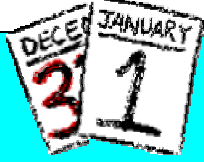
“The people of rural and remote areas and others who are currently missing out on access to health services are the ones who would benefit most from more effective application of the principles of universality, equity and compassion. We were encouraged by the expert speakers who provided evidence that Australians care about those of their number who are worse off. A commitment to compassion and fairness should be one of the characteristics of our health system,” Dr May said.

Conference delegates agreed on a set of 13 priority recommendations, the first of which recorded their thanks to Minister Roxon for the leadership she has exercised on women’s and men’s health and smoking cessation. Three of the other priority recommendations relate to partnerships: in Medicare Locals, health promotion, and arts and health. The other nine concern the Close the Gap campaign and the Closing the Gap work; food sovereignty; greater support for rural and remote health service managers; other reforms to the rural and remote health workforce; some specifics relating to rural and remote ageing and aged care; dental health; mental health; better connectivity; and work to collate exemplars of good practice.

The Minister will be pleased to see that some of these priority recommendations are quite specific and actionable.

**To view the 13 priority recommendations made at the Conference, click on the following link:**

<http://11nrhc.ruralhealth.org.au/recommendations>



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Thursday 5 May 2011	Good Health: Prevention and Health Promotion Community Forum	10.00am-1.00pm	Grace Vaughan House 227 Stubbs Terrace Shenton Park	Natalie Del Borrello Ph: 9221 3422 Email: <a href="mailto:natalie.delborrello@hconc.org.au">natalie.delborrello@hconc.org.au</a>
Thursday 2 June 2011	Health Issues Group	1.00pm - 3.00pm	Health Consumers' Council Crn Lord & Wellington Streets East Perth	Natalie Del Borrello Ph: 9221 3422 Email: <a href="mailto:natalie.delborrello@hconc.org.au">natalie.delborrello@hconc.org.au</a>
Friday 3 June 2011	Health Professionals Roundtable	12 noon - 2.00pm	Health Consumers' Council Crn Lord & Wellington Streets East Perth	Natalie Del Borrello Ph: 9221 3422 Email: <a href="mailto:natalie.delborrello@hconc.org.au">natalie.delborrello@hconc.org.au</a>
Friday 17 June 2011	CAC Conference	10.00am- 2.00pm	Jull Common Room St Catherine's College - The University of Western Australia 2 Park Road, Nedlands WA 6009	Rosemary Caithness Ph: 9221 3422 Email: <a href="mailto:info@hconc.org.au">info@hconc.org.au</a>
Saturday 25 June 2011	Consumer Representative Skills Training	9.30am - 3.00pm	Health Consumers' Council Crn Lord & Wellington Streets East Perth	Natalie Del Borrello Ph: 9221 3422 Email: <a href="mailto:natalie.delborrello@hconc.org.au">natalie.delborrello@hconc.org.au</a>
Friday 8 July	Health Professionals Roundtable	12.00 -2.00pm	Health Consumers' Council Crn Lord & Wellington Streets East Perth	Natalie Del Borrello Ph: 9221 3422 Email: <a href="mailto:natalie.delborrello@hconc.org.au">natalie.delborrello@hconc.org.au</a>

**If your DHAC would like to contribute information and**

**articles for the next issue of this e-Newsletter, please send them through to us via email: [info@hconc.org.au](mailto:info@hconc.org.au) or by post:  
Reply Paid, GPO Box C134 Perth WA 6839**

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online copy: [www.hconc.org.au/ourservices/DHAC.html](http://www.hconc.org.au/ourservices/DHAC.html)