Rural Health West is pleased to announce it has received funding to deliver the e-Advance WA (e-AWA) Telehealth Project.

Funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, the e-AWA Telehealth Project will enable Rural Health West to provide assistance to health practitioners and practice staff to establish Telehealth-ready practices.

“Telehealth has been around in many forms in the last few years and Rural Health West is looking forward to working with practices that are keen to provide Telehealth services,” said Workforce Development Manager, Kelli Porter.

“Our aim is to assist practices in the set-up and establishment of Telehealth services which should enable improved patient access to medical services and assist rural practices in achieving sustainable quality of care,” Ms Porter stated.

Rural Health West is able to provide advice and assistance with technology requirements, practice processes, claiming Medicare Telehealth incentives and information on external Telehealth resources.

Rural Health West has employed Telehealth Support staff whose focus is to provide assistance to practices in establishing and optimising Telehealth services. They are available to provide hands-on support including visits to your practice to assist with equipment set-up and establishment of practice processes and telephone help-desk support.

“I have previously worked in establishing Telehealth services in country Western Australia so I have a broad understanding of some of the challenges that can be faced,” said Telehealth Support Coordinator Mary Petkovski. “I am therefore able to provide various solutions to assist in overcoming these challenges.”

A Telehealth Support Officer, with an extensive IT background will also form part of the team, “Our Support Officer will investigate and be able to provide, unbiased information on different systems, as well as providing much needed technical advice,” Ms Petkovski stated.

The Telehealth team will be running a workshop as part of the Taking on Telehealth workshop series to be held on Sunday 23 September 2012 in Busselton following the Building the Future of Rural Health Conference.

If your practice is interested in exploring the world of Telehealth or would like to expand services to include Telehealth consultations, please contact the team via email telehealth@ruralhealthwest.com.au or telephone 6389 4500. You can also download a registration form for the workshop and view relevant information on our website www.ruralhealthwest.com.au/go/telehealth.
From the Chief Executive Officer
Belinda Bailey

The shortest day of the year has passed and the new financial year is upon us! Rural Health West has once again completed another successful year and I would like to thank the many practices and health professionals for their ongoing support.

A key milestone in the Rural Health West calendar is the annual Minimum Data Set Report and Workforce Analysis Update which has been released and provides you with an overview of the state of play of general practitioner services in rural and remote Western Australia. In addition, a series of five short Fact Sheets about the Western Australian workforce have been produced. All are available on our website.

Rural Health West, in collaboration with a range of primary care service providers, will be expanding its workforce database to include nurses and allied health professionals which will enable us to provide a comprehensive overview of the primary health care workforce living and working in rural and remote Western Australia.

Jabiru Jets ride
The Gibb Challenge

Rural Health West was pleased to provide sponsorship to the Jabiru Jets who rode in this year’s Gibb Challenge, a 650 kilometre five-day event riding from Derby to the northern end of the Gibb River Road.

The Jabiru Jets includes a general practitioner from Derby, Susannah Warwick, who participated with three other riders and a team of support crew. They raised $12,000 for the Ryan Marron Foundation and Kingdom Aviation.

“One of the joys of living in this area is the proximity to the Gibb River Road and the great cycling that can be done around this area. The Gibb Challenge allowed me to see this iconic road, from my bike!” Dr Warwick stated.

“This year’s ride was quite challenging as we had a strong head wind for several of the days but it was certainly a very rewarding experience and the joy and relief when we crossed the finished line was great.”

Dr Susannah Warwick, Derby.
Success from sharing stories

The 2012 Aboriginal Health Conference, titled Sharing stories … sharing successes, provided delegates with the opportunity to hear from a range of speakers who spoke about the many successful programs that are operating with the aim of ‘closing the gap’.

The conference was opened with a wonderful Welcome to country from Nyoongar elder Marie Taylor and a Welcome performance by the Wadumbah Aboriginal Dance Group.

At the opening keynote address, Dr Mark Wenitong, Senior Medical Officer for the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) provided some pertinent and insightful facts from his experiences in far north Queensland.

Delegates then participated in a range of hands-on workshops and attended concurrent streams that included updates on current research. Feedback from delegates was extremely positive.

“I came away feeling a sense of motivation and enthusiasm as well as linking and establishing important contacts.” Feedback from 2012 delegate

The conference concluded with a wonderful performance by Deborah Cheetham from Australia’s first Indigenous opera which she created titled Pecan Summer.

Adventure and medicine in the wilderness

The second Rural and Remote Retrieval Conference, facilitated by Rural Health West, was held at the Karijini National Park in May 2012.

Building on the success of the 2011 conference, delegates were able to hone their emergency medicine skills in a remote location.

Over three days, thirty delegates addressed issues through simulated clinical emergencies that they may be faced with in an isolated general practice setting. It also allowed them to develop practical skills and professional abilities such as teaching, teamwork, leadership and dealing with stress and uncertainty.

For those delegates who wished to traverse, paddle, slide, abseil, swim, jump and climb their way through the park, an ‘Afternoon of Adventure’ was scheduled to accommodate the thrill seekers’ desire to see more of the region’s natural wonders.

Next year's conference will take place from Thursday 16 to Sunday 19 May 2013. We encourage doctors who wish to attend to register their interest with the events team as soon as possible.
Over the last 20 years, Rural Health West (formerly the Western Australian Centre for Remote and Rural Medicine – WACRRM) has provided assistance to practices in rural and remote Western Australia to source appropriately trained local and international medical graduates.

Rural Health Select will continue to provide a personalised case management recruitment service, with recruitment efforts focused purely on servicing practices in rural and remote Western Australia.

“We now have an experienced team of recruitment consultants who are all aware of the varied and specialised skills required by health professionals who work in rural and remote locations of Western Australia,” said Recruitment Manager, Tina Donovan.

“Rural Health Select is a recruitment service that recruits general practitioners for permanent and Locum positions as well as nurses and allied health professionals for permanent positions. Your practice will deal with one consultant who will, in turn, be assigned to case manage potential recruits,” Ms Donovan said.

This personalised service ensures both candidate and practice receive relevant and up-to-date advice.

Dr Jackie Earl, a general practitioner recently recruited to Harvey, was extremely satisfied with the service provided. “They knew what needed to be done and had the contacts to make it smooth,” said Dr Earl.

The practice manager at Harvey was equally impressed saying Rural Health Select assisted with all the registration and documentation side of things. “We still had to do a lot from our side but what needed to be done was put right in front of us,” said the practice manager.

Rural Health Select has also had great success in recruiting nurses and allied health professionals for rural and remote practices, placing 16 candidates in the last six months.

Very positive feedback was received from both the candidates and the practices.

Annie Judd, a physiotherapist placed in Albany, recently said that Rural Health Select had been really supportive and she would not have had such an easy transition if we were not involved. “We are very conscious of the great need in rural and remote locations for health professionals of all disciplines,” Ms Donovan stated. “However, we are also aware of the importance of ensuring the candidate is matched to the location and practice. We aim to provide a health professional who will fit into the local community and is happy to stay in that community for a longer period of time.”

If you are interested in using Rural Health Select for your recruitment needs, contact us by email recruit@ruralhealthwest.com.au or telephone 6389 4500.
Rural Health West actively engages with the future generation of health professionals to encourage them towards rural careers.

Rural Health West Student Ambassadors:

What attracts me to want to work in rural Western Australia is that in a rural town you are often the sole practitioner and your role and skills are extended, giving you greater variety and independence in your career.

Katherine Humphreys
3rd year physiotherapy
Curtin University

Being able to live in a community where you know everyone walking down the main street of town, working as a multi-disciplinary team with your colleagues during the day and as a team with your patients and neighbours on the basketball court at night is what attracts me to want to work in rural Western Australia.

Rose Devereaux
4th year medicine
The University of
Western Australia

I have travelled the world and there is no place as wonderful as Western Australia and this is what attracts me to work in rural areas. There are not only incredible landscapes but also incredible people and by getting away from the city, I find you can really begin to truly appreciate both.

Courtney Taylor
2nd year medicine
The University of
Notre Dame Australia – Fremantle

What attracts me to want to work in rural Western Australia is the vast landscape and its size, the opportunity to travel and experience different parts of Western Australia, to live with and learn about Indigenous peoples, and the opportunity to contribute something back.

Jasmine O’Neill
3rd year medicine
The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia – Broome

The many beautiful locations with their interesting history and people is what attracts me to want to work in rural Western Australia.

Amy Bicknell
4th year medicine
The University of Notre Dame Australia – Fremantle

The Rural Health West Student Ambassador Program comprises medical and allied health students from universities throughout Western Australia who are employed to promote country careers and experiences to Western Australian health students.

They provide information on Rural Health West programs, student opportunities and student rural health clubs. The Rural Health West Student Ambassadors are active members of student rural health clubs and are passionate about rural health careers.
OUTREACH IN THE OUTBACK
Providing Maternity Services closer to home

Since 2011, the Rural Health West Outreach in the Outback program has facilitated the provision of an outreach maternity service.

The Outreach in the Outback Maternity Services program supports specialists, general practitioners and midwives to provide antenatal and post-natal care to communities that may not have ready access to these services.

The Southern Regional Medical Group, in Albany, has been participating in this program since October 2011 providing services to the community of Jerramungup, approximately 180 kilometres from Albany.

Their service includes a GP obstetrician travelling to Jerramungup every second month and a Telehealth consultation conducted with midwife and registered nurse Mary Dorai-Raj on alternate months.

“We have a strong emphasis on Telehealth as it has major benefits,” said Mr Chris Swarts, Chief Executive Officer, Southern Regional Medical Group.

“Mr Swarts.

A similar service is being provided by the Wyndham and Kununurra Health Service to the Kalumburu and Warmun communities in the Kimberley.

In the Wheatbelt, Southern Country Health Service has commenced an outreach maternity service to Moora and Northam. This is, once again, a popular service with 115 patients accessing the service on the two visits to date.

“This is a vital service being provided right across the State,” said Vivienne Duggin, General Manager Outreach Services.

“In many instances, community members would have travelled hundreds of kilometres to access maternity services in the past. This enables them to remain close to home and more importantly family.

“The Outreach in the Outback team was very pleased with the response to this program, which is now fully subscribed, and the feedback is that it is a very appreciated and valued service,” said Ms Duggin.

If you are seeking services or would like to be part of a team, contact the Outreach in the Outback team to register your interest.

Email outreachintheoutback@ruralhealthwest.com.au
Fun at The Beach House

Rural Health West once again held a Family Program as part of the 2012 Aboriginal Health Conference.

At each of the Perth conferences, Rural Health West provides fun and engaging activities for the families of medical practitioners attending the conference.

Children who registered to attend this program spent the morning at The Beach House kids fun centre where they played on bouncy castles, raced cars and participated in sporting activities.

The children were also able to enjoy a delicious lunch on the premises. The afternoon session was a trip to the movies to see Ice Age 4: Continental Drift.

Bursary applications now open

Each year, Rural Health West provides spouses of medical practitioners living and working in rural and remote Western Australia the opportunity to apply for a bursary. These bursaries are available to assist with professional and career development opportunities and can be used to purchase text books, attend courses and contribute to course costs.

Any medical doctor’s spouse or partner living in rural and remote Western Australia is eligible to apply provided they have not received a bursary before. Applicants are required to explain how the bursary will enhance their career and/or employment opportunities.


Family Support Program survey

Recently, Rural Health West sent out a survey to medical practitioner families. The aim of the survey is to assist Rural Health West in continuing to provide a relevant and enjoyable Family Support Program. If you have received this survey, we would greatly appreciate your feedback.
Building the Future of Rural Health
6th Annual Rural Health Conference
20-22 September 2012
Bayview Geographe Resort
Busselton, Western Australia

Program Overview and Registration Form brochure NOW AVAILABLE visit www.ruralhealthwest.com.au/go/buildingthefuture

Rural Health West Doctors’ Service Awards 2013

NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN

For Awards criteria and nomination forms visit www.ruralhealthwest.com.au/go/doctorsserviceawards

Minimum Data Set Report and Workforce Analysis Update

Rural Health West collates data from a comprehensive workforce survey of all general practitioners each year and compiles easy-to-read Fact Sheets based on components of the annual Update.

For further information visit www.ruralhealthwest.com.au/go/publications

Rural Medicine Australia 2012

The 2012 conference, themed Demonstrating the Diversity includes the 7th biennial scientific forum. Featuring research presentations, discussion forums, workshops and clinical updates, this popular annual conference is open to all rural doctors and other professionals working in rural and remote Australia. For further information visit www.acrrm.com.au

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