Flinders University’s Northern Territory Clinical School (NTCS) welcomed the Federal Health Minister’s announcement on 13 May of the Australian Government’s commitment of $27.8 million towards the Territory’s first full medical education program. An additional amount of $4.4 million has been committed by the Federal Government for the programs recurrent costs from 2010–2013. The Australian Government announcement came a fortnight after the NT Government announced its support for a medical school in the Territory.

The NT Medical Program will complete the pathway to allow Territory students to undergo their entire medical training in the Northern Territory for the first time. Once established the program will see up to 40 NT trained doctors graduating per year. A major focus of the program will be the recruitment and training of indigenous medical students to become doctors in the Territory.

Flinders University Clinical School Clinical Dean, Professor Michael Lowe said the Australian Government funding for state of the art medical education facilities was the result of twelve months of collaboration between Flinders University and Charles Darwin University, with both the Australian and Territory Governments, to develop the proposal. The medical degree proposed to be taught in the Territory will be the popular Flinders University model, but with an NT-specific focus on Indigenous, rural and remote health.

“We are pleased that the Australian Government is committed to the expansion of local medical education and believe we are well placed to continue working with both levels of government to deliver a first class program to Territory students.” Professor Lowe said.

Professor Lowe is confident that a Territory based medical program will not only boost the number of local doctors but it will also provide for a more stable long term medical workforce.

“Studies suggest that a ‘grow your own’ policy can provide a much needed boost to workforce stability. There are many Territorians who have passed up the opportunity to study medicine in the past because it would mean leaving the Territory. We further believe that there are indigenous people, who given the opportunity and appropriate support and pathways will undertake medical training to graduate as doctors” Professor Lowe said.

“These are the exact sort of students that we hope will stick around to practise medicine in the Territory”.

Please contact Velda Mazoudier on 08 8972 2072 or velda.mazoudier@flinders.edu.au with any stories you would like to have published in the next edition.

Editors: Velda Mazoudier and Lila Loveard
NTRCS Community Advisory Board 09
Dr Jenni Brown and Deborah McIntyre, NTRCS Nhulunbuy

On the 7th and 8th of May our Nhulunbuy campus hosted the 2009 Community Advisory Board (CAB) meeting for the NT Rural Clinical School. This annual meeting provides a forum to allow strategic partners and stakeholders to give feedback to the Rural Clinical School and to the Department of Health and Ageing on the School’s strategies for community engagement and to provide a framework for developing new strategies and areas of collaboration.

This year we were joined by a large group of senior academic staff from both Flinders University and Charles Darwin University, including the Vice Chancellors of both universities. Around 30 people attended in total, including representatives from the Local Advisory Board (LAG) from each of our sites, and representatives from the Federal Department of Health and Ageing, Royal Darwin Hospital, AMSANT, NTGPE and Centre for Remote Health. Other participants joined via videoconference.

Highlights of the two day meeting included tours of Nhulunbuy town and teaching sites, a trip to the Laynhapuy homelands and a very well attended dinner at the local yacht club. Mr Richard Trudgeon (author of Why Warriors Lay Down and Die) provided a thought-provoking lecture at the dinner.

Mr Alan Talbot, NTRCS consultant, made a presentation on a feasibility study for a new multidisciplinary teaching practice based in Nhulunbuy. Professor Michael Lowe presented a report on progress towards the full Territory-based medical degree. Research presentations were made by Dr Lloyd Einsedel, NTRCS, and Dr Alex Brown from the Baker Institute. LAG members represented the Rural Clinical School from Nhulunbuy, Katherine and Alice Springs. The full day of presentations and meetings concluded with a barbeque at the local surf club.

Unseasonable rain failed to mar the very positive spirits of all involved in the event. Much information was exchanged and shared both during the formal and social events. We are of the belief that our participants from “down south” have gone home impressed by what this North East Arnhem community has to offer our students, and willing to actively support further development of clinical training and health service delivery in the region.
Adventures in Nhulunbuy

Last issue we heard about some of Emily Carroll’s adventures in Nhulunbuy. She had many more while she was there….. During my rural placement in Nhulunbuy I was fortunate to visit numerous outstations and small communities. Many small homeland communities surround Nhulunbuy – creating lots of opportunities for bush trips.

I spent two days at Ramingining, the community where 10 Canoes was filmed. In addition to spending time in the clinic, I visited the local primary school with one of the remote area nurses. Each week he visits a different class to check the ears and skin of every child. Not only was it very good practice, but the children loved seeing what was inside their ears, as the otoscope connected to the TV. As we left, lots of children were making ear spears to get rid of the wax in their ears!

One of the highlights for me were multiple visits to a remote community Galiwin’ku. Situated on an island 40 minutes flight from Nhulunbuy, 3000 Aboriginal people are serviced by lots of Aboriginal Health Workers, several Remote Area Nurses and one doctor (at best). It is considered one of the most under-serviced areas in the region, yet also has some very innovative programs. The use of bush medicine and healing services are supported by the health service, Aboriginal Health Workers are an integral part of the clinic and there are many education sessions teaching patients the “story” of their sickness.

On my first visit to Galiwin’ku, I was fortunate enough to be taken looking for bush medicine. Unfortunately, the tide was too high to find the sea slugs for treating acute otitis media, however, the Aboriginal Health Worker showed me certain plants that can be used to treat boils.

Another visit was a part of the child health school screening program. In just 3 ½ days we screened over 240! I did a lot of vision screening and no matter how hard 4 year olds may seem in a clinic, it is 100 times harder when they don’t speak English, we are outside, it is hot, humid and 20 of their classmates are watching them while they wait for their turn! Fortunately, one of the Aboriginal Health Workers interpreted, making the testing possible, and the chaos had an element of fun to it.

Many of the children had anaemia, heart murmurs, perforated ears, hearing loss, scabies, fungal infection and some had trachoma. It was interesting to note that the children living a traditional life at Dhanyah were much healthier then those at Galiwin’ku. As with most remote communities, Galiwin’ku also has generalised social problems of overcrowding, poor living conditions, expensive food and high unemployment rates. But as the Aboriginal Mental Health Worker on Galiwinku said to me; “everyone hears about the bad things up here, but no one hears about the good.” And there are lots of good things happening.

The medicine in East Arnhem Land is interesting, challenging and you realise that logistics are the biggest issue; yet there is also plenty of time for fun. I went on several 4WD trips to the local beaches and freshwater lagoons, which involved driving through lots of water and sand. And if you like fishing there are HUGE fish to be caught. At 95cm mine was considered small!
Clinical Audits: students' role in quality improvement in the NT Health System

Dr Anna Smedts

This year, Flinders 4th Year students have been actively engaged in clinical audits of a variety of health care issues across the Territory. Topics have included: infection prevention; stress ulcer prophylaxis; anaemia rates at Alice Springs Hospital; screening rates of Hep-B in Nhulunbuy; Vancomycin use; emergency procedures and anaesthesia protocols at the Royal Darwin Hospital. These audits have been registered with the Human Research Ethics Committee of the NT Department of Health and Families and Menzies School of Health Research Committee, and most of the audit outcomes and recommendations have been reported back to relevant health teams and departments. This contribution by the students has been recognised as being valuable by the hospital Quality Improvement Office (RDH), as well as by health care staff across sites. In fact, a student-led clinical audit of the rate of facial nerve examination with temporal bone fracture was accepted for presentation at the annual ASOHNS (Australian Society of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery) conference in May. Congratulations to those students who have taken seriously their task in contributing useful and relevant information to their healthcare team. Your work may well impact the quality, safety, and experience of our patients.

Clinical Audit Cycle

*please remember that your audit must be registered BEFORE you start data collection!
Greening the NTCS Event
Cycle to your Clinical School, 23 June 2009

To celebrate the cool weather in the Northern Territory, the Clinical School is organising a Cycle to your Clinical School day on Tuesday 23 June 2009. The campuses of Darwin, Alice Springs, Nhulunbuy and Katherine will all be hosting a breakfast from 7.30am onwards on 23 June for students, staff and academics who walk, run or ride to work. The NTCS’s Green Fund will cover the cost of the breakfast on 23 June.

Here are some great reasons to give riding to work a go:
1. **Health** - feel great and reduce your likelihood of suffering from obesity, diabetes and heart disease.
2. **Save money** - reduce the costs associated with driving to work or catching public transport.
3. **Help the environment** - reduce your greenhouse gas emissions.
4. **Everyone is doing it!** - avoid traffic and parking congestion by joining the bike riders
5. **It’s fun** – meet your friends on the bike path and enjoy the view.

The NTCS will also be joining in the National Ride to Work day on 14 October 2009. Please visit the Ride to Work webpage if you are interested in the national day or wish to calculate the environmental, health or financial benefits of riding to work. http://www.ride2work.com.au/3002

Make a Submission to the NTCS Green Fund

“Think Globally, Act Locally” underpins our greening program philosophy, which is reflected in our idea of establishing a fund dedicated to environmentally improving the energy efficiency of our workplace and benefitting the local community. The NTCS Green Fund was established in 2008, and funding was allocated from the NTCS according to the amount of carbon emissions produced in the previous financial year. An audit established the amount of emissions produced.

Some examples could be:
- *Purchasing energy efficient lighting for office space.*
- *Supporting or sponsoring local environment research projects.*
- *Donating trees to local schools or sponsoring community gardens.*
- *Replacing existing office supplies and stationary with recycled products.*
- *Funding the office recycling program*

Please contact Eliza Gill (eliza.gill@flinders.edu.au) if you have a “Green idea” you think could be funded by the NTCS Green Fund.
Ode to Katherine

By Rebecca Grivas, Year 3 Flinders GEMP student

Oh Velda dear, I cannot think,
Of what to say, or what to print.
You see this time in Katherine’s
done,
some strange things to my cranium.

I can no longer rationalise,
or engage and intellectualise
It’s not that I have quite forgotten
It’s just I think my recall’s rotten

Caught a babe or two or three
Spent some time in ED
met a patient who was compliant
but only one, the others weren’t reliant

And Charles he did teach me stuff
I do so hope it is enough!
for I had to learn it all by rote
and I do not like it one iote!

There is no sense or meaning here,
it just runs straight through, right out my ear
Especially drugs, I hate them most!
they’re hard to say, to spell to DOSE!

But otherwise all’s been well
Enjoyed it here, the place is swell!
Studied every chance I got
(Sad I know, it’s such a croc)

To Charles you’re neat, you’re cool bananas
(Oh no! What rhymes? ... I’ll use iguanas???)
And Des, thanks heaps you saved the day
By jeez you sure did earn your pay

But Velda you did make it work
Covered for me when I shirked!
Let me have a hug or two
when I was sad and feeling blue!

So, my secrets out, (I write bad verse)
It’s in my blood, a terrible curse!
Comes from my Ma, she taught me a bit
‘bout words and how to dribble ...prose

Rural High School Visit, Alice Springs

By Emily Carroll, Year 4 Flinders GEMP student

Eight CARAH (Central Australia Remote and Aboriginal Health) students recently visited Yirara College for a rural high school visit. CARAH consists of medical, nursing and allied health students currently studying in Alice Springs. The club regularly organises visits to local and remote schools to promote all aspects of health careers, healthy living, and commonly used equipment. NTRCS students are invited to join CARAH while in Alice Springs.

Yirara College is a boarding school for Aboriginal students from remote communities. The afternoon started with a short session centered around the model “Gutsy Gus”, where we discussed the function of different organs and effects of smoking, alcohol and diet. The students then enjoyed watching their teacher be “treated” after a football injury in the mock scenario before they enthusiastically plastered each other, looked inside their ears, dressed in scrubs and learnt just how hard it is to wash all the germs off their hands!

To Charles you’re neat, you’re cool bananas
(Oh no! What rhymes? ... I’ll use iguanas???)
And Des, thanks heaps you saved the day
By jeez you sure did earn your pay

But Velda you did make it work
Covered for me when I shirked!
Let me have a hug or two
when I was sad and feeling blue!

So, my secrets out, (I write bad verse)
It’s in my blood, a terrible curse!
Comes from my Ma, she taught me a bit
‘bout words and how to dribble ...prose
Flinders Enterprise Wiki Server

By Thomas Kalikajaros

Wiki - The word ‘wiki’ comes from a Hawaiian word for fast. A wiki space is a collection of web pages designed to enable anyone with access to contribute or modify content. Keep this in the back of your mind when evaluating what a wiki server can do for you - collaborate and refer to content fast!

Other features of a wiki are:
- automatic linking and navigation tools
- news/blogging
- control of changes
- embed content such as word files or media such as you tube videos.

The Flinders wiki is available for staff and student use. The ISD team responsible simply needs to be contacted to create the wiki. The benefit of using the Flinders wiki over third party wikis is that it ties in nicely with Flinders identity management (FANs). The wiki’s product name is Confluence. It is a commercial product that has solid documentation and we are getting good support from ISU.

Over the course of the last week, we have been busily getting up to speed with Confluence and seeing how it can work for NTCS-RCS. We have found Confluence can fill a nasty collaboration hole we have.

Staff Updates

Ms Heather Brimson, Senior Project Officer, NT Medical Program (Heather is based in South Australia)
Dr Gurmeet Singh (0.4), IMG Pathways
Dr Alan Ruben has been appointed Principal Medical Advisor for Department of Health and Families (0.5), though in the remainder of his time he is still employed by the Clinical School. Congratulations on your new position with the Department of Health and Families Alan.

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Northern Territory Clinical School
Northern Territory Rural Clinical School
Teaching Health Students in the Northern Territory

The Northern Territory Clinical School and Rural Clinical School (NTCS & NTRCS) are part of Flinders University School of Medicine and are leading providers of health education in the Northern Territory, Australia.

The schools provides training for Flinders University and James Cook University medical students. They also provides placement opportunities and support for Allied Health students and interstate medical students.

The NTCS has a campus in Darwin, whilst the NTRCS has campuses in Alice Springs, Katherine, Nhulunbuy and Humpty Doo.