Letter of Intent Confirms NT Medical Program

The signing of a letter of intent regarding the Northern Territory Medical Program by Vice-Chancellor Michael Barber and Charles Darwin University Vice-Chancellor Professor Barney Glover, in the presence of Federal Health Minister Nicola Roxon, was an historic occasion for the two Universities as it confirmed the collaborative partnership that has developed around this initiative.

Students from the NT will now be able to complete their entire medical degree without having to leave the Territory. A full four-year graduate entry medical program will be delivered by Flinders University through the Northern Territory Medical Program commencing from 2011.

A $27.8 million commitment by the Federal Government provides for infrastructure to support the full medical program including the development of buildings at the Royal Darwin Hospital Campus, Charles Darwin University and infrastructure and resources in community based facilities throughout the Northern Territory.

A major focus of the program will be the introduction of new Indigenous Transition Pathways into Medicine that will increase the number of Indigenous medical graduates.

Staff of both universities are excited by the prospect of further and enhanced teaching collaboration and are working toward achieving the goal of commencing the programs in 2011.

(continued page 2)
Letter of Intent Confirms NT Medical Program cont...

Left : The Hon Nicola Roxon MP (Federal Government Minister for Health and Ageing)

Flinders University Vice-Chancellor Professor Michael Barber is pleased by the recent announcement to fund the medical program.

“I am pleased to be able to sign this letter of intent along with my CDU counterpart, Professor Glover. The Australian Minister for Health has signaled strong support for our collaborative approach to medical education in the Northern Territory and we aim to deliver on the commitment that we have signaled today,” Professor Barber said.

The medical degree to be taught in the Territory will be the Flinders University model, but with an NT-specific focus on Indigenous, rural and remote health.

NTCS Finalist in Melaleuca Awards

Eliza Gill

Winners of the Power and Water 2009 Melaleuca Awards for environmental excellence were announced on Wednesday 17 June. In a ceremony held at Myilly Point Heritage Precinct, the Northern Territory Clinical School was awarded as a finalist in the Community Category for the “Melaleuca Awards - recognising environmental excellence”.

If you would like to view the posters of the category winners & nominees, please go to the Power and Water Authority website.

NTCS continues to green our organisation by holding monthly cycle to the Clinical School days in Darwin; regularly emailing staff green tips; recycling all we can and reducing our air travel.

Mobile Muster

NTCS Darwin have recently set up a MobileMuster, which is the official recycling program of the mobile phone industry. Mobile phones can now be dropped at the Darwin NTCS office for recycling.

Initiated voluntarily by the Australian telecommunications industry in 1999, MobileMusters overall aim is to prevent mobile phones ending up in landfill.

Over 90% of the materials in mobile phones can be recovered and used as raw materials for new products. One tonne of mobile phone circuit boards can yield the same amount of precious metals as 110 tonnes of gold ore!
Carol Bradbury is one of our third year Flinders University medical students who finds the time in her busy penultimate year of study to pursue passions outside of medicine. We have recently found out that Carol is a student of many talents who regularly performs trombone with the Darwin Symphony Orchestra and the Army Band. She is also a black belt in taekwondo!

It is always interesting to find out more about the past lives of our graduate entry medical students. Many students choose to study medicine at Flinders coming from quite varied backgrounds. In 2001 Carol completed her undergraduate degree in music at Newcastle University / Newcastle Conservatorium of Music studying flute. She also started playing the trombone during her second year of that degree in addition to teaching flute to beginners.

After finishing her music degree and looking for a change from teaching music, Carol rekindled a past interest of studying veterinary science but had not yet done any science so she started a science degree studying externally through University of New England. Being an external student afforded Carol the opportunity to continue playing music and she regularly performed in musicals and competed in various eisteddfods whilst still playing in the Uni Concert Band and Wind Orchestra.

At the time of commencing her science degree Carol did not yet have an interest in studying medicine, however a comment made by a locum GP struck a chord with Carol, and upon completing her science degree she made the decision to study medicine.

So here she is now, half way through her medical degree in 2009 which sees her spending six months studying at RDH and six months at the Rural Clinical School in Alice Springs. We are happy to hear that Carol has also engaged with the Alice community and is playing trombone with the Alice Springs Town Band (pictured above) as well as joining in with Local GP, Dr Wendy Zerk on flute with the quintet Flamin’ Flutes (pictured below).
Community Health Education

By Emily Carroll, Year 4 Flinders GEMP student

"Kidneys act like pool filters", ten CARAH (Central Australia Remote and Aboriginal Health) nursing, medical and physio students were told by an eight year old child on a recent school visit. Approximately sixty students aged 4-12 participated in the day, which used fun activities to increase knowledge of the body and health careers.

We set off on a crisp desert morning in June for Santa Teresa, a community one hour drive south of Alice Springs. A dirt road is the only way to reach the community, and after heavy rain the normally dry riverbeds can become flooded, making the road and town inaccessible. Fortunately rain was not a problem on this visit!

The day started with an interactive session starring "Gutsy Gus". This is a manikin, with removal body parts, that is used to create a 3D understanding of what's beneath our skin. The students were asked questions such as what does the heart do, what causes diabetes (answer: coca cola!) and what happens if you smoke. They then broke into three groups to rotate through several interactive stations.

At the food pyramid relay many children were disappointed to learn that chocolate is not an "eat most" food but had great fun dressing up in scrubs and racing each other. They were horrified to see the wax in their ears through the video otoscope, but loved trying to elicit each others reflexes with tendon hammers.

Perhaps the highlight of the day though, was the opportunity for each child to have a plaster put on their arm, which they could then decorate with paint.

Everyone had a great time, and agreed that the enthusiasm of the children was inspiring. More importantly, a few children may even think about becoming health professionals in the future.

Suturing Workshop

Des Gellert

On Wednesday 8th July, the Walker Room took on an entirely new look.

With the floor covered in plastic drop sheets, and suturing kits around the tables, Year 3 Flinders students and Year 5 JCU students enjoyed a couple of hours stitching pigs trotters back together.

The session was led by Mr Hemi Patel.
NTRCS Meet Young Australian of the Year

Dr Charles Mutandwa and Katherine NTRCS students recently met with Jonty Bush at a presentation organised by Katherine Rotary Club. Jonty, 29, is the 2009 Young Australian of the year. Jonty is currently working as a Victim's support worker.

In her short life Jonty has experienced more tragedy than most of us ever will. When she was 21 her beloved younger sister was murdered, and then just five months later her father was killed as the result of an unprovoked attack. It is a tribute to her strength and courage that she not only managed to keep going but that she began to help others deal with their grief by becoming a volunteer with the Queensland Homicide Victim's Support Group.

The compassion and understanding Jonty showed others brought her recognition among members of the police force and the legal fraternity, and at just 27 she was appointed CEO of the organisation. She has since led the push for a review of the laws surrounding murder and manslaughter, and as a result the Queensland Law Reform Commission is now undertaking such a review. She also developed the One Punch Can Kill campaign, which has been adopted by the Queensland Government in an attempt to prevent further tragedies.

In all that she does Jonty shows others how to cope with their day-to-day lives after a tragedy, and helps them build a future for themselves despite their loss.

Allied Health Work-Integrated Learning (AHWIL) Research Project Update August 09

The Allied Health Work-Integrated Learning (AHWIL) project is a research project of the Northern Territory Clinical School in collaboration with the Department of Health and Families. The project is researching the significance of Northern Territory based allied health student placements and how this impacts the NT allied health workforce, both short and longer term.

Preliminary data analysis on the student and workforce survey results is underway and focus groups are providing additional information. We have found that the majority of allied health professionals offer student supervision and interestingly, a number would like to teach more although there are substantial barriers to this.

Most student respondents rated their placements as 'excellent' or 'good' and valued both the clinical and cultural opportunities offered by a Northern Territory placement.

For further information about the AHWIL study please contact:
Academics: Narelle Campbell, Anna Smedts, Richard Sager 08 8922 7666

or to notify us of student placement commencement dates contact:
Eliza Gill 08 8922 7937
Dragon Boat Racing

Early on Sunday morning a group of NTCS staff, students, family and friends assembled beside a tranquil Cullen Bay to prepare for competition in the Dragons Abreast NT (DANT) Dragon Boat Regatta. Following a blessing of the fleet by a Buddhist nun, which included wakening and feeding the dragons attached to each boat, the Motley NTCS Crew assembled for the first heat of the day. Most of the crew had never experienced dragon boat paddling before so the paddle out to the starting line was an initiation. With the aid of the sweep and our drummer, the team paddled furiously and with a clashing of paddles completed the 250 metres to the finish line.

The following two races gave the team the opportunity to hone our newly found skills but although we came first in our lane each time the overall result was not sufficient to net us a finals berth. We all had a good time doing something out of our usual routine and assisted DANT to raise some funds.

Thanks to the crew: staff members Michael Lowe, Chris Watson, Gurmeet Singh, Karla Kapenko, Mary Pocock; student Cartina Huang (Yr 6 Monash University); and Peter Watson, Jen Pocock, Siri Wanderelis, Anouk Dac and Maggie.

The next regatta is on the 11 October, cost is $10 per person. Please contact mary.pocock@flinders.edu.au if you are interested in competing; maybe this time we can organise a training session?.....a team uniform?.....a warm up routine and chant?

Alice Springs Building Project

Construction is progressing well on the new NTRCS administration and student support centre in Alice Springs. This building is located in the grounds of the Alice Springs Hospital and is a joint venture between Flinders and Baker IDI and largely funded by the Department of Health and Ageing. It is expected that this building will be completed by the end of the year and will enhance the existing Flinders facilities in Alice Springs.

Thanks to the crew: staff members Michael Lowe, Chris Watson, Gurmeet Singh, Karla Kapenko, Mary Pocock; student Cartina Huang (Yr 6 Monash University); and Peter Watson, Jen Pocock, Siri Wanderelis, Anouk Dac and Maggie.

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Graduate Diploma in Indigenous and Remote Child Health

A Graduate Diploma in Indigenous and Remote Child Health is being introduced from the first semester 2010 by Flinders University School of Medicine’s Northern Territory Clinical School (NTCS) in conjunction with Charles Darwin University (through the Menzies School of Health Research).

The Graduate Diploma aims to provide doctors with the opportunity to upgrade their paediatric clinical knowledge/skills as well as acquire an understanding of community child health principles, values and practices that contribute to improving health care access for children.

The Graduate Diploma will adopt an holistic approach. It combines clinical and curative aspects of child health with a community focus on promoting and maintaining child health. This includes following elements that relate to the normal growth and development of a child:

- Diagnosis, treatment and management of common childhood illnesses.
- Assessment, intervention and prevention of child abuse.
- Disease prevention and health promotion.
- Social and cultural determinants of indigenous child health.
- International and Australian child health programmes.

At the completion of the course, graduates will be able to:

- Confidently and competently treat and manage common paediatric problems within their own practice.
- Organise, manage and implement community Child Health Programs within their local district in a socially and culturally appropriate manner
- Identify more complex paediatric problems, institute initial management and refer onto the major centres.
- Build their own network of support/resource people for consultations and know when to use them.
- Impart paediatric knowledge to fellow workers (e.g. medical students, nurses, health workers etc.) and also to the community (e.g. in community education).

Topics include:

- Clinical paediatrics
- Introduction to Public Health
- Social and cultural determinants of Indigenous child health
- Epidemiology and control of communicable diseases
- Tropical Child Health
- International health and Global Economy
- An introduction to biostatistics and epidemiology

Prospective students:
The course is intended for hospital RMOs, GP registrars, paediatric specialist trainees and General Practitioners who wish to upskill and expand their child health practices.

Please contact Dr Alan Ruben alan.ruben@flinders.edu.au for more information.
The Menzies – NTCS Research Support and Education Program

**NTCS and Menzies present a seminar with:**

**Joseph McDonnell**  
**Biostatistician,**  
**Menzies School of Health Research**

**Topic**  
**Biostatistics: An overview**

**When**  
Thursday 10 September, 11.00 - 1.00pm  
**Where**  
Seminar Room, John Mathews Building  
Menzies School of Health Research

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**Timeline for future modules: September 2009 – April 2010**

All modules will be held in the Seminar Room at Menzies School of Health Research from 11:00-13:00, unless otherwise advertised.

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**The Research Support and Education Modules are free for NTCS and DHF staff.**

Please contact anna.smedts@flinders.edu.au for more information.
Student and staff updates

Sarah Strasser Resignation
Associate Professor Sarah (pictured left) has resigned as Associate Dean of Rural & Remote Health and Director of CBME and NTRCS. Sarah has returned to live with her family in Canada and has taken a new position at Northern Ontario School of Medicine. Sarah has been instrumental in the establishment of the NT Rural Clinical School and Community Based Medical Education. We wish her all the best in her new endeavours and will miss her inspiring leadership.

New Staff
Trish Bate - Evaluation & Pre-clinical Sciences, based in Darwin
Kathy Kuipers - Allied Health Lecturer, based in Alice Springs.

NTCS Year 4 Flinders medical student Benjamin Gladwin weds gorgeous Josephine in Brisbane on 4 April 2009 (left)

Dr Emma Kennedy and her partner Paul welcomed a new member to their family in June. Emma and her new daughter, Amy, are pictured at right. Congratulations to the whole family.

Dr Emma Kennedy and her partner Paul welcomed a new member to their family in June. Emma and her new daughter, Amy, are pictured at right. Congratulations to the whole family.

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.