



SHARP 2007 Newsletter

National events and conferences

2007 saw SHARP members trotting around Australia, representing the club and University at a herd of interesting conferences and events with a rural, remote and indigenous theme. Medical and Allied Health students have returned from these events, commending them as great opportunities to hear from speakers representing peak health bodies and network with other Rural Health Club students. These included:

- ◆ 6th-7th March 2007 - Aubury NRHN/NRHA conference on "staying strong: thriving in the bush".
- ◆ 31st August 2007 - Rural Health Workforce Australia Conference on Indigenous Workforce Issues, Fremantle.
- ◆ 31st May 2007 - "Health Equality in 25 Years" Indigenous Health Forum held by University of Sydney RHC, MIRAGE. Keynote speakers included Jeff McMullan, Jimmy Little and Dea Delaney-Theile.



SHARP also had a good representation at many of the different Conferences of National Significance – reports of some of our students can be found on the NRHN website.

Signing up new members

Throughout the year, SHARP representatives were also busy putting on events to introduce new students to the club and the NRHN. As well as running a stall and activities during O-week, SHARP put on the following:

- ◆ 14th February 2007 – Kay, Naomi (SHARP Senior Rep) and Shannon (RAHMS Senior Rep) made a special Valentine's Day visit to the first cohort of Medical students at the Shoalhaven campus. They spoke about their love for rural and remote health & shared some rural health cake. There had an overwhelming response, with all students signing up to be SHARP members, including Wollongong Medical students who joined in the fun via a live video link.
- ◆ Presentation to 1st year B Health Sciences students.

Events held

20 April 2007 - SHARP Bush Dance at Yallah

SHARP held its annual Aussie Bush Dance at Yallah which attracted some of our flannel and boot-scooting friends at RAHMS (UNSW) to come join the fun in the first half of 2007. Medical and Allied Health Students enjoyed the evening with a full buffet at the Yallah Roadhouse and the fantastic Wongawilli bush band!!



18 May 2007 – Mental Health Symposium

In May, SHARP partnered with students from the Graduate School of Medicine (UOW MedSoc) to present a Mental Health Symposium and launch the Mental Health Guide, "When the cowpat hits the windmill", written by students for students. The booklet, funded by Beyond Blue, provides students going on rural and remote placements a guide for staying mentally fit.

We had a huge attendance of SHARP members and the general community who each received a copy of the guide, heard from former mental health patients, and had awareness raised about local research and initiatives being undertaken in the community. Medical and Allied Health students and community members heard from keynote speakers including Alex Darling, Lord Mayor, and representatives from the Neuroscience Institute of Schizophrenia & Allied Disorders (NISAD), Helping Hands, and Light and Hope.



ON THE ROAD for Moruya's "Indigenous Health Check" Festival

7 SHARP representatives made tracks to Moruya Showground's Health Promotion "Indigenous Health Check" Festival, themed "Healthy Kids, Living Culture" (24-25 May). There, Medical and Allied Health students had fun putting to practise what they'd learned in the classroom or from each other to check the health of hundreds of young Indigenous school students and children of the Eurobodalla. It was a lot of fun and a chance to talk to Indigenous students about health careers and following their dreams on what they wanted to do when they finish school.



17 August 2007 – International Health Forum

During International Week, we held an International Health Forum with presentations from Dr Stewart Condon from international relief agency, Medecins Sans Frontieres, and SHARP members Joshua Lansom and Michael O'Halloran. University students and staff in attendance heard from these speakers inspiring stories about their experiences in making a difference in remote areas or places where there are wars, epidemics and natural disasters. Everyone was encouraged to consider taking their skills into other parts of the world.

ON THE ROAD for Thursday Island and Dubbo CrocFest



During the year, SHARP members headed to Thursday Island (17-18 July) and Dubbo (25-27 September) for CrocFest. Much fun was had plastering the arms of the children who came from rural and remote areas with creative, made-up stories of how they broke theirs! SHARP also had 2 great apple peelers that won many fans, despite their short functioning lives.

Our members had fun interacting with their potential future patients, encouraging them to take up healthy lifestyles and follow their dreams. In between scrubs relays, Gutsy Gus, and face-painting, SHARP representatives also experienced contemporary Indigenous culture and met delegates from other rural health clubs.

26 – 29 September 2007 – Australian Indigenous Games

SHARP members assisted the Games by packing promotional bags with rural health gear and information about careers/uni/scholarships which were given to all students who participated in the games. These proved popular among the students.

28 July 2007 – Illawarra Police Charity Ball

SHARP members volunteered at this annual community event that raises funds for local charities and projects each year by selling numbered balloons. Half of the Ball's proceeds this year went to the UOW Graduate School of Medicine Clinical Skills Laboratory.



Later in the year, SHARP hosted Illawarra Police Sergeant J Klepczarek and other dignitaries for the official handover of the cheque from the Illawarra Police to the Graduate School of Medicine. SHARP received a Certificate of Appreciation from NSW Police for its ongoing support for the Ball.

19 – 21 October 2007 – Dunedoo RAW

In October, 13 of our members braved a weekend without creature comforts to experience life on the farm during the inaugural Rural Appreciation Weekend held at Shannon Nott (UNSW Senior Rep)'s Dunedoo property. Highlights included roasting marshmallows over a fire, tours around the property, a snake demonstration, and an exciting & very competitive stockmanship competition on the final day!



9 November 2007 – Visit from Executive Director of NRHA

SHARP hosted a visit from Gordon Gregory, Executive Director of the National Rural Health Alliance to informally discuss the major political party positions on health, particularly where they stand on health in country Australia.

What to listen out for in 2008

So far, we've been busy this year running the bbq and signing up new members. SHARP participated in the MedCamp with a CrocFest demonstration of plastering and face-painting with the University's new medical students at the Graduate School of Medicine and welcomed in the new undergraduate students in the Health & Behavioural Sciences Faculty.

10 delegates have already been selected to attend the 10th National University Rural Health Conference (NURHC) from April 3rd-5th in Launceston, and hosted by our friends at RUSTICA, the Rural Health Club in Tasmania.

We have a busy SHARP calendar already lined up for 2008 so look out for the following and more major events happening this year:

- ◆ Annual SHARP Bush Dance in April involving SHARP members and our friends at RAHMS.
- ◆ Flo's birthday bash
- ◆ Annual CrocFest
- ◆ Rural High School Visits
- ◆ Illawarra Police Charity Ball
- ◆ Social activities!!
- ◆ ... and Kay's talking the City 2 Surf!



Going by the success and fun had in last year's events this year's calendar is definitely going to be one not to be missed!