



Primary Source

Mental Health - Rural

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From the Principal Network Adviser - Drought

Welcome to the third edition of the Primary Source Mental Health – Rural newsletter. This edition is about **spreading the word**. If you wish to contribute to the Primary Source Mental Health- Rural newsletter contact Elaine Dunn, AGPN Principal Network Adviser – Drought

edunn@agpn.com.au Encourage colleagues to subscribe to this newsletter

or any of the other Primary Source newsletters being offered by AGPN via the website:

www.agpn.com.au/media/subscribe and most importantly, enjoy reading.

Elaine Dunn AGPN Principal Network Adviser - Drought

AGPN Federal Budget 2011 Submission :

'Connecting Rural Communities for Mental Health'

Drought is not the only climatic cause of trauma and hardship that affects individuals and families. The Victorian bushfires, the locust plague, the North Queensland cyclones and the recent floods in eastern Australia are recent reminders of the enduring impact natural emergencies and events can have on communities. They are also a stark reminder of the need to continue the necessary mental health support programs to ensure the health and wellbeing of our rural and remote residents.

AGPN recommends in its **2011-2012 Federal Budget Submission** that, to better reflect its broader practical scope, the name of the *Mental Health Support for Drought Affected Communities Initiative* be changed to ***'Connecting Rural Communities for Mental Health'***.

Under the current Initiative, mental health services through Community Support Workers (CSWs) are also only provided in QLD, VIC, SA and NSW. In line with the Government's objective of increasing access to mental health services - especially in rural and remote areas - AGPN recommends that the newly proposed initiative **be broadened** to include all states and territories. AGPN further recommends that all Medicare Locals with rural and regional catchments hold the funds in order to engage CSWs and that GPNs or Medicare Locals in urban flood affected areas also be supported to engage such a workforce. Funds for program continuation would also provide

A blue banner for the National Forum. The text on the banner reads: 'National Forum', 'Australia's premier primary health care forum', '16-19 November 2011', and 'Melbourne Convention Exhibition Centre'.

National Forum
Australia's premier primary
health care forum
16-19 November 2011
Melbourne Convention Exhibition Centre

[Click here to view the events calendar.](#)

for workforce education, training and support in partnership with **beyondblue**.

Complementing the specialist psychological services provided through ATAPS, core functions of the CSW would be to:

- rapidly respond to their communities' needs in both the immediate and long term as part of a regional solution to all climatic variations causing distress
- implement targeted strategies to high-risk individuals, groups and communities around suicide
- assist individuals and communities during recovery from climatic distress
- support rural and remote residents to help-seeking and self-management behaviours to better manage their mental health and wellbeing through promotion, awareness and education – in partnership with beyondblue
- build on mental health and suicide literacy to de-stigmatise mental health in cultural groups and communities
- act as knowledge and referral brokers to put the right people in the right care at the right time and, where appropriate and suitably qualified, provide direct mental health support services

<http://www.agpn.com.au/policy/federal-budget>

AGPN Mental Health Conference – 12 & 13 April 2011 - Brisbane

The Australian General Practice Network is proud to be hosting the fourth national Mental Health Conference on Tuesday 12 and Wednesday 13 April at the Citigate King George Square, Brisbane.

In the context of broader primary health care reform and the transition to Medicare Locals, the theme of Conference will focus on:

- service models with an emphasis on hard to reach populations
- service integration and development
- partnership and collaboration
- evidence – based intervention

Web link: [AGPN Mental Health Conference program](#)

Round 2 of the 'Shed Development Grants' Now Open

The Australian Men's Sheds Association [AMSA] administers the Australian Government Shed Development Program (the Program) on behalf of the Australian Government to provide direct financial assistance to men's sheds across Australia.

All Sheds in Australia can apply for up to \$10,000 [GST excl] for a range of financial support across three funding

categories: *Workspace Development; Building and Operational; and Shed Co-ordinator*. This allows Sheds and organisations supporting Sheds in the community to apply for funds to better respond to local needs.

Men's Sheds have long been recognised as meeting places where men can find social support and camaraderie. During consultations for the National Male Health Policy there was considerable support expressed for Men's Sheds for their demonstrated success in reaching marginalised and isolated males and in contributing to improvements in male health and wellbeing.

The funding available directly to Men's Sheds includes provisions for Men's Sheds to apply to AMSA for items such as tools, equipment, purpose built workspaces, improvements to Sheds and the engagement of a Shed Co-ordinator.

Applications forms are now available from the website www.mensshed.org

Applications Close April 29, 2011.

Self Care of health professionals

A current key focus under the *Mental Health Support for Drought Affected Communities* initiative is to get our Community Support Workers thinking and acting upon their own self care. *Education and Training* provides education resources and interactive training modules for Allied Health Professionals moving to, working in or contemplating taking up, practice in remote and rural Australia. A resource available on the *SARRAH Education and Training* website may be useful – web link below:

http://bss.crana.org.au/cms/file_library/Other/Other_7.pdf

Sustainable Farm Families™ assists in flood recovery - Victoria

The Victorian Coalition Government today has announced another substantial package of measures to help Victorian communities and families recovering from months of devastating floods. As part of these targeted flood measures [Sustainable Farm Families™](#) has been funded to deliver in partnership with Department of Primary Industries and supporting health agencies 10 programs across Local Government areas impacted by flood.

For further information please contact:

Cate Mercer-Grant

T: 5551 8533

E: cate.mercer-grant@wdhs.net

Download application form [pdf](#) and [word](#)

Closing date for funding is the 27th May, 2011

3rd Rural and Remote Mental Health Symposium : Impacts & Outcomes

Mercure, Ballarat 14th – 16th November 2011

Submit your Abstract - Call for Abstracts Close 27th June 2011

The committee invites you to present at the symposium, a paper, workshop or poster. Speakers have the option to have their papers peer reviewed and published in a book of proceedings with an ISBN.

[Click here](#) to submit your abstract.

***beyondblue* Disaster Recovery Initiative (DRI)**

As a result of the January 2011 floods in QLD, NSW and VIC, along with Cyclone Yasi in North Queensland, there is again concern over the mental health of people living in affected communities. The aims of *beyondblue* in responding to these events will be to:

- raise awareness of the risk factors for depression, anxiety and related disorders after a disaster and improve health seeking behaviour amongst people living in disaster affected areas.
- support positive mental health and wellbeing in disaster affected communities by promoting protective factors such as community cohesion, resilience and social connectedness.

beyondblue is working closely with AGPN, DGPs and Community Support Workers under the *Mental Health Support for Drought Affected Communities* Initiative to support people and communities affected by recent disasters.

Nominations for the National Primary Health Care Awards open in March 2011

Australia's frontline health service providers will now be able to achieve well earned recognition and rewards for outstanding performance through the inaugural **HESTA Primary Health Care Awards**.

HESTA in conjunction with AGPN created these awards to mark excellence in primary health care.

HESTA CEO Ms Anne-Marie Corboy said the awards were designed to recognise innovation and leadership.

"These are two fundamental elements of a skilled and responsive health workforce," Ms Corboy said.

AGPN CEO David Butt said the awards were timely in light of the incredible health reform agenda facing this sector.

"These awards recognise the role of all those who are usually the first the community turns to when they are sick or injured," Mr Butt said.

ME Bank has provided \$25,000 in prize money for the awards which will culminate in a gala dinner at the AGPN's National Forum, to which finalists will be flown.

There are three categories for nominations:

Young leader

Individual distinction

Team excellence

Nominations open in March 2011 and can be made online at <http://www.phcawards.com.au/>

National Youth Week: 1-10 April 2011

National Youth Week 2011 is set to be Australia's biggest youth event, with events taking place all over the country from 1-10 April. You can take part by entering competitions or getting involved in events and activities happening near you.

National Youth Week, 1-10 April 2011. How will you 'Own It'?

<https://www.youthweek.com/Pages/default.aspx>

Mental Health – rural project contact:
edunn@agpn.com.au

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Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing

25 National Circuit Forrester ACT 2603 | PO Box 4308 Manuka ACT 2603
T 02 6228 0800 | **F** 02 6228 0899 | www.agpn.com.au | ABN 95 082 812 146

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