



# Doctors keep coming back!

## *Reflections on Galiwin'ku or - Sara's Island Home*

**F**lying through a storm in a 5-seater plane at 200 metres to certify the death of an old Yolngu lady on a remote outstation in East Arnhemland I realised that this was General Practice in the Top End. This and other experiences equally exciting were a regular part of life for me last year as the solo GP in Galiwin'ku; a remote traditionally oriented Aboriginal community of 2000 people on the Arnhemland coast. Life was certainly never dull. Working with a team of Aboriginal Health Workers and nurses we delivered babies unexpectedly, ran community education days, managed psychotic people, sat outside with family groups discussing serious health issues and resuscitated dehydrated children. These and other challenges enriched our often exhausting and chaotic working lives, where communication, isolation, dust and stray dogs were a daily challenge.

**T**he health needs in Galiwin'ku, as in most remote Top End Aboriginal Communities, are overwhelming; failure to thrive, diabetes, heart disease, youth suicide and high rates of smoking all contribute to a life expectancy 20 years lower for the local people than for non-indigenous Australians. As GPs we struggle to make a difference to these health outcomes. However perhaps the biggest difference is made to us as individuals as we grapple with the reality of the cross-cultural experiences, isolation and clinical

challenges. Galiwin'ku seems to draw on our untapped resources. Dr Sara Renwick-Lau, mother of 2y.o. Matilda currently providing the GP service there has proven to be a GP Registrar extraordinaire running most consultations in the local language as well as embracing the teaching and public health roles, which come with the job. Other hidden talents were revealed when she made a video documentary about her work and presented a session at the recent RACGP Scientific Convention. Dr David Peris, my predecessor at Galiwinku, has undertaken a degree in Public Health as a result of his 2-year stint and I have become a medical educator on the strength of my Galiwin'ku experience.

*"As GPs we struggle to make a difference to these health outcomes. However perhaps the biggest difference is made to us as individuals as we grapple with the reality of the cross-cultural experiences, isolation and clinical challenges."*

**F**or most the greatest rewards come from the relationships, which develop through working and living with Yolngu people. Balandas (non-Aboriginal people) who are keen to engage are usually adopted into a Yolngu family thus entering into relationship with the whole East Arnhem community. Through these relationships we are cared for and mentored and have many opportunities to learn about life from a Yolngu perspective. It is these relationships that bring people back to Galiwin'ku time and time again.



For several years Galiwin'ku has been a very popular training location for Medical Students, GP Registrars and, more recently Junior Hospital Doctors. Both Sara and David are examples of doctors who returned to Galiwin'ku as GPs after placements there as students /junior doctors. David and I continue our involvement supervising Sara from Sydney and Darwin respectively as well as visiting for regular locums in an attempt to address the urgent need for GP support for Sara and the community.

So how can we help GPs take the plunge and commit some time to this and similar communities? This is one of the big challenges facing the community at present. One thing is for sure, responding to the enthusiasm of medical students, junior hospital doctors and registrars by providing well supported clinical placements is a practical strategy contributing to current workforce needs and future GP recruitment. Doctors keep coming back!

*Penny Ramsay - Medical Educator/General Practitioner*



*Discussing student placements with the Clinic Team at Galiwin'ku*

## Junior Doctor Placement Program for Urban and Outer Metro Practices

NTGPE has just received notification of their successful application for funding to run a Junior Doctor Placement Program for Darwin Urban and Outer Metro Practices commencing 1 January 2006. This program is an extension of the already successful rural and remote program that has been running since the beginning of the year.

Royal Darwin Hospital based RMO's will have the opportunity to do up to 12 weeks in a Darwin practice to experience working as a General Practitioner.

Any practice wanting to participate in this program must be accredited as a GP Training Post and have an accredited supervisor in the

clinic. For those clinics willing to participate, NTGPE can assist with the accreditation process, which normally takes 3- 6 months to process through the RACGP.

All Junior Drs will earn Medicare income, which in turn will be Pay-Group-Linked back to the practice. An incentive payment will also be made to all participating practices to aid with the purchase of any extra equipment that may be required.

If you would like further information on this program or would like to express your interest please contact:

Nicole Lamb phone 08 8946 7079, or by email - [nicole.lamb@ntgpe.org](mailto:nicole.lamb@ntgpe.org)

*Nicole Lamb PVGPPP Coordinator*



There has been a flurry of activity amongst Medical and Cultural Educators of late as we have been attending various conventions and workshops.

In August several of us attended the IGPET Convention in Sydney. Cultural Educators and Mentors attended an Aboriginal Health Workshop before the main convention started. We were pleased to be able to present a paper outlining the Cultural Mentor program for medical students during the convention. The plenary speakers were well chosen and delivered stimulating and entertaining presentations. In the afternoon we divided ourselves between the various educational and research sessions, most of which were very worthwhile.

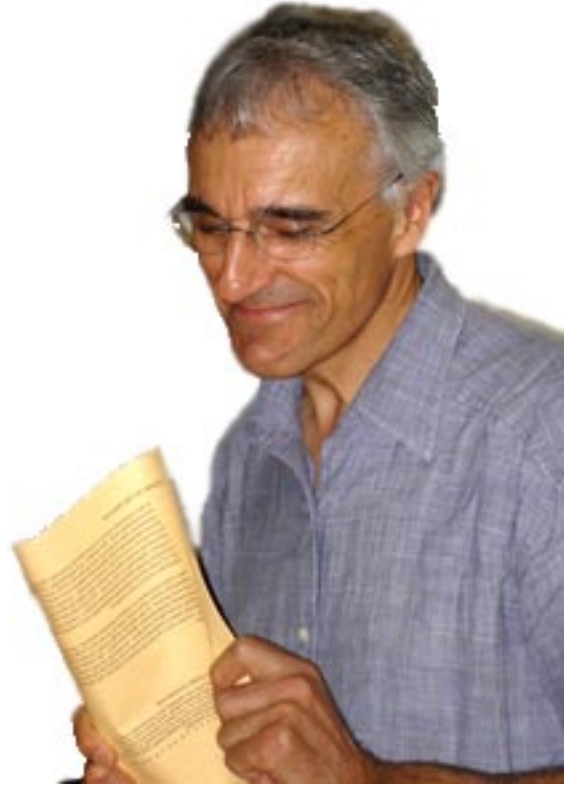
Following the Convention was a National Medical Educator face to face meeting which gave us the chance to network and discover what other RTP's are up to with regards to the Curriculum and delivery of training. We came away from this enlightened and enthused.

In September we were fortunate to have the talents of Frank Meumann, the Executive Director of the Tasmanian RTP, to give us some upskilling in delivering medical education. Some of the small group sessions he held included giving feedback, doctor-patient communication skills and planning a teaching session. He delivered a negotiation skills workshop for registrars at the Registrar Workshop and again for Trainers at their face to face. In the midst of all of this was the RACGP Annual Scientific Convention, topped and tailed by the Registrars' Workshop and the Trainers' Workshop respectively. Dr Emma Kennedy this month will be awarded a prize for her outstanding contributions to the Annual Scientific Convention.

There has been some departures and new arrivals among the ME's over the last few months. Dr Graham Carey and Dr Arman Yazdani have sadly left us. However we are pleased to have in our team now the services of Dr Brad Gray who is based at Wurli Wurli in Katherine, and Dr Ameeta Patel who works in Alice Springs.



Staff from both the Alice Springs and Darwin offices of NTGPE recently attended an Assertive Communications and Stress Management workshop at the Darwin Wharf Precinct. This was in response to a meeting earlier this year, which identified the need to learn to manage our stress levels more effectively.



*Dr Frank Meumann, Executive Director General Practice Training Tasmania*

We are currently in the process of reviewing how NTGPE delivers the educational component of the GP Curriculum. We hope to have a new framework available to commence in 2006. The next workshop to be held will be an Orientation workshop for the new intake of registrars in 2006 and for those registrars about to commence their Basic clinical practice terms. The Orientation workshop will be held in Darwin (Jan 16th - 17th) please check the website for details.

Finally we were grieved to be told by our Executive Director that he has handed in his resignation and will be leaving us before 2006. Doug Lloyd has done a tremendous amount of work for NTGPE and his will be a hard act to follow.

*Kim Manias Medical Educator*

# RACGP Annual Scientific Convention



*Introducing May Rosas - Cultural Mentor (Katherine) presenting at the RACGP Annual Scientific Convention, Darwin September/October 2005.*

The following articles present two views on the RACGP Annual Scientific Convention.

The Convention was held over 4 days and offered a very full program. There were speakers at the start and end of each day, and morning and afternoon sessions running in between. At any one time, one could choose from several different 2-hour workshops, procedural skills sessions or two different rooms which ran 15-minute presentations of scientific papers on a wide range of issues and research. A difficult choice every day!

I attended a mixture of longer workshops and busy presentation sessions, and found the few days really inspiring. The most powerful messages I noticed about the whole convention were the very strong visibility of Aboriginal issues, and the very positive presentation of rural and remote health practice. Through several keynote speeches and sessions, a very positive impression of life as a more remote GP in the NT was made. I found it very appropriate that all these issues were so strongly tabled; the Territory location really was setting the scene for the convention attendees to come and get a dose of real life stories from the NT. I felt very proud to be a Territory GP and to see the NT network of GPs and registrars talking so passionately about their work and lifestyle, and to see Aboriginal

wellbeing strongly prioritized. The topics covered throughout the 4 days were very diverse and revealed the variety of research and projects being undertaken by GPs Australia-wide. I knew GPs who attended only the medicolegal sessions, others who used it as an opportunity to do Emergency Life Support Skills training. People were brushing up on suturing skills, learning how to set up their own general practice, learning how to get published in a medical journal and being taught guidelines to manage families experiencing domestic violence.

There was a myriad of papers to listen to about anything from asthma to computer programs. Panels discussed political hot topics and made College commitments to move forward on issues such as supporting International Medical Graduates. It appeared to be a forum for GPs to genuinely influence the RACGP and have a say.

NTGPE was represented not only in the audience but through several speakers on stage and in a display booth, where admin and support staff did a great job promoting NTGPE and handing out the only healthy food snacks in sight! Ada Parry's keynote

speech had the large audience in the Darwin Entertainment Centre spellbound as she shared her family's story, as well as her very astute observations from years of working cross-culturally. Penny, Kevin and Latisha Petterson ran a full-day cultural safety training workshop, developed by ACWA. NTGPE Registrar Debbie Stach was commemorated through a Memorial Presentation speech (unfortunately cancelled but planned to continue in the future). Other NTGPE figures (past and present) who made significant contributions through their speeches or presentations included Doug Lloyd, Ngaire Brown, Simon Morgan, Danielle Esler, registrar Sara Renwick-Lau, Sam Heard, Paul Burgess, Fay Johnston, GP Trainer Lionel Crompton and Emma Kennedy (Chair of the organising committee).

For me, the Convention was a great exposure for Australian GPs to Territory and remote health, and Aboriginal cultural and health issues. It reinvigorated my feelings for general practice, made me feel proud to be an NT GP, and made me appreciate the diversity and passion of general practitioners.

*Dr Danielle Stewart Medical Educator  
Junior Dr Wellbeing Project*

# RACGP Annual Scientific Convention

This year was the first time I attended a RACGP ASC. The following is some honest feedback about my experiences at the conference. My first impression of the ASC was reading the outline for the conference and then of

the average pastime of general practitioners? The morning plenary session was spent listening to John Salinsky and Ada Parry, telling their life stories. Both were very interesting and Ada's talk was by far the highlight of the day.

quite fun chatting to a few friends and catching up with some others I hadn't seen for a while. I was beginning to think that this was perhaps the hidden agenda! Also frequented the stalls run by various organisations and drug companies. Plavix was giving away a free pair of socks with Plavix scrawled all over them. They would have gone well with my umbrella on the golf tee. I did manage to souvenir a purple dragon for my two year old son though!



Kathy Jannis - Program Manager at the NTGPE trade exhibit RACGP Annual Scientific Convention Darwin

Afternoon sessions all looked terribly drab, except for a session on Malaria. Unfortunately the first half was microbiology based, presented by an English fellow who had one of those low monotone voices that hypnotised me to sleep. I was having a terribly good catch up sleep from a busy week, when I was

rudely awoken by an usher, who sternly advised me that I should not have my feet on the chairs. But she was kind enough to wake me just as Nick Price started his presentation, which was a good summary of anti-malarial medication. The last session of the day was a bit mixed, and I must admit that I only went because I thought I better get my \$400 worth. The last two speakers were rural GPs working in remote Indigenous communities. Again, interesting anecdotal slide shows but not much beyond that. And so my day ended. On reflection, my expectations were completely surreal. I was thinking I was going to get an educative day with a mix of evidence-based general practise research and some procedural skills knowledge. Not so, but I guess my biggest gripe at the day is that I don't even play golf!

Peter Silberberg GP Registrar

course seeing how much it would affect my hip pocket. Reality been it not only costs to attend but also you incur the cost of a lost day's work. The two issues combined, I could actually only justify going to the one day-Friday 30<sup>th</sup> September. I rocked up at 8.30, a little bit nervous and also a tad excited. After all, this is my future college's peak annual conference. The day started with a good laugh when I was presented with my show bag and also a large umbrella, the sort more accustomed to been used on a golf tee. Maybe it reflected

What an amazing story she told, which gave an in depth insight into not only her own life experiences, but also the chequered history of this country, one that is so often untold. Unfortunately for me, the quality of the day took a nose-dive from there onwards. After morning tea and a social chit chat, I had a chance to use my umbrella as I walked down to the Crowne Plaza in blazing Territorian sun, for a session on procedural skills. Unfortunately it was quite disorganised, over booked, and in contrast to the advertised brochure, went for half the time and had changed all the topics.

Used my umbrella again and made my way back to the main conference, hoping that lunch would make up for the procedural skills mish-mash. Again, I had



# Junior Dr Wellbeing "Staying Well" DVD to be launched nationally

The Junior Doctor Wellbeing Project is due to finish in January. It will be presented in November at the National Doctors' Health Conference in Melbourne and at the 10<sup>th</sup> National Prevocational Medical Education Forum in Perth-two wonderful showcase opportunities.

The project showed that education on wellbeing and self-care skills was highly valued by junior doctors, but that sessions have to be easily accessible. A lunchtime talk and discussion session for interns and RMOs at RDH that I facilitated on 4 October had good attendance and very positive feedback. The interns and residents appreciate the opportunity to talk together about their stresses and learn self-care approaches.

The Project final report will suggest realistic and feasible ways forward.

These will include lunchtime sessions, a mentor system and intern discussion groups where education topics are expanded to include stress management, time management, dealing with the dying patient and other self-care skills teaching.

An absolute highlight of the Project is the Staying Well DVD. This very exciting 15-minute DVD uses NT junior doctors' own stories and views to discuss what life is like in the hospital and how to survive it. It will be distributed nationally in November/December and will form the core of a suggested discussion session that can be implemented by any facilitator. As such, the Project is hoped to make an impact not only locally but also nationally, creating an easy-to-use Wellbeing package for all Australian junior doctors.

*Danielle Stewart Junior Dr Wellbeing Project*

## From the Program Manager...

The final 2005 GP Registrar workshop was held in late September at Charles Darwin University and well received by participants. To link in with the RACGP's ASM in Darwin, the GP Trainers' workshop was held in early October and went well with active participation by trainers.

The workshops reminded me once again that I am so privileged to work with such great people. Thank you to you all for making my job so enjoyable.

The selection into the 2006 intake of the training program for the NT has been completed with 11 new

GP Registrars applying and being successful at interview. An orientation workshop will be held on 16 and 17 January to induct these new registrars and those commencing their

replacing Raelene whilst she is on maternity leave. Raelene's twins Aaron and Lily were born in Adelaide 29 August. They are now back in ASH, getting ready

### GP Registrar ORIENTATION Workshop 16th -17th Jan 2006 - Darwin



Basic terms during the year. The allocation to the NT is 20 new GPRs per year, so you can see our numbers are down on what they could be. We encourage you to actively promote training in the NT to your interstate colleagues. I am currently sending out confirmation of term allocations for 2006 which entails more work for GP registrars, completing forms, checking data reports, etc. I would like to welcome Eileen Robinson to our Alice Springs office - Eileen is

to go home - soon we hope. Congratulations to Raelene and Carl on the birth of their beautiful babies. There are a few clucky females in the office now! Some sad news is that our Executive Director, Doug Lloyd is leaving us to be closer to his family. We are all a bit shell-shocked by the news but understand his situation completely. He will be a hard act to follow and we will miss him.

*Kathy Jannis Program Manager*



# Trainer Tracks *Trainer Liaison Officer Update*

For those of you unable to attend the recent Trainers' workshop in Darwin – YOU MISSED OUT ! If only because of the Saturday night dinner at Crustaceans (best seafood many of us had experienced for quite some time) including the view, preceded by the harbour cruise and, of course, the company throughout, the bar has been raised. Make next year's workshop(s) a date for your diaries. Apart from the social side which

much to be used in future situations as a result, whether when dealing with Registrars, employers, staff, patients or even our own children ! If any Trainer would like to get a hold of resources from the session there are some copies still remaining at the Darwin office. Thanks again Frank and well done ! our second day was shared between cultural & business issues. Ada Parry, Cultural Mentor, and Kev Parriman, Cultural Educator, kindly gave up a deal of their

separately in due course, including those to be discussed by the board. However, amongst those into which Trainer input would be particularly valuable, are NTGPE's new and customised Trainers manual ( which has been circulated both at the PBS and via email – let me know if you haven't been included in the loop ) and a set of Key Performance Indicators by which we as Trainers can assess the value that NTGPE adds to GP Training as a whole – these have not yet been developed beyond merely broad headings so if any of you wish to contribute or become more deeply involved, again you know how to find me (nigel.gray@ntgpe.org - (08) 8952 3518 or 0427 003805 ).



Looking ahead I am moving towards completion of the data collection phase in my research looking at GP Trainers' perspectives on GP Registrars' training outcomes with trips to Gove & Katherine planned for October. If any Trainers, except those in Alice who I'll probably get to last, have not been contacted, please let me know and I'll make arrangements.

Finally we have our next teleconference scheduled for December. I feel maybe we should be looking at more clinical content within these in future and would welcome your views, at both a general and specific level, as to items for inclusion. So thanks again for your support. Receiving the kind of positive feedback forthcoming throughout the workshop helps to make the role that much more rewarding and sustainable. Which is pretty important - after all, it could be your turn one day !

*Nigel Gray  
Trainer Liaison Officer*

led to a high demand for coffee and water, particularly from the early presenters, the following morning, we were fortunate to benefit from the expertise of Dr Frank Meumann, experienced ME & now CEO of Tasmanian General Practice Training, who used the NTGPE Trainers as guinea pigs to trial his well-renowned session on negotiation skills on

time and shared a great amount of their knowledge, experience and advice in facilitating what proved to be a most valuable, ostensibly question and answer session from which all of the Trainers benefited hugely. Thanks again to both – the informal approach and setting allowed us to feel comfortable in voicing many of our cultural difficulties and uncertainties, not an easy task to facilitate when dealing with a group of Trainers who have such widespread experience and experiences.

Finally a number of issues arose from the Private Business Session which concluded the workshop. These will be communicated

a group of supervisors for the first time. I am sure all of us gained



# What's on Oct - December

When	What	Where
Oct 25th	TERM 4 Commences	Territory wide
Nov 3 - 6th	ADGP Divisions of General Practice Network Forum	Perth
Nov 3 - 5th	4th National Doctor's Health Conference	Melbourne
Nov 6 - 9th	10th National Prevocational Medical Education Forum	Perth
Nov 11 - 13th	The General Practitioner Conference & Exhibition	Melbourne
Nov 22 - 23rd	NTGPE Staff Cultural Workshops	Holiday Inn Darwin
Dec 10th	NTGPE Staff Christmas Party	TBA
Dec 26th	Boxing Day Public Holiday (Office Closed)	Territory Wide
Dec 27th	Public Holiday (Office Closed)	Territory Wide

*For more information please contact ntgpe, email [admin@ntgpe.org](mailto:admin@ntgpe.org) or phone 08 8946 7077*

## STAFF News & views

It is on a very sad note that I write this to say goodbye to Prof Doug Lloyd from NTGPE.

I have enjoyed working with Doug in the capacity of medical educator and particularly appreciated his sound management experience and knowledge of education.

Doug's commitment and energy for excellence in medical education in the community has been crucial in providing a service to meeting training needs in the Northern Territory. It has been a privilege to work with Doug to enhance the support we provide to the community context. He has always acknowledged the priorities of rural and remote and Aboriginal health care and the central role that medical and cultural education can play.

His energy for advocacy for more appropriate funding to support GP registrar training assisted us to be able to provide a more NT wide approach soon after the transition to regionalisation. The staff of NTGPE

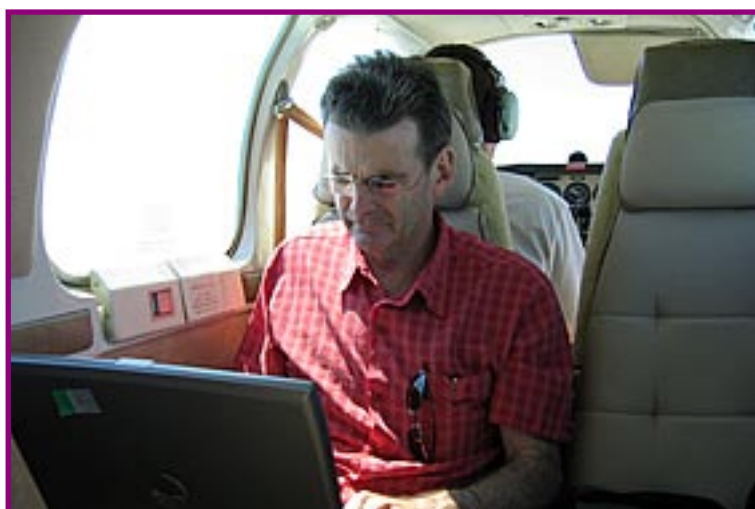
have worked very hard following Doug's lead in maintaining

the programs that interconnect, their common link with the GP trainer at the community health service – medical student, junior doctor and GP registrar programs. The underlying reasoning for this is the integrity of providing medical education support in a model of one stop shop for the

well for the next exciting phase in his personal and professional adventures.

Emma Kennedy

Since our last issue we have seen several other staff changes. We would like to welcome Margaret



essentials, for the trainer at the 'coalface' of the teaching. To do this requires balancing of funds and relationships with different places and stakeholders. I would like to acknowledge how difficult this is and that trust is an essential ingredient to success.

I would like to thank Doug for his professionalism, commitment to integrity in relationships and passion for equitable access to health care for all. I wish him

Vigants as the new Medical Student Coordinator in the Top End. Margaret replaces Nicole Prudames who has left the NT to take up residence in QLD. We wish Nicole all the best and would like to thank her for her contributions to NTGPE. Eileen Robinson also joins the team in Central Australia in our Alice Springs office supporting the GP Training Program. Welcome to you both we look forward to working together.

