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NT General Practice Education Ltd

# GP Registrar numbers increase by 90 percent

**1**9 Australian Medical Graduates are expected to commence training with Northern Territory General Practice Education in 2007. This will bring the existing numbers of GP Registrars currently training in the NT to 60 and represents a 90% increase in the number of applicants seeking to enter General Practice Training in the Territory on last years first round offers.

It's an exciting time for NT General Practice Education and presents an important opportunity for Territory Health.

**E**xecutive Director Dr Michael Wilson identified that while NT General Practice Education is excited by the increased interest in GP training in the Territory, it is a development that would require the ongoing support of the Hospitals, Practices, Clinics and support agencies if the graduates were to join the NT medical workforce in the long term.

"Attracting and training the future GP workforce is only one component of GP workforce planning for the NT."

**N**T General Practice Education in collaboration with other key stakeholder organizations has been developing strategies with the overall goal of attracting recent graduates to return to work in the NT.

"The challenge is keeping them here once qualified, and that is where all NT based service providers for GPs need to embrace this exciting development

and implement initiatives that provide a supportive environment for GP Registrars. The key to successful retention is to ensure that registrars are well supported by supervisors, medical, cultural educators and mentors." says Dr Wilson.

**N**T General Practice Education is in the process of implementing strategies to further support these groups to assist them in this important role.

"Ultimately, a positive training placement has a higher probability of attracting recently graduated GPs to work and live in the Territory".

"The Northern Territory has a lot to offer in terms of lifestyle and interesting medical careers."

"We have a highly motivated team of GP supervisors, Medical and Cultural Educators and mentors that have a laudable enthusiasm for General Practice in the Territory and a fantastic opportunity to train some great GPs for the Territory." Dr Wilson said.

***"Ultimately, a positive training placement has a higher probability of attracting recently graduated GPs to work and live in the Territory".***



# Junior Doctors making a difference...

Last year I agreed to take on a junior doctor as a favour to the medical profession. Hippocrates and all that—impart knowledge of the Art without fee or stipulation etc etc. As it turns out, I shouldn't have bothered with the altruism; even Pericles, the ancient Athenian economic rationalist, would have highly recommended junior doctors.

Since then, Jabiru Health Centre seems to have had more JDs coming through than you could poke a stick at...and so far I haven't had to, not even once! Even without corporeal persuasion, they are so keen to see patients and learn new things, I am tempted to nail a 'gone fishing' sign on my door while they run the business.

Maybe we've been lucky, but the four JDs who have made the trip to Kakadu have all slotted into our health team seamlessly. One JD even came with a bonus practice nurse; in a remote town like Jabiru, spouses with nursing qualifications are exciting additions. Admittedly, I have to set aside a fair bit of orientation time for the JD initially,

but it's a bit like starting an antidepressant—if you can get through mild side effects in the first week or so, the benefits kick in and the improvement continues over the next six weeks. In the end, everyone is happy!

I have always enjoyed teaching medical students, and I wouldn't advise taking on a JD unless teaching does appeal. But the comparison with students stops there; although I expect JDs to consult me for many patients, in the end I am involved in the most interesting five minutes of the consultation, leaving the JD to do all the test ordering, paperwork and follow up...and I keep the cheque!

It is only now my next JD has cancelled that I realise how much I have become reliant on them. Come to think of it, I wouldn't recommend any reader taking on a JD at all. Not until I get another one.

**Justin Coleman**  
GP, Kakadu Health Service

## Training Posts and Accreditation

During a recent visit to Katherine we visited Kintore clinic (the mainstream GP Practice in Katherine), Katherine District Hospital and Tindal Airbase. Kintore has been a popular training post for all GP terms for many years, offering excellent supervision and teaching with a strong emphasis on minor procedures. There is also the opportunity to care for GP patients during admissions to KDH. It may also be possible to organise registrars to do regular anaesthetic or

obstetric lists at KDH. Katherine Hospital provides excellent small rural hospital experience.

It is accredited for Hospital, Special Skills and potentially ARSP terms. It may also be possible for registrars to do combined General Practice terms at KDH and Wurliwurlinjang in future. Katherine Hospital is currently not accredited for General Practice terms in its own right however. Please contact me if a combined GP term is of interest well in advance as this will take some organising. Other new training posts which may well be accredited for GP terms

in the next few months include -

- Wadeye (Port Keats): subsequent term only
- Fannie Bay Surgery (Darwin)
- Oasis Medical Centre (Palmerston)
- Palliative Care at RDH (Special Skills Term)
- Tindal Airbase (ADF base in Katherine)

If you would like information on how these accreditations are progressing contact Nicole Lamb or myself.

**Dr Penny Ramsay**  
Medical Educator





Our new ED Michael Wilson is settling in nicely to NTGPE. He is full of enthusiasm and strongly encourages innovation and self-development. Since his commencement we have also held interviews for a Director of Medical and Cultural Education. Pleasingly we have found an eminently suitable candidate who should be able to commence with us by the end of the year. We have chosen someone who we believe has the drive and energy to take Medical and Cultural Education into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (forgive the cliché).

The recent registrar workshop held at the Airport Resort Hotel was very well received by those who attended. The venue was very user friendly and it was good to be away from the usual University Campus. Plans are already afoot for the next workshop on 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> November at Alice Springs. Registrars are invited to offer suggestions for proposed topics for the workshop as soon as possible.

Meanwhile regional small group meetings continue throughout the Territory. Registrars on the whole support this process and believe it is an improvement on previous years' teleconferences. Of course the success of each meeting relies more heavily on input from registrars.

Feedback from the Registrar Survey was delivered at the last workshop. In particular there was considerable constructive feedback about the Orientation that is given for registrars about to commence Basic terms, especially for registrars going to remote/rural clinics or AMS's. We have taken this feedback on board and hope to be able to provide a more relevant orientation suited to individual needs next year. This may require us

to expand the workshop to 3 days, especially for rural/remote registrars.

Medical Educator numbers are always in flux and we are continuing to recruit new eager doctors to swell our numbers and boost our expertise. This is especially pertinent as NTGPE is primed to become an important player in the educational support and guidance of International Medical Graduates in the NT from 2006 onwards.

Selection interviews for next years crop of registrars will commence in August. This year we have had a record number of expressions of interest and our final numbers for interview are almost to capacity. In addition registrars are regularly transferring to the NT from interstate so next year we anticipate having a record number of registrars on the books. A challenge to which we sincerely hope we can rise.



There is still a great shortage of general practitioners in rural and remote Australia. Besides making life more difficult for those living there it makes placing and maintaining registrars in these locations that much more complicated. We can only trust that by continuing to promote and support registrar training in the Territory we can eventually turn the tide and foster a cohort of GP's suitably trained to face the everyday challenges of remote General Practice.

**Kim Manias**  
Medical Educator



*check out [www.ntgpe.org](http://www.ntgpe.org) for training tools*

# GPET Convention Hobart

Several NTGPE staff and GPs had the pleasure of attending the annual GPET convention in Hobart last week. Against a backdrop of a snow speckled Mt Wellington we mingled with medical and cultural educators, CEOs and GP supervisors from around the country, sharing experiences and ideas. The theme of the convention was Clinical Supervision and Mentoring.

Highlights included a traditional welcome to country. Dr Roger Neighbour, an eminent GP educationalist and author from the UK delivered a keynote address in which he explored core values of General Practice and Medical Education, encouraging us to try to discern what is wise and effective from what is only fashionable! Hilton Koppe, a medical Educator from NSW injected optimism and helped immunise his audience against pessimism and burnout in his session about doctor well being. Dr Brian Jolly (Educationalist from Monash) summarised the evidence for what good clinical supervision entails and Ed Poliness (Medical Educator from Victoria) led a session in which four outstanding GP supervisors told their stories; what inspires and challenges them and their creative solutions to GP registrar supervision.

Interspersed throughout the convention were workshops and papers on a wide range of topics including teaching cross-cultural awareness, learner-centered feedback, supporting GP supervisors, doctor well-being, defining the curriculum in GP training, teaching the inner apprentice, various learning tools for GP training, and training for rural



General Practice including training for FACRRM and the Fellowship of Rural General Practice (RACGP).

The convention finished with a very entertaining hypothetical on "Supervision –The Pacific Solution" facilitated by Dr Norman Swan in which we contemplated the coming years with the anticipated "tsunami" of new GP trainees.

All round we return to warmer climates energised and inspired with new ideas and networks.

*Penny Ramsay - Medical Educator*

## Minister launches general practice learning portal

A record 460 delegates, including hundreds of GP supervisors, attended the annual National General Practice Education and Training Convention in Hobart last week. During the opening ceremony, following a welcome from the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community, the Minister for Health and Ageing Tony Abbott launched a national online learning portal for general practice training. Mr Abbott conducted a 'virtual launch' of the e-portal – called COMET



(Collaboration for Online Medical Education and Training). COMET ([www.comet-gpet.com.au](http://www.comet-gpet.com.au)) follows years of research and development, and discussion with those involved in general practice education and training. It will improve the quality of educational exchange, development and support available to the primary medical care community, including GP registrars, supervisors, educators, training providers and other primary care practitioners. It will facilitate a

collegiate online environment that enables the development, sharing and distribution of educational resources. It will also enhance accessibility to these resources, recognising the fact that registrars work, live and train in diverse settings.

"This is a significant project of GPET which has been brought to fruition with Commonwealth Government support and I'd like to thank everyone involved in the project," Mr Abbott said. "I'd like to encourage everyone involved in GPET's learning programs to make full use of this because the more use we make of tools like this the more enculturated the use of IT will become in general practice."





# Trainers Tracks

## Trainer Liaison Officer Update

If I had a dollar for every time in the last week that I'd heard that GP Supervisors were the most important part of the jigsaw that is Australian General Practice Training, I could afford a beer next time I was in London (and could probably afford to get there too ?!).

Along with many other members of NTGPE's staff I spent last week in wintry Hobart at the annual GPET Convention entitled "Support ... Challenge ... Vision", the theme of which was Clinical Supervision and Mentoring.

We learned much of the value of the GP Supervisor, some of it new but all of it good to hear again, reinforcing what we as Supervisors know already – that without our commitment and enthusiasm the apprenticeship role model that currently produces among the best GPs worldwide would completely fall over.

Therefore it was particularly disappointing that the timing

the Convention was scheduled, as it was many thousands of kilometres from most of us in The Territory at a time when we needed to be at our Training Locations supervising a new cohort of learners in their first month of a new placement.

However what the trip emphasised to me is how important initial orientation and ongoing support of GP Supervisors is in terms of sustainability and development of our Trainers' network. There is much NTGPE as RTP and myself as SLO can do to improve these processes as they stand at present and I hope to put some of the tips and techniques shared at the Convention into practice in the weeks and months ahead

We shall begin with the annual **GP Trainers' Workshop** to be held in **Alice Springs** on **October 15 & 16** at which a new session dedicated to the sharing of ideas and tips we use in our own Practice Based Teaching will be

run, alongside those on Evidence Based Literature Searching and Vicarious Liability delivered by guest presenters. I am reliably informed that the mandatory peripheral entertainment will at least match last year's spectacular (for those from the desert at least) Darwin harbour cruise and quayside seafood extravaganza. See you there.



**Nigel Gray**  
*Trainer Liaison Officer*

### Exciting new opportunities with the Royal Flying Doctor Service

Attention all GPRs – NTGPE would like to flag with you that there may be two new GPR positions at Tennant Creek, and one at Yulara/Mutijulu, commencing in 2007.

If these placements go ahead as planned, we will be offering them to NT-based GPRs first, however we expect that demand from interstate

GPRs will be high, once we begin promoting the placements nationally. So we strongly encourage you to flag your interest with your TA or the Programs Manager as soon as possible.

Watch this space!

**Kathy Jannis**  
*Programs Manager*

# What's on Aug - Oct

When	What	Where
Sept 27 - 29th	8th National Injury Prevention Conference	Sydney
Oct 5 - 8th	RACGP Annual Scientific Convention	Brisbane
Oct 9th	RACGP - National Workshop Aboriginal & Torres Strait Is Health	Brisbane
Oct 15th-16th	NTGPE - GP Trainers Workshop	Alice Springs
Oct 20th-21st	GPPHCNT - Rural Emergency Skills Training	Darwin
Oct 21st	RACGP - Clinical Examination 2006.2	Darwin
Oct 25th	TEDGP - Dermatology Workshop	Darwin
Oct 31st - Nov 2nd	TEDGP - PAD Workshop	Darwin
Nov 1st - 3rd	NTGPE - GP Registrar Workshop 2006.2	Alice Springs
Nov 13th	Healthy Living NT - World Diabetes Day	National
Nov 14th - 16th	DOHA - 2006 Biennial Health Conference	Sydney
Nov 24th - 31st	NT Aids Council - AIDS Awareness Week	Darwin
For more information please contact ntgpe, email <a href="mailto:admin@ntgpe.org">admin@ntgpe.org</a> or phone 08 8946 7077		

## Staffing news & update

**Dr Vathany Shanmugalingam** commenced with NTGPE on 1 August as a Medical Educator based in Darwin and focusing on the GP registrar program and the OTD program.

**Bianca Doyle** commenced 24 July full time in the role of Receptionist and will provide broad administrative support to programs and staff.

**Vanessa Phillips** commenced 24 July part time as the Administration Assistant in Darwin, Vanessa will provide valuable support to our programs.

**Anthony (Tony) Lane** commences 31 July full time in the role of Finance Manager, Tony comes with a broad financial management background having worked with organisations such as banks and insurance companies, stockbroking firms and the Grain Pool of WA. He has worked in various locations around Australia and New Guinea. He grew up and commenced his working life in Darwin

### Dr David (Jim) Thurley

Commences on 1 August part time as the International Medical Graduate Educator, based in Alice Springs. It is really a welcome back to NTGPE, with Jim having worked with us previously. This new role will coordinate all aspects of medical education and inculturalisation to Australia for doctors trained overseas and wishing to work in Australia

### Leonard Scicutella MD FRACGP FFAFP

Recently joined on the 18th September as a Medical Educator. His clinical practice is at the Cavenagh Medical Centre in Darwin. Leonard comes from an extensive background in Medical Education in the US. Leonard's role at NTGPE will be working with GP Registrars and Supervisors.

### Heather Traeger

Commenced with NTGPE in July as our new Human Resources and Quality Manager. Heather has a background working in the Health sector having been previously employed by the Dept of Health and Community Services supporting Undergraduate Nursing Training. Heather has also been involved in HR and Industrial Relations management in her role as a Board Member of the Industrial Relations Society of the NT.

### Staff Role Changes

**Kevin Parriman** has taken on a broader NT wide role, particularly relating to building relationships with our key stakeholders, Community Elders and in managing liaison between Community members and Doctors specifically around Men's health business.

**Glen Wallace** has taken on a broader role in CA, his new title being Corporate Services Manager. This role provides a central point for all matters relating to corporate administration and operations management for staff in CA, as well as service delivery to clients throughout the region. Glen will manage marketing and public relations activities, financial delegations and has responsibility for the Corporate Services budget for Central Australia. This position will play a key role in strategic planning, developing contract proposals and business strategies on matters relating to Corporate Services Central Australia.

### Farewell

A farewell afternoon tea was held to celebrate **Felippe's** overseas excursion to spend some time in his new wife's country. We wish Felipe all the very best with his new life and no doubt will see him back in Darwin in a year or so.