

## From the RAMUS Team

Welcome to the April 2018 issue of the RAMUS Newsletter.

This newsletter contains the announcement of the 2018 Mentor Award recipients. Congratulations to Dr Neil Africa, who was nominated by Matthew Kenworthy; Dr Cyril Latt who was nominated by Jyoti Maulder; and Dr Ian Bruce who was nominated by Naomi Clements. It is wonderful to see these Mentors acknowledged for the effort they put into mentoring their RAMUS scholars.

Also included in this edition are some excerpts from 2018 completing scholar reports.

The next RAMUS newsletter will be issued in late June. Contributions (including photos) and suggestions are very welcome. Please send them to [ramus@ruralhealth.org.au](mailto:ramus@ruralhealth.org.au) by 15 June.

Best wishes

*Janine Snowie and the RAMUS Team*

## Keep your contact details up-to-date

Have you recently moved house or changed your email address? You can update your details online through the RAMUS website.

To update your details go to:

<http://ramus.ruralhealth.org.au/update-ramus-scholar-details>

## Scholar requirements now due

A reminder that Scholar Mentor Plans are now due.

Please try and connect with your Mentor when possible. They are committed to helping you so try and ensure you make the most of their support.

If for some reason you need to change Mentors, all you need to do is to contact me with your new Mentor's details.

Please ALSO ensure you are a member of your Rural Health Club as we will be confirming membership with the Clubs shortly.

## RAMUS on Facebook

Have you joined the RAMUS Facebook group yet?

The pages contains current RAMUS news, you can ask the RAMUS team questions or communicate with other RAMUS scholars, mentors and alumni.

To join the RAMUS Facebook group, go to: [www.facebook.com/groups/348490061904468/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/348490061904468/)

*Note: this is a closed Facebook group, exclusively for RAMUS scholars, mentors and alumni.*

## RAMUS Mentor Awards

There were three very worthy winners of the 2018 RAMUS Mentor Award.

### **Dr Neil Africa – nominated by Matthew Kenworthy.**



It is with great pleasure that I nominate Dr Neil Africa for the RAMUS Mentor Awards.

For the last four years, Neil has been an invaluable mentor. He has guided me through the joys and challenges of studying medicine, and was the person I endeavoured to become over this journey.

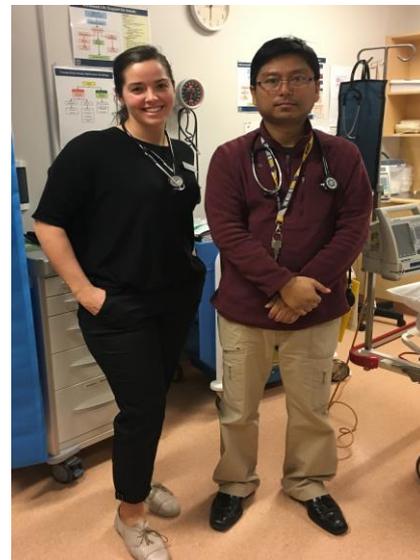
While Neil has continually assisted me to develop my skills in regards to the science and art of medicine, it is the way he individually cares for each of his patients, taking an interest in their own lives, and individual experiences to ensure their optimal care that I most admire.

Neil has a wide range of patients including people who are of refugee and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background. Neil's passion to care for people in unmet needs has also inspired my own drive to do the same. This year I spent time in an Aboriginal healthcare centre in Geraldton volunteering with one of the local Communities. During previous years I have spent over two months volunteering in a remote healthcare centre in Uganda providing medical care in an area once deemed so poor that it was called 'mission impossible' and had one of the

highest rates of HIV aids and orphans in the world. Neil has played an instrumental role by leading as a role model for myself in his endeavour for social justice and has continued to nurture one's desire to work in rural Australia.

I support Dr. Neil Africa's nomination with great enthusiasm and no reservation. Simply put, I could not have done this without you Neil. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

### **Dr Cyril Latt – nominated by Jyoti Maulder**



My name is Jyoti Maulder, I graduated from the University of Tasmania in 2018 and was lucky enough to have had Dr Cyril Latt from St Mary's Tasmanian as my RAMUS mentor throughout my undergraduate studies.

Over the multiple placements across the years of my medical degree, Dr Latt provided a dynamic and enriching learning environment. I was always given the opportunity to be involved in patient care to whatever capacity my current skill set allowed, from consultations in the GP clinic, to community hospital rounds or procedural skills in the emergency room. Each year as I progressed I was given more autonomy. In final years I saw my own patients, developed management plans and was able to see the results of the

plans in follow up consults. These experiences showed me, first hand, the diversity and rewarding nature of rural medicine, not to mention, provided me with an excellent preparation to my current internship.

During my time at St Mary's I witnessed the unique and special relationship an experienced, caring and dedicated rural general practitioner has with their community. The trust that is built by practitioners such as Dr Latt, has a profound impact on rural communities, their participation in health care and thus, overall health outcomes.

I would like to recognise Dr Latt not only for his outstanding support for learning and generosity with teaching, but also, for his inspirational and exceptional commitment and service to the community of St Marys, Tasmania.

### **Dr Ian Bruce – nominated by Naomi Clements**



I would like to nominate my RAMUS mentor, Dr Ian Stewart, for mentor of the year. We have been meeting regularly for 5 years now – beginning in high school, continuing contact through 2014 when I deferred my medical degree, and now as I have passed the halfway point in my degree.

Dr Stewart assisted me in editing my Phase 2 reflective portfolio early in the year, knowing I

was disappointed with the marks from my Phase 1 submission. His advice and support boosted my confidence and I was rewarded with far better marks in my subsequent report. Additionally, he made himself available for regular meetings (prompting me if I ever fell out of contact for a few weeks!) and was always ready to work around my schedule.

He attended the Riverina Medical and Surgical Symposium, where I presented a poster based on my ILP work this year. The attached photo is from that conference, and it meant so much to have him there, especially as I was so intimidated to be presenting for the first time at a formal event.

### **Thoughts from Completing Scholars**

“Ultimately, this year has been an adventure I will never forget. I have made many friends, learned more than just book smarts and reconsolidated my practical skills. I intend to use all of this knowledge as I head into my internship at Cairns Hospital, with my first rotation being in Mareeba, a nearby regional town. This year has left me in excellent standing for the work to come, and I am as confident as I could possibly have hoped to be. I have so much to thank the RAMUS scheme and administration staff for. I could not have completed this degree or had time to do nearly as many amazing rural placements without the financial aid I was given and I will be forever grateful. I look forward to remaining an alumnus of the program and being able to become a mentor myself in the years to come, or volunteer to help other students as my mentor has helped me!” (2018 Completing Scholar)

“My elective placement was the most exciting part of my year, completed at the Ord Valley Aboriginal Health Service (OVAHS) in Kununurra, Western Australia. OVAHS is a healthcare hub for the Indigenous people of

the East Kimberley and encompasses Aboriginal Health Workers, three to four locum GPs, nurses and midwives, with visiting physicians, paediatricians, dentists, podiatrists and physiotherapists. OVAHS also performs remote outreach to isolated communities in the East Kimberley to provide access to healthcare for Indigenous people who find it difficult to travel to Kununurra. Furthermore, the clinic employs a full-time social worker and a psychologist, as well as dedicated health promotion officers – the ‘Tackling Indigenous Smoking’ team (also known as ‘Nuff of the Puff’) and the Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) team.

My role at OVAHS was variable each day. I had my own consulting room to see patients, take histories, do examinations, measure vital signs, perform wound assessments and dressings, complete cervical screenings and take venepunctures. The GPs and nurses were welcoming and encouraging, teaching me at every opportunity. When an antenatal or paediatric clinic was on, or a physician visiting from Broome or Perth was in town, I was able to sit in on these consults. I also worked with the remote outreach clinics and accompanied the health promotion staff on offsite visits.

As a result of my placement in Kununurra, I believe I am more aware of the medical conditions, particularly chronic disease issues, facing Indigenous patients and I feel more confident talking with them about the social aspects of their life. I have a deeper understanding of the problems facing doctors and patients in rural and remote settings, and I appreciate the barriers to healthcare that come with this.

OVAHS provided me with a well-rounded education in Aboriginal Health, as not only was I able to participate in clinical care, but I could learn from the public health officers and see the results of their work in the community.” (2018 Completing Scholar)

“When I first got accepted into medical school, I had no idea what the journey would encompass. The RAMUS program has allowed me to connect with the most amazing doctors who have become my daily inspiration when interacting with patients. I have tried to integrate some of their methods for patient rapport and professionalism into my clinical manner when interacting with patients. I believe that this year has been one of the most rewarding and eye-opening, allowing me to really practice the type of doctor I want to be. I believe that none of this would have been possible without the aid and mentorship of the RAMUS program and my RAMUS mentor.

Over the past six years, RAMUS and my mentor have helped to nurture me from a shy but eager teenager into the confident and inspired doctor I am today. I was successful in securing my internship in Cairns Hospital in 2019 and through the inspiration of the RAMUS program have chosen to undertake a rural GP rotation in Babinda.

I’m not 100% sure where the next few years will take me in my career. However, I am certain that I will continue to keep in contact with my RAMUS mentor, always prefer to work rurally and regionally and will never forget the assistance that RAMUS facilitated throughout my medical school days. One day I hope to become a mentor and pass on my advice and experiences to inspire young medical students about rural and remote medicine.” (2018 Completing Scholar)

## Australia Journal of Rural Health

The April 2019 issue of AJRH is now available online. Workforce issues are prominent in this issue. Contents include:

- Are all rural placements created equal? A national study of placement experiences among multidisciplinary health students
- Effectiveness of regional medical schools in attracting and retaining students for early-career practice in the local area: The James Cook University experience
- Rural pharmacy workforce: Influence of curriculum and clinical placement on pharmacists' choice of rural practice
- Making rural health care better: How to attract interns to rural hospitals
- Doctors' rural practice self-efficacy is associated with current and intended small rural locations of practice
- Quality of acute stroke care in a regional Victorian hospital, Australia
- Successful implementation of a medication safety program for Aboriginal Health Practitioners in rural Australia
- Prevalence and outcomes of overweight and obesity amongst pregnant women in rural Queensland
- Efficacy of a remote screening model for oral potentially malignant disorders using a free messaging application: A diagnostic test for accuracy study



### AJRH Short Reports:

In addition, there are articles on:

- Stage at presentation for head and neck cancer in the Top End of the Northern Territory
- Preferences and attitudes to mobile phone and Internet-based cardiac rehabilitation maintenance programs in rural Australia
- Rural origin students match metropolitan origin students' academic performance once admitted to Bachelor of Medicine Bachelor of Surgery course
- Use of clinical quality indicators to improve lung cancer care in a regional/rural network of health services

## University Survival Guide

The Country Education Foundation of Australia has created a University Survival Guide for rural and regional students to help make the transition of moving away from home to pursue study or jobs just that little bit easier. Head to their website to find more:

<https://cef.org.au/students/uniguide/>



## Indemnity and insurance

As a RAMUS scholar, it is your responsibility to ensure that you have the appropriate indemnity insurance cover if you are undertaking supervised clinical activity as part of your RAMUS-related rural activities; such as during visits to or placements with your RAMUS mentor.

You may be asked by medical practices or health services to provide evidence of your indemnity insurance cover.

Don't assume that your RAMUS rural activities are automatically covered by the university's indemnity and insurance arrangements for medical students. You should check whether the planned activities are included in your university indemnity insurance cover. Those that do not form part of your formal university course and curriculum requirements may not be covered.

You can consider joining a medical defence organisation (MDO) that provides medical indemnity insurance. Several MDOs offer special packages for medical students for free or at low cost

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RAMUS is managed by the National Rural Health Alliance Ltd on behalf of the Australian Government



[www.ruralhealth.org.au](http://www.ruralhealth.org.au)