RAMUS Newsletter
RURAL AUSTRALIA MEDICAL UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP

May 2016 Newsletter for RAMUS Scholars, Mentors and Alumnus

From the RAMUS Team

Welcome to the April 2016 issue of the RAMUS Newsletter and to all the new scholars who have commenced their scholarship this year.

This issue contains the announcement of the 2015 mentor award winners. Congratulations to Dr Richard Bills and Dr Horst Herb for their outstanding contribution to RAMUS through mentoring RAMUS recipients.

Also included are helpful tips for new scholars and an outline of the April issue of the **Australian Journal of Rural Health** (AJRH). Scholars have free online access to the AJRH through the RAMUS website.

Best wishes,

The RAMUS Team
Lesley and Janine

RAMUS Mentor Awards

Dr Richard Bills and Dr Horst Herb have been recognised as the RAMUS Mentors of the Year for 2015. Congratulations to both Doctors.

Richard Bills is based at the Brooke Street Medical Centre in Woodend, VIC.

He was nominated by RAMUS scholar Catherine Smale, who he has mentored for the past 3 years.

In her nomination Catherine talks about Richard and the inspiration he has been to her:

"Over the past 3 years Dr Bills has organised multiple placements in my areas of interest mainly indigenous health and been an excellent mentor. I have had the opportunity to participate in placements all over Australia including Wilcannia NSW and Gunbalanya NT where I have developed my clinical skills and my passion for rural and remote health. Through these placements I have built on experiences and developed connections that will transfer into my future practice. These have all been possible because Dr Bills has shown an interest in improving my skills and broadening my knowledge. I also had the pleasure of being taught by Dr Bills and many other excellent GPs at Brooke Street Medical Centre in Woodend during my General Practice rotation in 2014. He is dedicated to education and is always happy to answer questions and offer advice when I need it. The experience I have had during medical school has been enhanced by the opportunity to be mentored and taught by Dr Bills and I believe he is very deserving of recognition of his contribution to medical student education."

Dr Richard Bills

Dr Horst Herb has been a RAMUS mentor since 2015 and was nominated by RAMUS scholar Heidrun Herb.

Doctor Horst Herb is based in Dorrigo NSW.

Heidrun's nomination clearly depicts the great relationship they share:

"I would like to nominate my RAMUS mentor, Dr. Horst Herb, for the RAMUS mentor awards to recognise the effort he put in to make my placement at his rural practice one that enriched my knowledge and inspired me to work and live in a rural area.

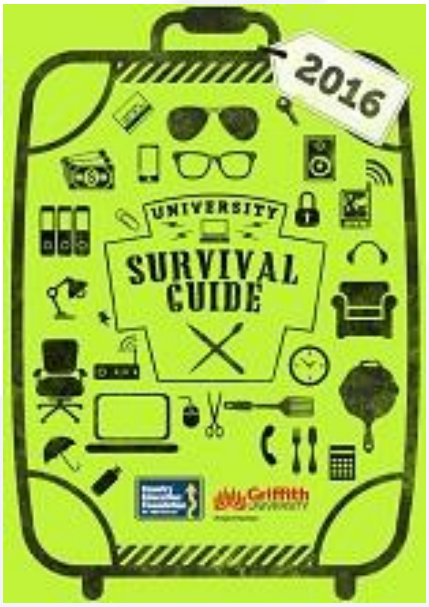
Horst currently works at the local hospital and the nursing home attached to it as well as running a busy solo practice, where patients typically have to wait 5 weeks to get an appointment. It is amazing that despite his work load he still takes the time to make sure his patients understand what is happening instead of rushing through appointments. As well as taking time for his patients he took time to explain procedures and conditions to me as well as allowing me to practice procedures and examination skills I had previously learnt as well as teaching me new ones. I found myself constantly on my tip toes as he frequently quizzed me or asked me to explain something to a patient. He also ran an introductory ultrasound course after work because I professed interest and taught me how to set up the mobile X-ray machine at the hospital. Moreover he organised for me to attend an Emergency Management of the Sick Child course (EMET Clinical Emergency Training) run at the Dorrigo Hospital, which allowed me to see how an emergency situation is handled in the hospital setting as well as highlighting the importance of teamwork between doctors and nurses. He also found the time to engage in weekly skype lessons to discuss and extend cases I had covered at university. This greatly enriched my learning as it allowed me to integrate the theory we had learnt into practice as well as allowing me to discuss assumptions and theories I had come up with.

In summary I find that my mentor deserves recognition for going above and beyond what is expected and to whom is patient care and education of his students is so important."

Dr Horst Herb

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 out more: https://cef.org.au/students/uniguide/



Tips for New Scholars

If you have started your scholarship this year you will be finding a RAMUS mentor and working with them on a scholar-mentor plan for the first time.

Finding a mentor

Finding a mentor for RAMUS is not as daunting as it might sound. In the first instance, we encourage you to use your existing contacts or networks; for example by approaching a doctor from your home district or a rural doctor with whom you already have an informal mentoring relationship or with whom you undertake rural placements.

If you are having difficulty in arranging a mentor, the RAMUS team will be happy to help. We maintain details of current and previous mentors and a register of former scholars who are available to be RAMUS mentors.

An ideal mentor is an experienced rural doctor (not necessarily a GP) who is able to give you support and advice and to facilitate opportunities for you to experience and learn about rural medicine and rural communities. Your mentor should be currently practising in a rural or remote location; that is, ASGC-RA categories 2-5.

As a scholar it will be up to you to maintain regular contact with your mentor by phone, email or social media and by arranging face-to-face meetings. You should aim to have face-to-face contact at least once a year. Therefore we suggest that you should approach a doctor either from your home town or a location where such contact will be possible.

For more information about the RAMUS mentoring program, have a look at the **Information for New RAMUS Scholars 2016** booklet available at: http://ramus.ruralhealth.org.au/tips

Preparing your RAMUS scholar-mentor plan

One of the RAMUS requirements is that scholars, with the help of their mentor, prepare an annual plan for rural activities. The annual plan is documented on the scholar-mentor plan form.

This annual planning exercise provides structure and guidance for your relationship with your mentor and for your exposure to rural practice and rural life over the years of your scholarship. We also hope it will help you in your longer term decisions about a career in rural health.

The **Guide to Preparing your Scholar-Mentor Plan** is available at http://ramus.ruralhealth.org.au/tips and includes suggestions and examples from plans of current scholars who are at different stages in their degrees.

Continuing scholars requirements now overdue

Due 30 April 2016

- Scholar–Mentor Plan 2016
- Please ensure you are a member of your university's rural health club

Thank you to all who have already sent in their plan for the year.

New scholars

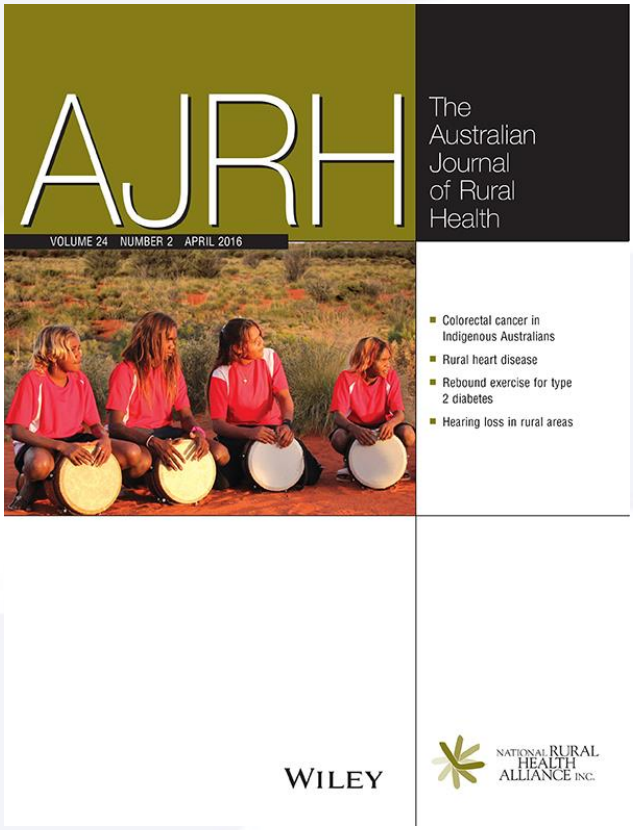
Please organise your mentor, prepare your Scholar-Mentor Plan and make sure you are a member of your university's rural health club within two months of being offered a full scholarship.

RAMUS is on Facebook

Stay up to date with RAMUS news, ask RAMUS a question or communicate with other RAMUS scholars, mentors and alumni.

To join the RAMUS Facebook group, go to: http://www.facebook.com/groups/348490061904468/

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



Australian Journal of Rural Health

RAMUS scholars have free online access to the Australian Journal of Rural Health (AJRH). Access is through the RAMUS website: http://ramus.ruralhealth.org.au/ajrh

The April 2016 issue of AJRH is now available online. Contents include:

- three articles on aspects of cancer care in rural settings
- articles on preventive treatment of cardiovascular disease
- results of a study of rebound exercise in type 2 diabetes
- a comparison of rural – urban hearing loss
- associations between mining and violence in Western Australia

Don't forget you don't have to wait for the most recent articles. AJRH now offers Early View – online access to the latest papers accepted for publication. Recent topics include:

- Determinants of rural Australian primary health care worker retention: A synthesis of key evidence and implications for policymaking
- Secondary fracture prevention needs to happen in the country too: The first two and a half years of the Coffs Fracture Prevention Clinic
- Coordination of diabetic retinopathy screening in the Kimberley region of Western Australia
- Examining health and well-being outcomes associated with mining activity in rural communities of high-income countries: A systematic review
- Increasing trend in the frequency of sports injuries treated at an Australian regional hospital

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 them, go to: http://ramus.ruralhealth.org.au/update-ramus-scholar-details

14th National Rural Health Conference

The biennial National Rural Health Conference has a unique reputation as a meeting place, for the vibrant exchange of positive solutions for the health needs of rural communities, and as the source of a strong united voice for rural people.

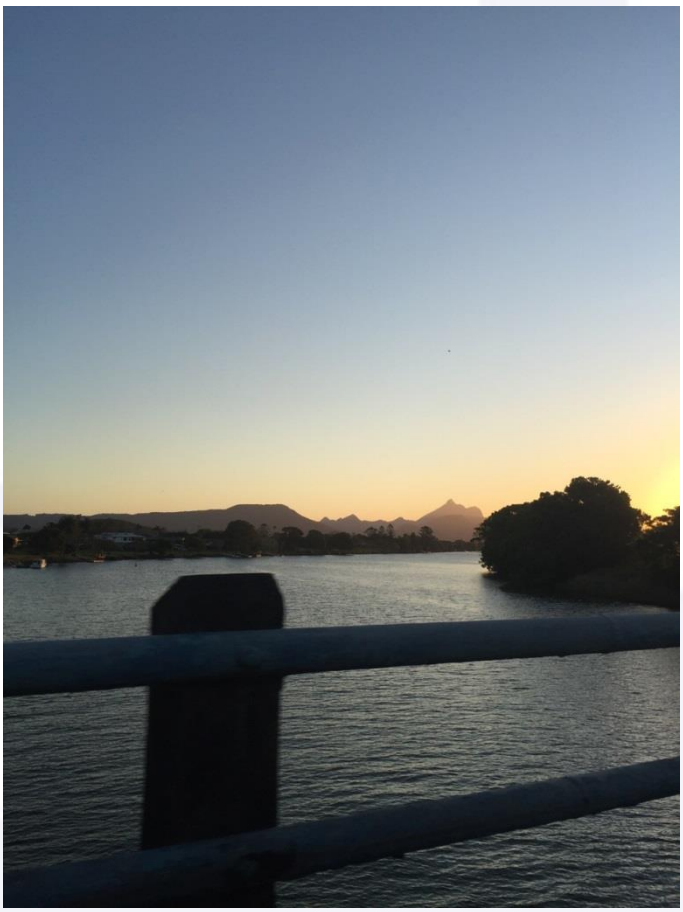
The 14th National Rural Health Conference will be held on 26-29 April 2017 in Cairns and we hope there will be plenty of students there to inject their youthful enthusiasm into the event. Why not consider submitting an abstract?

http://www.ruralhealth.org.au/14nrhc/homepage

Scholar experiences

Scholars have kindly sent in photos from the adventures undertaken last year. Thank you to all scholars that sent in photos with their scholar reports and a particular thank you to Ty Drake and Peter Richter for the images below.

Ty Drake, completed his scholarship in 2015



Peter Richter