

## From the RAMUS Team

Welcome to the May 2017 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 2016 mentor award winners. Congratulations to Dr Neil Africa, Dr Anna Glue and Dr Clare Garner for their outstanding contribution to RAMUS through mentoring RAMUS recipients.

Also included is 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*

### Continuing scholars requirements now overdue

#### Due 30 April 2017

- Scholar–Mentor Plan 2017

Please ensure you are a member of your university's rural health club, we will be contacting the clubs shortly to confirm membership.

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

## 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*

## RAMUS Mentor Awards

**Dr Neil Africa, Dr Anna Glue and Dr Clare Garner have been recognised as the RAMUS Mentors of the Year for 2016. Congratulations to each of the Doctors.**

### Dr Neil Africa is a GP based in Torquay, VIC.

He was nominated by Jessie-Anne and Matthew Kenworthy, who he has mentored for 2 years.

In their nomination Jessie-Anne and Matthew write about Neil and the inspiration he has been to them.

Jessie-Anne wrote "I have just graduated from university and for the last five years Neil has been my mentor. Without Neil, I am unsure how I would have survived my medical training. I volunteered in an extremely rural health centre in Mannyra/Uganda for several months in my holiday breaks, where there was no electricity or running water, one highlight was delivering ten babies on one of my visits. Neil encouraged me during this period. He is a perfect role model who provides client centred care, and shows a lot of passion in his daily work. He is very caring and knowledgeable. I will try to follow in his footsteps as a Doctor. I am so proud that I was successful in graduating and I know that I owe most of my success to the support and encouragement that Neil has given me as my mentor. I would love to be a rural GP like Neil as I have learnt the rewards that a GP can find in supporting clients in rural areas. I believe the RAMUS Mentor program is fantastic and hope other students have the opportunity to have a wonderful, inspirational mentor such as Dr Neil Africa".

Matthew added that "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 sister's and my own drive to do the same. This year I volunteered in the Kimberly's while my sister spent time in Alice Spring volunteering with one of the local Aboriginal Communities. During previous years my sister and I have spent over six months combined 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 us in our endeavour for social justice and has continued to nurture our desire to work in rural Australia.

We support Dr. Neil Africa nomination with great enthusiasm and no reservation. Simply put we could not have done this without you Neil.



*Dr Neil Africa*

**Dr Anna Glue has been a RAMUS Mentor since 2015 and was nominated by Daniel Wilson.**

**Dr Glue is based in** Ballarat, VIC.

In his nomination, Daniel said:

Under the guidance and mentorship of Dr Anna Glue, my personal and professional networks and skills have flourished. I am nominating Dr Glue for the deserved position of Mentor of the Year due to her ongoing support, breadth of knowledge and wisdom regarding the Australian rural health system, and persistence at ensuring I develop as a junior health care professional.

From only two years of our professional mentoring relationship, Dr Glue has enriched my understanding of the Australian health care workforce and increased my prospects for skilled work in the near future. Her passion for regional and rural health is undying; ensuring I am well equipped both in knowledge by attending conferences (RMA 2015 and 2016, RESP/EMET 2016) and clinical experience through regional placements (Gympie QLD, Mareeba QLD, Cairns

QLD, Wangaratta VIC, Ballarat VIC). This passion for regional health care (and particularly, education in health care) has nurtured my interest in medical education and my decided future to work in rural areas of shortage in Australia.

Most notably, Dr Glue has gone beyond the demands of the RAMUS Mentor, acting as a reliable confidante to reflect and debrief during demanding times of my medical career. As health care professionals, we may be confronted by daunting and corporeal realities of our work; and as such, many of us turn for another to confide and seek advice. Dr Glue has been this individual, offering personal and professional advice, which has been invaluable in such times.

Dr Glues' clinical experience and knowledge of regional training pathways has allowed me to appreciate the variety of career options available to me, particularly in the fields of General Practice and Women's Health. Dr Glue continues to encourage my professionalism and enrich my professional networks whilst simultaneously supporting avenues for future clinical practice within the local Ballarat region.

In the short two years that Dr Glue and I have established a mentoring relationship, a strong friendship has also developed. Dr Glue has actively worked beyond the demands of the RAMUS Mentor by pursuing the best opportunities to enrich my appreciation of Australian regional and rural health care.



*Dr Anna Glue*

**Dr Clare Garner has been a RAMUS Mentor since 2016 and is a former RAMUS scholar. Caitlin Fiegert has nominated her for a 2016 RAMUS Mentor award.**

Dr Clare Garner is a GP based in Naracoorte, SA.

In her nomination, Caitlin said:

In 2016 and hopefully for the duration of my RAMUS Scholarship, I chose Dr Clare Garner as my mentor. Having known Clare through living in Lucindale SA, I made no hesitation in asking her to mentor me. She has been nothing but brilliant during my first year of medical school. Initially I found the transition from high school student to university student a somewhat difficult adjustment, having just finished year 12 where regularly high marks and a competitive nature were the norm. Clare explained to me before I left for Townsville that it is important to not only try my best but to find balance in my life. Medical School is a long journey and it is important to enjoy it by making friends and having a life outside of studying. This encouraged me to become more involved in my college and in sport and I found not only was I happy in my new city of Townsville, I was also doing better than I expected in my academic life due to finding the crucial balance to life as a medical student.

Whenever I am feeling low in confidence, I know I can always turn to Clare. She is a former RAMUS scholar and such a bright, vibrant person. Through her own experience, she encourages me to keep working towards my dream of becoming a valued and respected doctor someday. I find that Clare and I are very alike which makes her not only a great mentor but also a good friend, someone I can talk about both my trials as a student and my experiences as a young adult. For this reason, I am most excited to conduct my part of my placement with her in January 2017. Her constant support and motivation is invaluable to me and I am ever so grateful that I chose Clare to be my mentor. She has helped me to be a balanced student and taught me that I do not have to be the best so long as I try my best. Clare is the epitome of the type of doctor I hope to be when I graduate - highly respected, increasingly well liked and above all a vital part of her rural community, understanding that the key to it all is a balanced life. I have no hesitation in nominating Clare for the RAMUS Mentor of the Year; she is truly inspiring to me, and an invaluable mentor for this program.



*Dr Clare Garner*

## 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/>



## Indemnity and insurance

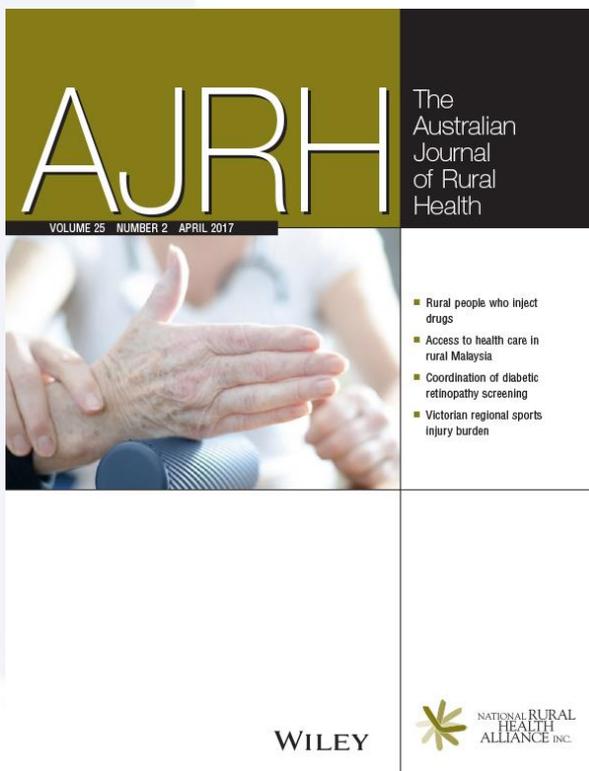
As a RAMUS scholar, it is your responsibility to ensure that you have the appropriate indemnity insurance cover if you are undertaking supervised clinical activity as part of your RAMUS-related rural activities; such as during visits to or placements with your RAMUS mentor.

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.

For more details, please see the statement on indemnity and insurance at [ramus.ruralhealth.org.au/scholars](http://ramus.ruralhealth.org.au/scholars)



## 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 2017 issue of AJRH is now available online.**

**Contents include:**

- Building a sustainable workforce in a rural and remote health service: A comprehensive and innovative Rural Generalist training approach;
- Rural people who inject drugs: A cross-sectional survey addressing the dimensions of access to secondary needle and syringe program outlets;
- Coordination of diabetic retinopathy screening in the Kimberley region of Western Australia; and
- The impact of extensive loss of telecommunications on general practice: A case study in rural Victoria.

## 14<sup>th</sup> National Rural Health Conference

The 14th National Rural Health Conference was held from 26 - 29 May 2015 at the Cairns Convention Centre in northern Queensland. Below are excerpts from the reports of scholars who attended the conference with support from the RAMUS 14th National Rural Health Conference Bursary.



*Trade exhibition*

“Speakers and delegates from the conference also provided useful information on what it’s like to live and work in rural communities. Prior to attending the conference, I could only draw on my own personal experiences from childhood, and recently,

some placements that I've spent working in rural areas. Throughout the conference, however, I became well-educated on many aspects of rural living and how to tackle many of the challenges I will be presented with in the future. Some valuable comments were made about how to; address confidentiality issues in rural towns, increase access to services, minimise gaps in health literacy, combat detrimental health behaviours that are more prominent rurally (e.g. alcohol misuse) and how to fulfil your role as both a medical professional and valued member of the community." - Eliza

"The rest of the conference was a mixture of exciting plenaries and break away concurrent sessions. One particular concurrent session stream that I went to that I found particularly interesting was the Ageing and living well stream. I have just finished my Aged care rotation at uni where I have had a wonderful time and was particularly interested to hear the speakers talk about some of the challenges that people face rurally in the field as well as some of the recent research that has been done to try and combat some of these challenges. One of the research projects that was presented was an interesting idea of developing an app for elderly people to use in rural locations to increase the ability to find services in a rural or regional setting. They had some interesting approaches and the study showed some success in the trials that had been conducted." - Thomas



*MC Catherine King*

"The conference began with a truly exceptional welcome to country and smoke ceremony and I was relieved to see some familiar faces in attendance. The conference followed on from this ceremony with the theme of Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander health flowing through many of the conference sessions. One particularly engaging presentation was Professor Gracelyn Smallwood's "Integrating different world views of health and wellbeing" where she outlined many of the well meaning attempts to improve indigenous health which have failed due to a lack of cultural awareness and a disregard for the individual needs of different communities." - Robert



*14<sup>th</sup> NRHC Conference dinner*

"Overall the National Rural Health Conference was a valuable experience in terms of furthering my knowledge of rural medicine, extending my network of medical and allied health contacts, and broadening my horizons in regards to practicing medicine in rural and remote Australia." - Evangeline

"It is common knowledge that workforce maldistribution is one of the largest issues in improving health outcomes in rural Australia. Attending a session presented by Leanne Brown, I was not surprised to hear that trial data had observed medical students of rural origin were 2.35 times more likely to end up working in rural Australia. However, it was interesting to hear that medical students of an urban background, who completed a rural placement term during their training were approximately 4 times more likely to work in a rural location. In my opinion there are many policy changes that can be achieved to improve rural health outcomes and to decrease the maldistribution of medical professionals, the most beneficial being ALL medical students required to undertake a rural placement of suitable length." - Michael