

Newsletter

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Student Experiences Samoa Tsunami

Kirsty Campbell

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NTCS NEWSLETTER

Please contact Velda Mazoudier on 08 8972 2072 or velda.mazoudier@flinders.edu.au with any stories you would like to have published in the next edition.

Editors: Velda Mazoudier and Lila Loveard

The 8.3 magnitude earthquake that rocked Samoa at approximately 7AM on Tuesday September 29 came as a massive shock to this small island nation – it was nothing compared with what was to come. The quake's duration was about three minutes long and anecdotally the worst experienced in a lifetime. Despite there being little obvious structural damage to properties, the tsunami warning sirens alarmed within half an hour, sending most of the capital, Apia's, residents "heading for the hills." Fortunately, Samoa had introduced tsunami drills within the last year, so residents knew how to respond.

Within a few hours of the earthquake, the phone lines became jammed and the internet ceased working – there was little way to contact anyone. At this time, most of the information coming in about the earthquake and possible tsunami were all from American Samoa and little was known about the independent Samoa. It was at about this time that news spread via word of mouth that the south coast had been ravaged by tsunami and the fatalities were climbing. In Apia, however, people were still being encouraged to stay on high ground.

Late afternoon marked the arrival of the first corpses and casualties from the worst affected areas – the



Lalomanu Beach, Samoa

marked delay due to significant debris and damage to the roads in addition to limited facilities with which to transport these people.

Overnight, the surgical ward was filled with survivors from the tsunami, and the Paediatric ward was converted into the Tsunami Ward. The Samoan doctors worked around the clock in those first few days, fighting fatigue and distress. Fortunately, being school holidays in Australia and New Zealand, a number of doctors and health professionals were already holidaying in Samoa and began flooding into the hospital to volunteer their services. Unfortunately though, there were countless tasks to be done, and many hands to help, but no-one was overseeing the activities and directing people about the best ways to help – this compounded

with very minimal resources ultimately meant that most people were just standing around trying to help.

It was not until the military and medical teams arrived from Australia and New Zealand over the ensuing days, heavily laden with makeshift theatres and tonnes of emergency medical and civil supplies, that the hospital began to effectively manage the situation. For weeks thereafter, all theatre lists were dedicated purely to the recovery of the tsunami victims with numerous orthopaedic procedures being performed along with general wound debridements.

The tsunami ward was officially closed on Friday 23rd October after the last patient was discharged. Continued over page...

Student Experiences Samoa Tsunami cont...

From page 1.... During the period of its operation, it treated the one hundred patients hospitalised at Tupua Tamasese Meaole Hospital (Samoa's National Hospital), as a result of the tsunami, and performed a total of 134 surgical procedures. The death toll in independent Samoa, as recorded by the Police was 142.



Roadside damage, Samoa

At present, Samoa is attempting to minimise the effects of the mass displacement of those who survived the

tsunami to makeshift communities on higher ground. In addition to this, the clean-up continues, along with the provision of fresh, clean water and other basic living needs, such as food, clothing and tents. With this devastation occurring just weeks before the commencement of the wet season, the health departments are now very concerned about the spread of infectious diseases, such as gastroenteritis and Dengue Fever.

Unfortunately, one of the worst facts regarding the tsunami is that it destroyed countless beachside resorts – the south coast was lined with accommodation for those on any budget and provided the vast majority of Samoa's tourism industry. Lalomanu Beach, considered to be Samoa's most beautiful, was the community that was the worst affected by the tsunami, in addition to the villages of Poutasi, Saleapaga, Siumu and those along the Aleipata coast-

line, where homes and livelihoods were equally destroyed, displacing hundreds of subsistence fishing and farming families to makeshift inland settlements. Despite this, the communities and resort owners of the South Coast endeavour to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the tsunami with a grand re-opening. It seems such a shame that at a time like this, when the local economy needs any boost it can get, that its main industry has been decimated. The stoic, united and positive nature of the Samoan people really shines through though, with the national attitude being that of rebuild and reopen.

With the hospital back to its usually capacity and activities, and the clean-up and rebuilding process continuing on a daily basis, one can only hope that from this grows a stronger and happier Samoa.

International Visitors

Lila Loveard

The NT Clinical School in Darwin had the pleasure of hosting four visiting academics from South East Asian medical schools on Monday 19 October. Guests from the Philippines included Dr Fortunato Cristobal, Founding Dean of the Ateneo de Zamboanga University School of Medicine (ZMSF) in Mindanao, and Dr Rex Samson, graduate alumni and now a member of the school's teaching staff. Ateneo de Zamboanga's School of Medicine was developed with a radical vision to create a home-grown health workforce for this under served and war-torn region of the Philippines. The innovations of the medical school are now being shared with other countries especially in Southeast Asia, including the newest medical school in Indonesia at the University of Nusa Cendana, in Kupang, Indonesia.

Two members of the University of

Nusa Cendana joined the Philippine guests in Darwin - Dr Heru Tjahyono, Dean, Faculty of Medicine and Dr Nicholas Edwin, Lecturer, Faculty of Medicine. This new medical school is looking to other universities, including Flinders, to assist it develop its program to improve the health outcomes of the people living in the towns and villages of this developing region.



While in Darwin Dr Cristobal presented an informative Menzies lunch time seminar with the topic 'Medical Education for Health Development: The Philippine Experience'. Dr Cristobal elaborated on the ZMSF's vision as a medical school whose curriculum combines competency and problem based instruction with experiential learning in the community, responsive to the changing patterns of health care development and the needs of communities, sensitive to the social and cultural realities of Western Mindanao and imbued with the belief that they exist not only for themselves but also for others.

From Darwin the group visited Flinders University teaching sites in Alice Springs, Adelaide and rural South Australia.

From left—NTCS staff member Heather Burton, Dr Fortunato Cristobal, Dr Nicholas Edwin, Dr Heru Tjahyono and Dr Rex Samson

NTMP Update

Prof Paul Worley

Planning for the first full medical course in the NT is well advanced. Led by the NTMP Taskforce, a hand-picked team from CDU and Flinders in Darwin, Alice Springs, Adelaide and Renmark, a series of working groups are developing curriculum plans and admissions policies in preparation for an Accreditation report that is due in March 2010 to give the green light. This will be followed by a visit by the AMC in June, for students to arrive in January 2011.

This work is already influencing the existing Flinders course as together we grapple with how to continuously improve our course in the light of our School's commitment to have a positive impact on the current and future health outcomes of the communities we serve in the NT and SA.

In addition to this ground breaking work, the Building Working Group has created the plans for an inspiring environmentally sensitive building on the CDU campus that will be the home for the first two years of the medical course. This is a remarkable achievement in this timeframe and, by linking with the existing Biological Sciences building and the new Pharmacy building, will provide a state of the art bio-medical hub at the Casuarina campus.

Our Indigenous Reference Group has been established under the leadership of Associate Professor Dennis McDermott. With the generous support of the CRC for Aboriginal Health, this Group has brought together local and national leaders in Indigenous Health to give our course the best chance to make

a major contribution to closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous health outcomes in Australia.

The Northern Territory Medical Program is a national building initiative of importance to all Australians. Recent visits by Medical School Deans from West Timor and the Philippines have demonstrated the international interest and impact the program has created even in its planning phase. Two universities, two Governments, and a wide range of professional and cultural groups are partnering for this once in a generation opportunity. There is plenty more work that can be done, so please let us know if you would like to join us in growing our own medical workforce in the Territory.

NTMP Building Update

Geoff Veness

Design and planning work is well underway for the NTMP building to be constructed on the CDU Campus. This building will house GEMP years one and two. The architects are designing the building to a 5 Star Green Star Rating which classifies the building as a building of Australian Excellence in environmental sustainability.

Every effort is being made to ensure that this building is energy efficient in its design, construction and ongoing use. The building will incorporate the best technologies in teaching and curriculum delivery

for this unique program, with a strong emphasis on information technology and videoconference.

The building will have a definable Territory and Indigenous flavour. All dedicated spaces will flow out onto vegetated courtyards providing access to both indoor and outdoor learning spaces.

Construction is expected to begin in late January 2010 with a completion date of November 2010.



Above-Site of new NTMP Building at CDU

Below-Broad concept design of NTMP Building at CDU



NTCS Highlights 2009

Lila Loveard

- The Australian Government announced in May that it would provide \$27.8 million in infrastructure funding to support the establishment of a full medical program in the Northern Territory.
- Vice Chancellors of Flinders University and CDU signed letter of intent regarding the NT Medical Program in the presence of Federal Health Minister Nicola Roxon.
- NT Rural Clinical School Community Advisory Board meeting held in Nhulunbuy. This was attended by many distinguished guests including the Vice Chancellors of both Flinders University and CDU.
- Graduation of allied health NT quota students- Congratulations to Tait Suridge (Speech Pathology), Christine Cooper and Clare Brown (Nutrition & Dietetics). Clare was the first Dietetics student to undertake the degree through partnership with Charles Darwin University.
- NTCS website upgraded and part of the Flinders-wide web network and style.
www.ntmed.flinders.edu.au
- Allied Health research completed, culminating in focus groups with interested parties.
- Regional Community Week held again in Alice, Katherine and Nhulunbuy.
- Papers delivered at ANZAME and NTGPE conferences
- Greening the NT Clinical School Poster won best poster at the Tertiary Education Management Conference held in Darwin,
- NTCS a finalist in the Melaleuca Awards, which recognise environmental excellence.
- Student and staff database launched and named, AXON.
- Baker Building, joint project with the Baker Heart Foundation, completed in Alice Springs.

The Year Ahead 2010

- The commencement of the Graduate Diploma in Indigenous and Remote Child Health
- Continued planning for the launch of the NT Medical Program in 2011
- Staff recruitment for NT Medical Program
- NT Medical Program Curriculum Planning and mapping.
- Commencement of NTMP Building construction at CDU.

Alice Springs NTRCS News

Dr Kathy Williams

Semester 2 is completed, and we farewell our third year students- and look forward to seeing some of them again next year.

The semester timetable has continued to evolve, with intensive weeks in ophthalmology, renal medicine and anaesthetics.

Pharmacy tutorials in association with the local community pharmacy interns and pharmacists have given a great insight into clinical pharmacy, as well as continuing to educate me as

the facilitator. We are looking forward to continuing these, as well as including allied health students and supervisors in next year's tutorials.

We've completed another Regional Community Week and particularly enjoyed the opportunity it created for informal inter-year gatherings of Flinders students from years 2, 3 and 4. The inaugural virtual patient PBL was completed in the latter part of this semester- with a

view to changing all the Paediatric PBLs to this format for next year.

Teaching on the Run Training has started training hospital staff in preparation for supervising students.

Thanks to all our hard working supervisors and staff- have a great holiday season, and we look forward to working together again next year.

RACGP Graduation

Velda Mazoudier

Congratulations to Dr Charles Mutandwa, NTRCS Lecturer from Katherine, who graduated from RACGP with a Fellowship in Advance Rural General Practice (FARGP) and Graduate Diploma in Rural General Practice (GDRGP). The Graduation took place at the Darwin Airport Resort where three other Territorians were recipients of this prestigious Award.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OUR JCU AND FLINDERS UNIVERSITY FINAL YEAR STUDENTS WHO ARE GRADUATING!!! WE WISH YOU ALL THE BEST.



Katherine NTRCS News

Velda Mazoudier

September was an eventful month with students arriving for their Rural Community week placement. Students Meg Pilkington, Helen Selucky, Rose Turner & Dat Hyunh thoroughly enjoyed their stay in Katherine.

The students managed to complete their surveys and enjoy what Katherine has to offer. A presentation was made at Rotary with the NTRCS Local Advisory Group attending along with many Rotarians.

A visit to a Remote Community, Binjari, was an experience. The Tour Guide took them fishing

and swimming in the local water hole, while advising about crocodiles.

A trip to Katherine Gorge was also on the list. Mataranka Hot Springs was also a welcome site after a long hard day collecting surveys.

Year 3 students Lauren, Peter, Brigid & Meg have been slogging away with their studies and I feel they will be glad for the trip to Darwin for their final exams! A good excuse to meet their friends and have sessions to prepare for exams & enjoy what Darwin has to offer this time of year.

Dr Charles has been busy networking in our area as well as travelling to Melbourne for studies—he was there a week early as Tiger Woods (his hero) was there the following week...bad timing.

I have been going grey with the connection (IT) side of things—I think everyone in Katherine has been having the same problems.

Became a Grandmother twice in one week in October and have two more weddings (daughters) in the next 3 months—two to go then that's it..phew!!

Outlook on Alice

By Rural Package student Cheryl Wilson

Welcome to Alice. A town that has a great sense of humour. A town that brings the world to your doorstep. So, what brings this timid, reclusive Canadian to the centre of the Australian continent, you ask? Why, medical school, of course! The first stop on my Northern Territory Rural Package.

Alice Springs is a town that always seems to have something on the go. I landed just in time to partake in the Beanie Festival, in which the bizarre and spectacular is put on display and for your purchasing pleasure in the form of beanies. A multitude and myriad of beanies.

The show stopper that exemplifies the town's quirky style and the 'make do with what you've got' way of life was the Camel Cup. Ungainly, teetering camels lumbering up the racetrack with jockeys clinging to the swaying saddles in the midst of a throat choking cloud of dust; the Camel Cup. Sit back, cheer and have a good laugh (and ironically you can have a camel meat sandwich).

Markets on Sunday provide a mix of crafts, art, good food and friendly atmosphere.

While in Alice, we fourth year students are to have access to a four wheel drive Prado to enable us to enjoy the spectacular scenery in Central Australia. But first we had to prove ourselves, in the form of a 4WD course. Can't help but enjoy the idea that as part of my medical degree, one of the courses I'm taking is on 4 wheel driving through the desert.

There's always something to keep one busy. Such as school. And school took on the form of an Orthopaedic rotation for me. Ahh, my old stomping ground. Loved learning more about mus-

culoskeletal and seeing the surgeries I've rehabbed. Dr. Bandula, Dr. Jai and Dr. Sumedha were excellent teachers. In outpatient clinics almost every patient was made a learning opportunity for me.



Above— Alice Springs Photo courtesy Peter Wyllie, Yr 3 GEMP student

Despite the swine flu epidemic's cancellation of elective surgery, these guys were going non-stop. The trauma and infections did not get time off. For my birthday I stood for eleven hours, wearing a lead apron (x ray protection), watching the guys hard at work. The world seems to come to Alice. The specialist Orthopods fly up from Adelaide. Which meant I was able to sit in with and be quizzed by the paediatric orthopaedic surgeon which was a fantastic learning experience. The doctors here at Alice Springs Hospital (ASH) are from all over the world. And with them comes their experiences and knowledge.

A surgical conference was being held in Alice. As it was on my doorstep I thought I would give it a go. It was on 'Infections' so despite being a non-surgeon, there should be something for me to learn, yes? Surprising the conference was very relevant for me. A lot about how patients present and how to determine when to intervene and how to intervene and what can be done in a rural or remote community (opposed to having a vascular surgeon on your door step in a big city). Two of the surgeons I

was working with had presentations so it was great to watch and support them. The last night we all went to the conference dinner. I even bought some high heels for the occasion! It was at the nocturnal house at the desert park. The orthopaedic team sat by the western quoll!!! Everyone at the table knows about quolls now. Then we went to the iconic bar "Bojangles". A wee bit of dancing (too crowded to move much) and some good laughs.

Sadly, by the time one can prove themselves something of value and start to feel part of the team and camaraderie, it's time to go. I signed up for and got a flight with the Royal Flying Doctors Service. The nurse and pilot were lovely. A quick flight to Ali Curung just south of Tennant Creek where the patient walked out of the ambulance with his bag of saline in hand and on to the plane. We marched back on to the plane and flew back. I appreciated the opportunity for the experience.

One of the Aboriginal Liaison Officers was kind enough to drive myself and another Resident Medical Officer to see the town camps. The town camps are scattered along the outskirts of the town. This is where some of the Aboriginal communities reside. As many of our patients come from and are sent back to these camps and I've heard of the conditions I thought that it would be good for me to see just what the camps are like. I saw four. And they varied widely in their condition. It was good for me to see and understand. Now to try out those 4WD skills! I got the 4WD and I packed it full of fellow 4th year medical students, water, (cont next page...)

Outlook on Alice cont...

some munchies and the beloved camera and we were off to the MacDonnell ranges. First stop was Standley Chasm and Simpson's Gap. Walking trails, pictures and black footed rock wallabies. The next day was full on as we headed into the Eastern MacDonnell ranges. First stop was N'Dhala Gorge National Park. A spectacular place. Rich warm reds of the rock walls as the sun bathed them. Petroglyphs (rock carvings) over 6 thousand years old adding history and mystery to a truly majestic environment. A pair of bell birds perched themselves on opposite ends of the gorge and called to each other. The echo of their songs flowed through the gorge engulfing us in an exquisite melody that was enchanting. Timeless.

Trephina Gorge National Park had us hiking under the sun, over the rim of the gorge and then down through the gorge in the waterless sand expanse. John Hayes rock holes presented a picturesque view. Too cold and slimy green for a swim but a lovely spot all the same. Emily and Jessie Gaps were two beautiful stops on the way back to Alice. They have cultural significance in that they are where the heads of the caterpillars were bitten off during a battle with some stinky beetles. Paintings on the rocks at the gaps added further to these beautiful National parks.

Worn out we dragged ourselves home. I was up dark and early the next day to walk out to meet the ophthalmology team that were headed to Santa Teresa. I can't help but think of Mexico when I hear Santa Teresa. It was a mission that is now an Aboriginal community. 80 km dirt road trip to a small community surrounding a white



*Above– Trephina Gorge
Photo Courtesy Peter Wyllie, Yr 3 GEMP student*

washed church. The optometrist, ophthalmologist and registrar were all great. I peppered the registrar with questions and stared at optic discs (back of eye). Then back on the dirt road home.

Next day had me, a knap sack and bag of food being picked up by the remote paediatrician on the way to the airport. We had a chartered flight to Lake Nash. By chartered I mean an airplane with a cabin smaller than my Toyota corolla. Oh my. Putt, putt, putt and we were up in the air. Looking over the Eastern ranges; Emily and Jessie gaps from above. Two hours and we landed in Lake Nash. An Aboriginal community that is in the middle of a cattle station, on their traditional lands. It was nice to be of use. I got to help out and quickly I was seeing patients on my own, with the paediatrician coming in at the end and cleaning up my loose ends which were typically "how do we" manage various aspects of care out in the middle of nowhere. I saw several premature babies, skin sores (impetigo) and scabies. It was so good I'm now giving paediatrics a good think

about. It really was quite amazing to be truly out in the middle of nowhere. During breaks I'd sit out on the bench in front of the clinic and just watch the wind whip the dust through the air, or the children run by. Then it was time for the Henley on Todd Regatta. Yes folks, that's a waterless regatta. Gotta love Rotary. A brilliant sense of humour and fun. It's simple. It's silly. It's all good fun. Grand stands set up by the 'river-side' to watch canoe races, kayak races, skiing, and other various boats races culminating in a full on battle between the three Rotary clubs represented as the Vikings, Navy and Pirates. Vikings dominated and were the clear victors. I sat on the grass watching the races surrounded by an ever expanding group of friends. It was pretty quiet here the first rotation but with the second rotation I've come to know many more people and as other medical students included their RMO and Registrars into our core Flinders Medical Student group we had expanded into a great group of folks.

Outlook on Alice cont...

Rural Package student Cheryl Wilson

There's a great sense of camaraderie amongst the medical officers and students. Very welcoming, easy to be around and great company. Two months into my rotations at ASH and I quite enjoyed recognizing familiar faces as I walk through hallways and wards and friendly hellos. Makes a world of difference. Go the 4WD again.

My friend, Vanessa, hopped in the passenger side and joined me as I slipped it into gear and we headed for the first dirt road in the direction of Kings Canyon, Watarrka National Park. We met up with a wild camel along the way. Fit in a brief walk along the canyon floor before settling in for the night. We spotted a few dingoes skirting the edges of the camp and managed to get a picture of one at dawn the next day before we headed back out to the Canyon to do the 'Rim Walk'. So up up we climbed and spent 3 hours walking along the top. Beautiful. As we got back on the road I pulled the car to a halt across the road as I'd finally spied a goanna. We rushed out to move

him off the road and then take a picture (or two, or three). Running on the theory that if one was out, there had to be more so we kept our eyes searching the terrain as we drove back towards Alice.

We stopped at the Henbury meteorite craters and then pulled into Rainbow Valley at dusk. We snapped a few pictures of the rock formations and then set out on a wee jaunt. What luck! We stumbled upon not one but eventually TWO Central netted Dragons. An adult by its burrow and soon after, a wee juvenile (approx. 10 cm) that charged Vanessa, sending her sprawling backwards, as it stood strong over its ant hill entrance.

Western McDonnell ranges were saved til Sunday and in the mid thirties my roommate Hilary and I hiked the 7 km trail through Ormiston Pound and Gorge. It became a test of endurance climbing peaks and across rocky river beds. Never so happy to see the end of a hike. The gorge was lovely and we spotted another lizard, a long nosed dragon. On the way back Hilary

dodged a big bearded dragon basking on the road. We rushed back to make sure he was okay. He'd come out of it with minor damage and after a picture we left him to get over his ordeal and hopefully learn a lesson. During my last week with Paediatrics I managed to find my way onto another remote trip. This time it was two days in Hermannsburg. Dr. Clare MacVicar was excellent to work with. Let me do histories, exams and poke kids with needles and all in a very supportive and educational environment. Excellent experience. Loved the remote paed work.

All too soon, the three months are over and it's time to move on to my next rotations.

Looking at the ranges outside my window, I know I'm going to miss Alice.

Good bye Alice Springs. Hello Nhulunbuy. The adventure continues!

Below- Peter Wyllie explores the centre. Photo Courtesy Peter Wyllie, Yr 3 GEMP student



NTCS Wins Best Poster

Eliza Gill

Staff from Flinders University attended the Tertiary Education Management Conference (TEMC) at the Darwin Convention Centre in September. The conference brings together tertiary education administrators and facilities managers from across Australia, New Zealand

and the Asia-Pacific region to discuss how the challenges of the future can best be met. The theme this year was “sustainability” which inspired a range of inspiring, thought provoking presentations on environmental issues, strategic planning, financial management, facilities management and technology shift, community & regional engagement, student services, commercial partnering & staff management.

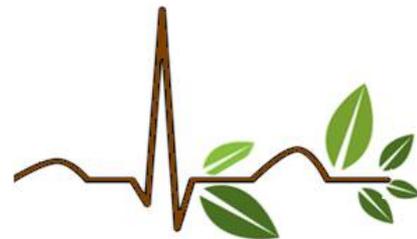
NTCS presented a poster “Greening the Clinical School” displaying our philosophy to “think globally & act locally” - environmental problems are affecting people’s health and NTCS acknowledges the need to measure our environmental performance and aims to reduce our ecological footprint. NTCS was awarded best poster.

Left, Eliza Gill with the winning poster

NTCS Green Mascot Competition

A competition was run to design a green mascot which will support our green initiatives through marketing & promotional material.

Congratulations to Anna Smedts for the fantastic winning design Ecopulse, below.



Grad Diploma in Indigenous and Remote Child Health

Dr Alan Ruben

The Graduate Diploma in Indigenous and Remote Child Health will be offered for the first time in 2010 by Flinders University School of Medicine’s Northern Territory Clinical School in conjunction with the Centre for Remote Health and the Menzies School of Health Research

Hospital RMOs, GP registrars, paediatric trainees and General Practitioners who wish to up-skill and expand their child health practice are invited to undertake this new Graduate Diploma.

Learn about clinical and curative aspects of child health with a community focus, including:

- Diagnosis, treatment and management of common childhood illnesses
- Ambulatory and behavioural paediatrics
- Disease prevention and health promotion
- Social and cultural determinants of child health
- International and Australian child health programmes.

Further information can be found on the Flinders University website:

www.flinders.edu.au/courses/postgrad/gdpircc/

Or by contacting Dr Alan Ruben alan.ruben@flinders.edu.au Mobile: 0429 675 283

Farewell (for now) to NTRCS Nhulunbuy

Dr Jennifer Brown

It's now just under three years since I arrived in Nhulunbuy to help set up the local NTRCS campus and time has just flown by. When I chose to leave my cozy urban practice in Canberra with my two young sons, Andrew and Max, and our beloved Staffordshire terrier Lee-Roy to live in Northeast Arnhem Land I knew we were in for some new and sometimes challenging experiences and I certainly haven't been disappointed.

their time and their knowledge and my family and our visiting students have been privileged to be welcomed into their world.

The local clinicians are all multi skilled and extremely generous with their time and their experience. Our visiting specialists are also happy to teach and supportive of their rural generalist colleagues.

Below- Jenni and her sons Andrew and Max



This is a very remote and very special part of Australia. Situated on the western tip of the Gulf of Carpentaria this bauxite mining town is surrounded by Aboriginal land that can only be accessed by permit. The unpaved central Arnhem highway is only traversable in the dry season. For a large part of the year this town and surrounding indigenous communities are only accessible by air or sea. The beaches are stunning and the water warm and clear. Waterholes abound and wildlife is abundant. Fishing, sailing and camping are very popular past times and we have been fortunate to indulge in all of these on a regular basis.

The local Yolgnu people have lived here for at least 50,000 years and are rich in language culture and kinship. They are generous with

This very multicultural town community runs regular events including beach volleyball, astronomy nights, art and craft fairs, speedway competitions, theatre productions, trivia nights and fishing competitions. Sporting and school facilities are excellent and the town is extremely family friendly. We have no cinema, shopping options are fairly limited and perishables are expensive but this has just made the fairly regular trips we have made to Darwin, Alice and Cairns more exciting.

Working with keen students who have finished their final exam hurdles and are trying to gain the clinical experience necessary for internship has been invigorating. Using videoconferencing and studying on-line has been a challenge at times and this has been complicated in the wet by fairly regular power

cuts but the arrival of broad band last year has made a big difference. Media and IT support in Darwin and Adelaide have been consistently patient and helpful as we continue to learn and make improvements.

I am grateful for the support and advice we have received from Darwin, Flinders and the other NTRCS academic and administrative staff. I am particularly grateful to Deborah McIntyre who was appointed as our local campus administrator in February 2008. She has consistently made efforts above and beyond any expectations to support myself, my family, the students and the local community.

Contrary to the expectations of some southern colleagues and friends we have survived and thrived in this land of crocodiles, box jelly fish, snakes, cane toads, road trains, single engine planes, monsoons and bushfires. While we sadly lost Lee-Roy to cancer 2 months ago we have fond memories of him racing along pristine beaches and chasing geckos and turtles. We have made firm friends at work, school and play, both local and imported. We are now somewhat reluctantly heading back to Canberra for family reasons.

I am confident that Dr Sarah Chalmers from Laynhapuy Health will make an excellent replacement senior lecturer and will be ably supported by our local clinicians, Deborah and the NTRCS, NTCS and Flinders teams. Flinders have recently applied for funding to support the establishment of a GP multidisciplinary teaching clinic and education centre. If this application is successful, Nhulunbuy will truly become a centre for medical and allied health education excellence. I believe people from this region will be more likely to consider studying medicine with the commencement of the new 4 year GEMP Darwin from 2011.

I also have strong feeling that this may not be a permanent goodbye but rather Nha Ma Yalala (see you later).

Heather weds Tim



Heather Burton (Brimson), Senior Project Manager for the Northern Territory Clinical School, married Tim Burton on 3 October 2009 at Bert Dix Park, Paringa SA followed by a marquee reception at the park. Heather and Tim honeymooned in South West WA. Heather met Tim in 2002 when she moved to the Riverland to take up a job with the Flinders University Rural Clinical School.

**WE WISH
EVERYONE A SAFE AND
HAPPY NEW YEAR
AND FESTIVE SEASON**

NT Medical Program Information Session for Potential Students

Are you interested in studying Medicine? Are you a university Graduate?

From 2011, for the first time ever, you will be able to study the full four year Flinders Graduate Entry Medical Program in the Northern Territory.

For more information join us for an information session.

Date: Monday 7 December, 5-7pm Place: Charles Darwin University Room Red 6.1.03

Drinks and nibbles provided.

CONTACT DETAILS

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Email: admin.ntcs@flinders.edu.au
Website: www.ntmed.flinders.edu.au

Northern Territory Clinical School
Northern Territory Rural Clinical School
Teaching Health Students in the Northern Territory

The Northern Territory Clinical School and Rural Clinical School (NTCS & NTRCS) are part of Flinders University School of Medicine and are leading providers of health education in the Northern Territory, Australia.

The schools provides training for Flinders University and James Cook University medical students. They also provides placement opportunities and support for Allied Health students and interstate medical students.

The NTCS has a campus in Darwin, whilst the NTRCS has campuses in Alice Springs, Katherine, Nhulunbuy and Humpty Doo.