



GP e a s t e r n GP

Eastern Ranges GP Association Newsletter Summer 2009

**CHRISTMAS
WISHES**

**THE NEW
ERGPA 2.0
WEBSITE
UNVEILED**

Case study:
**A real Life!
participant**

*let the silly
season begin!*



Mental Health Nurse

Rachel Pritchard has joined our Mental Health Nurse Team, and brings with her a sound working knowledge of the public mental health system, in particular the Critical Assessment Team. Rachel is ready to take on patients through our Mental Health Nurse program, referrals can be found at www.ergpa.com.au, or by calling Felicity on 9871 1000.

Administration Officer

Felicity Talha has joined us on reception, so you'll hear her cheerful voice when calling. Felicity is also part of our Patient Services team, processing referrals, billing and general program administration to make sure each of our services run as smoothly as possible, for both you, and your patient.

Practice Manager ERAHMS

Tania Middleton is our new After Hours Medical Service Practice Manager, and comes to us with extensive experience and an established record of success in the management of medical practices across multiple sites. Her last position was as Business Manager for the Victorian Cardiovascular Services, and she has previously performed similar

roles with LaTrobe Private Hospital, and number of general practice and imaging businesses.

Manager, Practice Development

Tanya joins us from Western Australia where her most recent role was as District Manager for Australian Hearing. Tanya's career has principally been within service based health industries, incorporating over 10 years of specific experience in senior health management and part of multi-disciplinary teams. Tanya has general management qualifications and experience in strategic planning, project development, organisational development and change management, budgeting & finance, human resources, marketing and capital improvement. Over the years Tanya has been responsible for business effectiveness and efficiency and ensuring compliance and profitability to the businesses stakeholders.

Health Services Development Manager

Erin joins the Patient Services Team to build the WorkHealth, Life! and Allied Health business from the new satellite sites at Healesville, Pakenham and Lilydale. Erin has previously worked with a Division

of General Practice and her most recent role was with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. Erin has extensive experience working effectively with General Practitioners, GP stakeholders and multidisciplinary teams. She has a passionate interest in promoting health, preventing illness and contributing to quality outcomes in primary healthcare. Erin is experienced in business development, national marketing campaigns and sponsorship acquisition. This new position is an exciting addition to Patient Services team.

General Practice Service Assistant

Lisa Houston has previously worked in the aged care sector and has recently completed her Business Degree at Swinburne. Lisa will assist Ian Bell with the PEN/CAT Tool and will be able to help you with any inquiries.

A big welcome goes out to all our new staff members, who have joined our team to be part of helping put together services to assist you give the best care to your patients.

Welcome to new staff

So much has changed recently within ERGPA, it's hard to know where to start!

We've got new programs, and therefore new staff members coming in from left to right, all raring to go, so we can offer you the best service we can. A particular welcome to our WorkHealth Nursing Team.

We would also like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas, and a safe New Year. We look forward to seeing you all in 2010!

Kristin Michaels
CEO

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Client Relations
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Bushfire Councilors
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Diabetes Educator
Christine Van Boxtel

Chronic Disease Nurses
Clare Blee, Agnes Whittle

GP Leaders
Dr Geoffrey Broomhall (Hospital Liaison/ Quality Use of Medicines), Dr Robin Rowe (Aged Care), Dr Louise Alexander (Mental Health), Dr Tony Palmer (Workforce), Dr Lesley Sutcliffe (CPD)

Practice Nurse Leader
Dianna Ferguson

Practice Manager Leader
Lyn Foden

Practice Nurses - Eastern Ranges After Hours Medical Service
Claire Oettinger, Ruth Tinney, Lyn Bell, Mandy Van Velp Fernand, Diane Barber, Nichola Rumpff

ERGPA's TOP 5 for 2009



This year has been a big one at ERGPA, and our team has achieved some fantastic results.

We are very proud of all of our achievements, so it was hard to pick the highlights, but here are our top 5 picks for 2009!

1 The Victorian Public Healthcare Award's Recognition of Service for Outstanding Contribution to the 2009 Victorian Bushfire response.

2 The 2009 Annual General Meeting Awards recognized the excellence of our GPs, Practice Managers, Practice Nurses and ERGPA staff.

3 The Bushfire Counseling Team provided almost 700 sessions of counseling to victims of the Black Saturday Bushfires and their families.

4 ERGPA was accredited as a provider of Worker Health Checks by WorkSafe Victoria. The team kicked off checks in October 2009!

5 Marysville Medical Clinic wins RACGP's Victorian General Practice of the Year! With the assistance of the Division, RWAV, the Alexandra Community Health Service and many, many others, the hard working folk at Marysville Medical Clinic managed to set up a new clinic in Buxton and continue to provide primary care to this important community.



WorkHealth

WorkHealth is an initiative funded through WorkSafe Victoria that aims to provide Victorian employers with the opportunity to participate in one of two opportunities; Worker Health Checks, and Workplace Health Promotion Grants.

<http://www.ergpa.com.au/workhealth>



Worker Health Checks - offering workers a free and confidential health check which helps them understand their risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

Workplace Health Promotion Grants - employers who have already offered health checks to the majority of their workers in the past two years can access a grant to expand existing health activities.

WorkHealth strategies target the connection between modifiable lifestyle risk factors, chronic disease and workplace injury across the workforce. The long term goals of the initiative include reducing the number of workers at risk of chronic disease and reducing workplace injury and absenteeism.

As the WorkHealth initiative rolls out across Victoria, general practice will start to see workers presenting for follow up appointments to discuss the results of their health check.

What does a worker health check involve?

- self assessment of tobacco smoking, physical activity, alcohol and diet,
- physical/biomedical assessments - waist circumference, blood pressure, random blood cholesterol & random blood glucose
- risk assessment - the AUSDRISK and Absolute Cardiovascular Risk tools.

On completion of the assessment, each worker is provided information on their results and given tailored advice based on their assessments.

In some circumstances, workers will be advised to see their GP for follow up.

Who provides worker health checks?

Worker health checks are provided by WorkHealth Endorsed Service Providers (ESPs). ESP organisations have been endorsed based on their ability and experience in providing high quality health check services to employers.

Where can I access further information?

For further information contact Sally Ingram on 9871 1000 or visit www.workhealth.vic.gov.au.

THE CASE STUDY

diabetes success story!

A positive health and wellbeing success story has been achieved in the Eastern Ranges as a result of lifestyle modification advice provided by local GP, **Dr Sachin Patel** to one of his patients

In May 2009 Dr Sachin Patel, a GP from Churinga Village Medical Centre referred one of his patients to the Life! Taking Action on Diabetes program. Mr Damien Richardson, aged 53 years from Croydon, was referred to the program with the aim of reducing his risk of developing Type 2 diabetes as he was overweight with high blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

Since commencing the course Damian has significantly reduced his risk of developing Type 2 diabetes by making a number of positive changes to his lifestyle. He has managed to reduce his waist measurement by 15cms, has lost 17.6kg and reduced his BMI from 34.4 to 26.52. These positive changes have resulted in Damian now being in the slightly overweight range instead of the obese range. Damian has taken up a membership at Fenix Fitness Centre in Mooroolbark, where he attends daily to exercise in the cardio and weights rooms.

Congratulations to Dr Sachin Patel who has to date been the Division's most successful GP in identifying patients at risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes and referring this 'at risk' group to ERGPA's Life! Taking Action on Diabetes courses. Many of Dr Patel's patients attending the courses are achieving weight loss and increasing their understanding of how positive lifestyle behaviour changes can improve their overall health and well-being.

For more information on the [Life! Taking Action on Diabetes program](#) please contact Sally Ingram at ERGPA on 9871 1000



mychristmas

David Overton – Operations Manager

It has been our practice for most of the past 22 years to celebrate with close friends on Christmas Eve. Our friends have links back to Lithuania so we enjoy a traditional feast which is based around 14 specific dishes mostly fish and vegetables served both hot and cold. The meal commences with the sharing of a wafer with the other guests. You offer your wafer to them and they break off a small piece, then you break off a piece of their wafer. A brief greeting is exchanged and the pieces of wafer are eaten. Depending on the number of guests this can take quite a while.

Originally we lived close by but over the years we have moved, so invariably, we have travelled to visit them. This in recent years has resulted in us spending a good part of Christmas Day traveling home down the Hume Freeway. Surprisingly there are not too many places serving food let alone Christmas fare on the freeway. Even McDonalds is closed on Christmas day. Our most memorable Christmas lunch was a two day old cheese sandwich from the service station.

However Boxing Day is another matter. This is the day shared with family. A great feed, exchange of presents and the traditional cricket match where the golden retriever is the star fielder. The next day is the great camping trip where we take our grandchildren away and enjoy the simple pleasures of living in a digital/electronic vacuum.

May you and your families have a truly great festive period.

Felicity Talha – Receptionist, Eastern Ranges After Hours Medical Service

Christmas morning Nathan and I get up at about 7am (argh!) and exchange our gifts. Our dog Shamus eats his gift and my bird Bry attacks the wrapping paper and anything else shiny he can find.

We then go to my parent's house where we exchange gifts with my parents and younger sister. My aunt and uncle (dad's side) then come and we do gifts again and have a HUGE buffet breakfast; my mum cooks enough to feed twenty people, and between my dad and his brother they tend to eat most of it!

We stay at my parents for most of the day and then we go either to my aunt's house or stay at mums depending on whose turn it is to host the family dinner (my mum's family rotate the family Christmas dinner locations). We eat another huge meal with my grandpa, aunts, uncles and cousins. We all exchange gifts (again) and then we have dessert and Christmas pudding (my favorite). We finally roll ourselves home later in the evening.

On Boxing day we go to Nathan's parents where we have lunch with his two brothers, sister and their partners, our nephew Oliver (2yr old) and this year a new little baby brother or sister for Oliver. We eat a three course meal, starting with seafood (yuk!) for everyone else and I get kabana and cheese.

We exchange gifts again and then have dessert. We then roll ourselves to my aunts and uncles house (dad's side) for dinner and stay there until the early hours of the morning (luckily they live next door).





Did you know that the practice of eating insects is called entomophagy? Insects are sometimes eaten in certain countries and are known for their nutritional value.

Have I been missing something? Worms, slugs, bugs and beetles. Edible insects; you may feel that these are two words that do not even belong in the same sentence. In all probability, you have never deliberately eaten an insect, however you will probably inadvertently consume over a kilo or more in your lifetime.

Flour beetles, weevils and other insect pests that infest granaries are milled along with the grain. Small grubs and other tiny insects can be found in your fruit and vegetables. Insects are especially common in canned or other types

of processed foods, and even in some beverages.

Could insects be the food of the future? Could the crunch of their exoskeletons become the crunch of a potato chip? Stir-fried cabbage worms? Maybe with enough bean sprouts to hide them? Couldn't be much worse than tofu! It is sort of like a candy filled with a special middle, but without the great taste.

Apparently most insects are edible; there are 1,462 recorded species of edible insects. And they're quite nutritious. For instance, 100

grams of cricket contains only 121 calories, less than half of beef. A cricket contains only 5,5 grams of fat, compared to 21,2g of beef. Beef contains more protein (23,5g - a cricket 12.9g) but the 100g of cricket also contains 5,1g of carbohydrates, 75,8 mg calcium, 185,3 mg phosphorous, 9,5 mg iron, thiamin, riboflavin, and niacin.

It is also important to consider the fact that most of our aversion to the eating of insects is cultural and psychological and in many cultures insects are eaten regularly.

tech corner

Brought to you by BizTechIT

With the Christmas season upon us and your business slowing down, now is a good opportunity to review your IT infrastructure, assess the strengths and weaknesses of its abilities to support your site and pay close attention to existing application systems, security concerns and requirements.

Understanding your IT

IT infrastructure can be intimidating. Not only do you need to decide what to buy, you must also determine the most effective way to implement it. Good choices can give you a decisive edge over your competition, while poor choices can limit your success. Since we know how critical these decisions are to our clients, we have put together some handy advice for you to consider

Understand your existing applications

Gain an understanding of the existing applications by:

- Reviewing any documentation available,

- Interviewing key personnel who use the system on a daily basis
- Observing staff performing their duties and any issues they have in relation to IT
- Consider the way the work flows, both the manual and automated processes. Concentrate on the applications that will be replaced or impacted by the new system and applications that interface with the new system.

Think about more than just your hardware

Recent advancements in IT cover more than just the improvements in your computer hardware or server. There have been dramatic changes and improvements in Telephony (VoIP), Internet speeds, communication devices, backup and security technologies. Now is a good time to review your internet plans/speeds, review your requirements for your phone system, look at the current method of backup and security of your critical data and how this can be improved. It is important to take a

holistic approach in your review of your IT.

Things to consider

- What is my expected growth for the next 3 years
- Does my infrastructure allow for future growth or changes in technology
- Do I have the most appropriate system for my requirements
- Does my system allow me to do everything I need it too
- Is my data as secure as I need it to be
- Do I have full redundancy in my system
- What contingencies do I have in place should something go wrong
- Do I have a 3 year plan for my IT

With the rebate still on offer until the end of year now is the time to start reviewing your business needs. We would be happy to consult with you and assist you in reviewing and planning for your future requirements. Please call BizTech IT on 03 9694 6666.

Some Key Points for the Season

Make use of the rebate/accelerated depreciation. You can claim back an additional 50% depreciation on top of the 30% in your first year

Plan for the long term. Going cheap initially could cost you more in the long term

Make sure an Audit is done before committing to any proposal. You have to understand what you have now before you can plan for you need for the future.

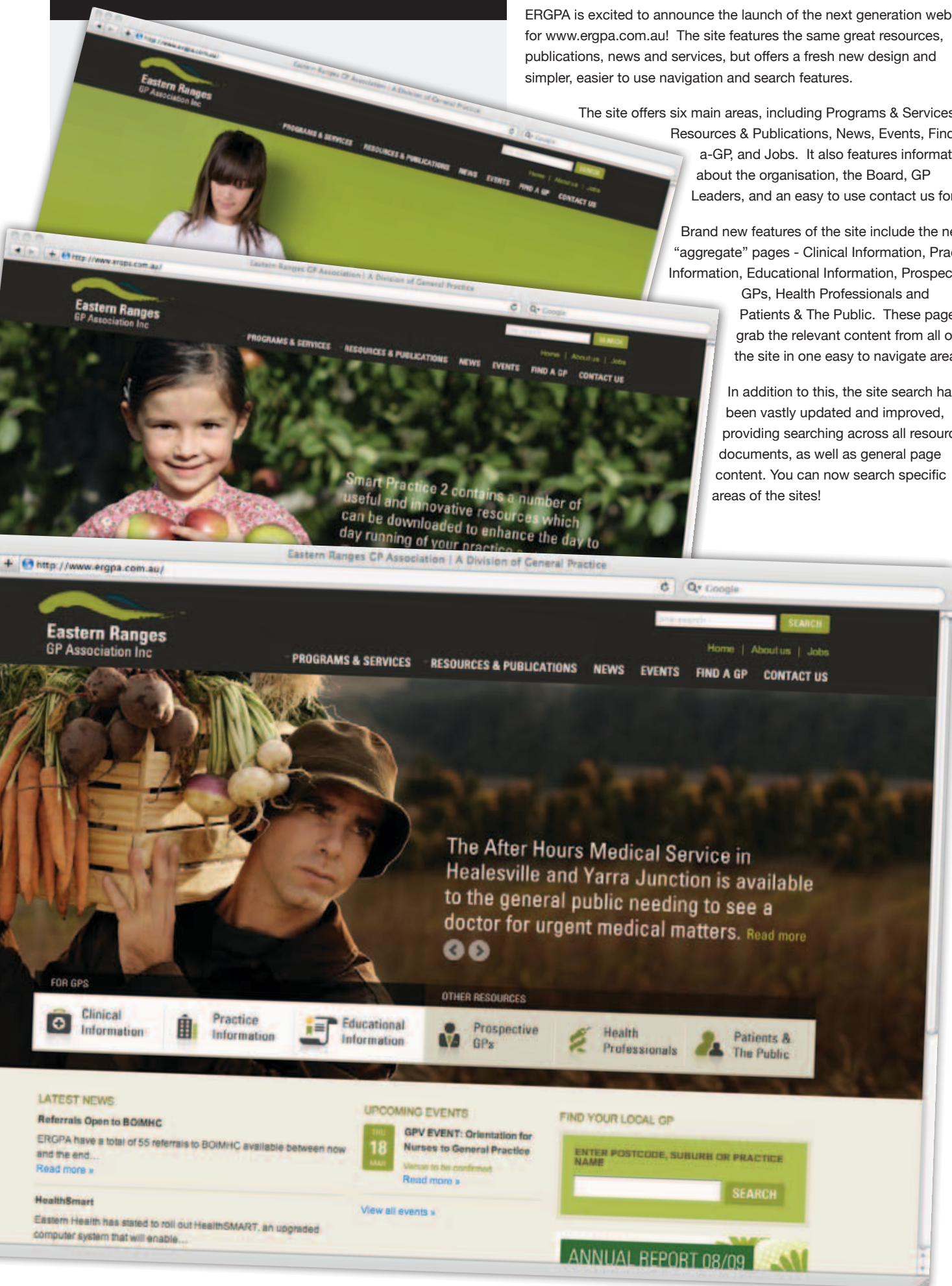
ERGPA2.0

ERGPA is excited to announce the launch of the next generation website for www.ergpa.com.au! The site features the same great resources, publications, news and services, but offers a fresh new design and simpler, easier to use navigation and search features.

The site offers six main areas, including Programs & Services, Resources & Publications, News, Events, Find-a-GP, and Jobs. It also features information about the organisation, the Board, GP Leaders, and an easy to use contact us form.

Brand new features of the site include the new "aggregate" pages - Clinical Information, Practice Information, Educational Information, Prospective GPs, Health Professionals and Patients & The Public. These pages grab the relevant content from all over the site in one easy to navigate area.

In addition to this, the site search has been vastly updated and improved, providing searching across all resource documents, as well as general page content. You can now search specific areas of the sites!



Behind the scenes of the new website has been updated as well. The site is built using a Content Management System, which makes it easier for us to update the site, delivering you the latest information quickly. The site is also built using the latest web standards, making it much more accessible, and quicker to load.

We would like to thank the team at Thirst Studios (<http://www.thirststudios.com>) for doing such a great job with the new site re-design. Thirst Studios specialises in developing user-friendly, accessible websites, and we certainly think that they have hit the mark with our new site.

If you have any questions about the new site, please contact Kristin Michaels at ceo@ergpa.com.au or call 9871 1000.



Image 1 - Resources and Publications

Resources & Publications

The new Resources & Publications section makes it much easier to quickly find what you are looking for. It includes a complete, alphabetised list of resources and documents, and a resources-specific search engine. It is now easier to find resources by browsing categories, and programs and services (see Image 1).

Find-a-GP

It is now quick and easy for the general public to find local GPs using the new Find-a-GP search. Users can enter in the practice name, a postcode or the suburb name, and find practices in and around that area.

The search will even show where the practice is on a Google Map! (see Image 2)



Image 2 - Find-a-GP

Jobs & Vacancies

Looking for new staff for your practice? Download the vacancy registration form, fill it out, and we will post the job online for you. The job will link back to your practice page on the site (see Image 3).

Events

Interested in an event we are running? It is quick and easy to register for an event using the updated online form. Once you have completed the form, you will be sent a confirmation email, confirming your registration was successful!



Image 3 - GP vacancies



Christmas Wishes & Seasonal Patience

Christmas and New Year can be a difficult time for many people, whilst for others it brings great joy and celebration. Your patients no doubt represent a cross section of the population, with many requiring additional support over the Christmas period, and more still starting the New Year with plenty of resolve to change their lifestyle for the better.

ERGPA offers a range of programs and services to assist your patients at Christmas.

Springtime is a great time to review patients and order HMRs

The end of “winter gloom” or the end of the “peak period” either way spring is a great time to put things under review, including your more complex patients. Why not take the time and order some Home Medication Reviews (HMRs – Medicare item 900) for those of your patients who do not appear to be responding to their medications as well as expected? It’s good practice and good business. If you would like to know more, call Joy Sweet at the Association on 9871 1000

Please note that on the 1st November, the Medicare payment to GPs for HMRs and Collaborative RMMRs have been adjusted for inflation and are now: HMR (Item 900) \$143.40 and RMMR (Item 903) \$98.20.

And for your own staff ... have you considered a Worker Health Check?

ERGPA is accredited to deliver free worker health checks for workplaces based in the east and south east regions of Melbourne with an annual payroll under \$10 million!

Did you know that unhealthy workers average just 49 productive hours of work per month compared to 143 hours per month for the healthy ones (Medibank Private, 2005)? Manage your employee’s health and see the results add up!

To discuss your interest in having ERGPA deliver free Workers Health Checks for your workplace visit <http://www.ergpa.com.au/workhealth> or call ERGPA on 9871 1000.

Life!

Patients that are over the age of 40 and are overweight are at a significantly increased risk of developing Type II Diabetes. Add to this equation the festive delights that fill our dinner tables, an abundance of alcohol and continual snacking on mince pies and home baked goods and this risk over the Christmas period increases significantly. With so much eating taking place, Christmas is a time where people stop and think about their weight and how it will affect their health both in the short and long term. The Life! program is here to help; providing 6 sessions with a trained Life! Facilitator, the program is available for patients over the age of 40 who are at risk of developing Type II Diabetes according to the AUSDRISK diabetes risk assessment tool. The program aims to prevent Type II Diabetes and to contribute to early diagnosis in those who have Type II Diabetes but don’t know they do.

Over the 6 sessions, patients will gain a basic understanding of nutrition and physical activity that will enable them to make more informed choices about their own dietary intake and planned exercise. For a referral form or for more information, contact Sally Ingram at ERGPA Tuesday – Friday on 9871 1000.

Mental Health Nurses

While the holiday season brings sentiments of joy and celebration for some, for others it is a time of isolation and an increase in feelings of depression and negative thoughts. In fact, numerous studies as well as anecdotal evidence from distress centers and crisis workers confirm that there is an increase in both the numbers and severity of calls by depressed individuals during the holiday season.

The Mental Health Nurse Incentive Program helps community based patients with a severe mental illness access the right services at the right time, assisting to prevent unnecessary hospital admissions/

re-admissions. Mental Health Nurses work in collaboration with general practitioners and private psychiatrists to provide services such as:

- periodic reviews of patients’ mental states;
- medication monitoring and management;
- information on physical healthcare to patients; and

integrated services from GPs, psychiatrists and allied health workers (such as psychologists) including arranging access to interventions from other health professionals when these are required.

Bushfire Counseling Service

As the bushfire season approaches, anxiety levels and hyper-arousal will rise significantly in the community. ERGPA has a team of 6 specialised bushfire counsellors who are available to provide one on one counselling to any of your patients that have been affected in any degree by the Victorian bushfires. Operating at a range of sites, suburbs and townships throughout the Division, patients can be referred for unlimited and free personal support and counselling with any one of our counsellors.

ATAPS

ERGPA’s Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS) is the longest standing and most familiar of all the patient services offered. Providing free psychological treatment to referred patients that fit into the demographic of low income and youth (16-25 years). Patients are referred to a registered Psychologist after the GP completes a Mental Health Treatment Plan (2710) and is eligible for up to 12 treatment sessions.

For more information contact Felicity Tahla at ERGPA on 9871 1000.



All I want for Christmas

What do you want for Christmas and why?

Andrew McIntosh: Cool weather, pleasant company and celebrations with family and friends.

Heather Allen: A bit more spare time – Because I have so little at present.

Anthony Palmer: World Peace! Responsible Governments and a week in France.

Joe Balci: Peace and prosperity for everyone.

Eroy Schroeder: A decent medical computer system..., but a bunnings voucher will do.

Leanne Raven: Peace and quiet.

Barbara Inness: Someone to do the Christmas dishes and clean up after the rellies!

What's your favourite Christmas memory?

Andrew McIntosh: The kids opening gifts early morning (before they knew about the reality of Father Christmas)

Heather Allen: My son dressed as a Christmas Elf

Anthony Palmer: My wife waking up Christmas morning to find a double kayak floating on the swimming pool – her joy was fantastic

Joe Balci: When my uncle fell through the chimney

Eroy Schroeder: When my 3 year old daughter handed out presents at an aged care home (Schofield 1972)

Leanne Raven: ...lunch at the Monty Pach Hotel in sydney

Barbara Inness: The year I had a good sleep in

Are you getting your Practice Staff/Work colleagues gifts? If so what are you getting?

Andrew McIntosh: Yes, Hampers

Heather Allen: We do a Kris Kringle at our Christmas function

Anthony Palmer: \$\$ Bonuses and individual personal gifts

Joe Balci: Yes, weekends away at the Cumberland Lorne

Eroy Schroeder: Yes, \$\$ Bonuses presented at the YVC Christmas party – a tradition that goes back 30 years.

Leanne Raven: Kris Kringle, \$10 maximum

Barbara Inness: Yes, they demand gift vouchers from exclusive shops.

What's your worst Christmas memory?

Andrew McIntosh: Heat wave conditions

Heather Allen: I don't have one

Anthony Palmer: Spending Christmas morning with a female patient in the back of an ambulance instead of with my family.

Joe Balci: When my uncle fell through the chimney – Broken Leg!

Eroy Schroeder: Doing a difficult caesarian section at 9am on Christmas morning – live birth (South Africa 1968)

Leanne Raven: Eating too much

Barbara Inness: The year the oven broke down, the fuse blew at 10am, all hell broke loose!

What's your favourite Christmas Carol?

Andrew McIntosh: Good King Wenceslas

Heather Allen: I like them all, largely

Anthony Palmer: Silent Night

Joe Balci: Jingle Bells

Eroy Schroeder: Lord Rest ye Merry Gentlemen (or if unavailable) Have Yourself a Merry Christmas by Luther Van Dross

Leanne Raven: Away in the Manger

Barbara Inness: Silent Night.

*Have a very Merry Christmas, and happy and safe New Year!
from all the Board*

Reform school?

“We believe that primary healthcare services need to be supported to take on broader roles related to service coordination and population health planning. This goes beyond the provision of primary healthcare treatment to individual patients. We believe that Primary Healthcare Organisations should be established, evolving from or replacing the existing Division of General Practice”

National Health and Hospitals Reforms Commission (NHHRC) Final Report, June 2009

Divisions of General Practice were established in the early 1990s by general practitioners, after GPs had successfully lobbied the federal government for funding. The GPs wanted to create local groups that were similar to the hospital ‘divisions’ that organized professional development and provided other support for medical specialists.

Today there are 111 local Divisions of General Practice in Australia, supported by 8 State based organizations and a national body. The Divisions Network is primarily funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing.

Local level Divisions work closely with GPs and their staff – including practice nurses, practice managers and medical receptionists – to help improve patient outcomes and experience.

The Future?

In November 2009 Divisions of general Practice throughout Australia met with the Australian General Practice Network (AGPN) to discuss the health reform processes and the recommendations of the NHHRC. Over 240 leaders from the Divisions network agreed that significant change to the Australian health care system is long overdue and that the move to develop Primary Health Care Organizations (PHCOs) is fundamental building block in a reformed system. Dr Barbara Inness, who attended the meeting commented, “Within any major reform strategy it is critical that the strengths of the current condition are leveraged for the betterment of those involved and those receiving the services”.

Participants agreed that Divisions were ideally placed to take on the role of PHCOs, providing the

following set of principles and characteristics were met:

Principles

- General practice is the front line setting where most people go for their health care, with more than 100 million consultations each year: integration with general practice is critical to reform of comprehensive, continuing PHC
- General practice engagement and strong clinical-managerial partnerships are critical to leading more organised PHC in Australia. The General Practice Network is the only mechanism that universally engages general practice in Australia
- PHCOs should be built on what exists and what works. The Network is the logical platform to establish regional PHC organisations. They already have strong engagement with GPs and general practice. They also have the agility,

Don't forget your legal responsibilities this silly season...

Corporate Christmas functions may be a great way to thank staff for a year's worth of hard work, however they can also present a very real legal risk for employers if the event doesn't unfold according to plan.

Carter Newell Lawyers senior associate and workplace relations specialist Clayton Payne says employers should carefully consider the risks posed by Christmas functions and take the necessary precautions to reduce or avoid liability.

“Having good policies in place and making sure staff members know about the potential issues and how they are expected to behave will greatly reduce the potential liability employers could face if something goes wrong,” he says.

According to Payne, many

companies open themselves to potential injury claims by not realising that function venues can be regarded as a ‘workplace’ for the purposes of the Workplace Health and Safety Act.

To ensure everything runs smoothly at your company's end-of year function, Payne has passed on to

Brisbane Business News his top corporate Christmas party legal tips.

- Choose a venue that will not create any obvious risks or hazards to employees
- Read the fine print in the venue-client contract as many will try to waive their liability in case of an accident.
- Ensure the company's insurance policy is updated to include potential claims coming from

non-office hours functions.

- Remind employees prior to the event of their responsibilities under the
- company's sexual harassment and discrimination policies.
- If the function is fancy dress or has a theme, set guidelines to an expected dress standard to reduce the risk of a sexual harassment or injury claim.
- Serve a wide range of non-alcoholic beverages and plenty of food to offset the effects of alcohol.
- Encourage senior staff members to keep an eye on those who are drinking excessively.
- Set clearly defined

starting and finishing times.

- Facilitate travel home from the function by organising a private bus or handing out taxi vouchers.

Best Wishes - Enjoy yourself and be safe this Christmas season. From the Mediprotect Team

Article courtesy of Brisbane Business news Nov 09 – Jan 2010 Issue.



coverage, credibility, capability and consistency of performance on which to base PHCOs

- PHCOs must help achieve current health reform objectives: maximising a focus on prevention; addressing health inequity; providing 'joined up' services and assisting to ensure the most effective and efficient use of resources
- An urgent and significant commitment by Federal, State and Territory governments to develop eHealth solutions, including electronic patient records able to be used consistently in general practice and other PHC settings, is essential to ensure the most effective joined up system.

Scope

The role of PHCOs should be to facilitate improvements in the health and wellbeing of local populations through planning, coordinating, funding, developing and potentially delivering comprehensive primary health care services integrated with general practice.

PHCOs should:

- Undertake population health and service planning
- Strengthen the effectiveness, efficiency and vitality of regional PHC services
- Ensure access to PHC services that meet community need, particularly where there are service gaps
- Contribute to regional leadership and innovation in health
- Promote cooperation, collaboration and communication with other regional organisations with an interest in PHC

Capabilities

To carry out these roles, PHCOs will need clear responsibilities, the authority for planning and funding/commissioning services to meet gaps in service provision and the skills and resources to carry this out. In addition, they will:

- Build upon the vital work already done by GPNs in supporting and engaging with general practice
- Network and engage with others involved in the local service delivery environment: primary health care providers and support services to primary health care professionals
- Have a skills-based board reflecting the diversity of clinicians and services forming comprehensive PHC including general practice as well as other skills desirable for good governance
- Have mechanisms to garner clinical, consumer, community and health stakeholder input to PHCO strategic direction and decisions about planning and provision of services
- Be accountable to the Government and the community for measurable outcomes, using a consistent national performance and improvement framework

- Promote research and evaluation, and the enhancement of an evidence based culture in PHC
- Play a major role in the education, training and distribution of Australia's future PHC workforce
- Provide leadership in ensuring quality patient care by focussing on data and information management, and on eHealth solutions including electronic patient records.

The NHHRC final report has recommended that PHCOs should have a population size of 250,000 to 500,000. ERGPA currently serves a population of 225,000, so our Board is currently considering strategies for determining the ideal size of a PHCO in our region. Additional considerations include relationships with other agencies, existing patient flows, natural topography, growth corridors, transportation and communities of interest.

Partnerships are essential to integrated care and better joined up systems. General practice networks bridge the primary health care agenda of government and the needs and interests of local primary health care providers and communities. By extending these partnerships, PHCOs will usher in a new era of primary health care organisation.

"General Practice is the current front line health service where most Australians go to obtain their health care and it is an obvious strength within our current primary health care system. Thus, general practice is central and should be nurtured and developed within any proposed Primary Health Care Organisation."

Leanne Raven – Independent Board Member

Leadership and Transition

Leading reform of regional PHC will require organisational and infrastructure development that takes time. However, our Board believes that establishment of a PHCO network by June 2012 is realistic. A transition support fund has been recommended to assist with the evolution of the Network to a new system of PHCOs. A new national primary health care agency is proposed to coincide with the introduction of PHCOs to support change, innovation and service improvement.

"We have a fabulous opportunity at ERGPA to improve access, collaborative team work across professional groups and to produce better health care outcomes that our community in Eastern Ranges deserves. The Commonwealth government needs to work with us to leverage the strengths of the current primary health care system and ensure that GPs remain central."

Dr Andrew McIntosh, Deputy Chair

For more information about the NHHRC or PHCOs you are encouraged to contact the Board at ERGPA via board@ergpa.com.au. If you would like to speak with our CEO about the steps ERGPA is taking to position itself for the changes please contact Kristin Michaels via ceo@ergpa.com.au or 9871 1000.

what's on

Looking for a Christmas gift to warm your heart and appeal to your philanthropic side? Try some of these...

Oxfam Unwrapped

To buy a goat, buffalo or whole new house for a family or community in need. Visit www.oxfamshop.org.au There's also a great range of Christmas Cards, recycled decorations and other goodies.

All profits support indigenous artists and Oxfam's Charity Work around the world.

OzHarvest

Help food rescue charity OzHarvest raise \$1 million by July 2010 to feed 1 million people, by SMSing "food" to 1991 1121. Part of the \$3.50 phone fee will go towards providing meals to those in need.

Visit www.ozharvest.org.au

Barnardos

Barnardos Cards4Kids offers a range of Christmas cards, greeting cards, calendars and other printed material.

- Personalised Cards - Create your own customised Christmas or greeting cards with Cards4Kids unique Personalised-to-fit service. They will be delighted to work with you to produce an exclusive design that reflects your distinct company image.
- Ready-to-go Cards - Cards4Kids range of quality cards with envelopes is Ready-to-Go with an assortment of pre-printed verses and sentiments that are perfect for friends, family or associates.
- Other Items - Cards4kids also have a range of calendars, notepads and other printed material.

Visit www.barnardos.org.au and go to the Gift Shop

New awards become effective from 1st January 2010

If you choose to pay staff over award payments it now means you can still be liable for an underpayment of wages claim from an aggrieved staff member. Therefore preparing employment documentation correctly is the only thing that can protect you.

Doing nothing will cost your practice more as the default provisions will result in additional penalties and allowances.

For further information contact Tanya Jardine, Manager Practice Development at ERGPA on 9871 1000 or Victorian Hospitals Industrial Association (first consultation free through ERGPA umbrella membership) on 9861 4000.

- All practice staff, including practice managers & nurses, will need to be classified and paid under the new award.
- Ordinary hours definition has been expanded
- Employers must not require or request their employees to work more than 38 hours per week, plus 'reasonable additional hours'.
- Changes to overtime penalty rates and loading
- Part time staff will now be entitled to time and a half and double time payments if they are in excess of their agreed hours.
- Any breaches from aggrieved employees may see the employer face fines of up to \$33,000 per breach.
- There is greater emphasis on the fact that if you want higher pay you should undertake more formal education externally.
- The awards must be clearly accessible electronically or in the lunch room so everybody knows the basis of their pay
- You must consult all staff and discuss changes if hours are going to be altered, and mitigate its impact on individuals where possible.
- An employee required by the employer to use the employee's motor vehicle in the performance of duties must be paid 74c per kilometer.
- Practices cannot force staff to sign contracts that contravene the award
- An employee, when required to perform any duties in a classification higher than their usual classification must be paid at least the rate which would be applicable if such duties were performed on a permanent basis.
- The uniform allowance, but not the laundry allowance, will be paid during all absences on leave.
- An employer may require an employee to take annual leave by giving at least four weeks' notice in the following circumstances: as part of a close-down of its operations where such direction is reasonable: or where more than 8 weeks leave is accrued.
- New redundancy rules state that you need to pay 4 weeks' notice if terminating. It is no longer two weeks or as mutually agreed.
- FWA Inspectors have been specifically employed to enter a workplace (without force) during working hours & interview persons (by consent), and to inspect and copy documents and records or inspect any work process. The Inspector can investigate; pay slip and time and wages record keeping requirements, freedom of association, Union right of entry, underpayment of wages and entitlements, coercion, undue influence, pressure and misleading and deceptive conduct in agreement making, Sham contracting arrangements, discrimination or contravention of NES

We've Moved Office!

Apart from welcoming our new staff members, ERGPA has been busy moving office! We are now located at 21-23 Maroondah Hwy Croydon, 3136.

If you thought moving house was hard, just try moving an office! It's sure kept our staff busy.

Not only do we have larger, upgraded offices for our ever expanding team, we also have brand new training facilities. Our training rooms can be found on the ground floor, and has room to hold up to 70 people at any one time.

Not only will this be fantastic for our own

events, but we're also able to hire the room to external organizations so they can run events in a brand new facility too!

We're looking forward to introducing you to our new office at our next event!

BizTech IT is a Melbourne based Support Company with the philosophy of 'bringing business and technology together'.

biztechit
"bringing business and technology together"

We enable your organisation to dramatically increase productivity and reduce costly overheads due to infrastructure downtime.

At BizTech IT we understand the requirements and pains of IT within the Medical Industry, with years of experience looking after the various

medical software and infrastructure used by the Divisions of GP, clinics and specialists across the state. With this in mind, our consultants aim to create integrated IT solutions that are tailored specifically to your business' individual requirements. We offer a wide range of superior services including equipment leasing and sales,

network support, security solutions, facilities management, web services and much more.

Our consultants' comprehensive knowledge of medical systems and all facets of technology ensure a streamlined, creative solution that will take your business to the next level