

Country Connections



President's Report

by Amber Moynihan, President, RMFN Victoria

As you will see from the report many things have been happening around the State to help connect our rural medical families.

Thanks go to the divisions that have taken up the offer to run some family networking events. Each one has reflected the need in their area.

The mentoring workshops have been run in three locations around the State. The participants all have left with new skills to enhance their lives. Thanks go to Leigh Kibby for being available to run these for us.

RWAV Annual Doctor Award night has been held, this acknowledged the work of the rural GP, also the support of the spouse and family.



Rural Medicine Australia 2009 is the annual conference of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine and the Rural Doctors Association of Australia.

This year **Rural Doctors Association of Victoria (RDAV)** and the **Rural Medical Family Network Victoria (RMFN)** will participate in this joint event.

Rural Medicine Australia 2009 will present outstanding opportunities for doctors and other health professionals working in rural and remote medicine to connect with colleagues, learn new skills, share their knowledge — and enjoy a brief respite from the pressures of work. The conference sessions and workshops will emphasise practical skills and knowledge with immediate application to the demands of rural medicine.

Rural Medical Family Network Victoria (RMFN) will be running their usual spouse and children's program as for previous RDAV conferences. This will also be of benefit to those who normally attend the ACRRM/RDAA conference - something that has been absent from their previous national conferences.

Rural Medicine Australia 2009 will be held in Melbourne from Thursday 29 October to Sunday 1 November 2009.

Special hotel room rates!

Special accommodation rates have been negotiated for delegates staying at the conference hotel (Rydges Hotel Bell City). To book, please check out the website www.rmfn-vic.com and click 'Accommodation' in the menu on the conference site.



CONTENTS

ISSUE 2

Presidents Report	1
Regional News	
• Central West Gippsland	2
• Otway	2
• Geelong	3
• Murray Plains	4
• South Gippsland	4
• Mallee	5
2009 Victorian Rural Doctors' Awards	6
Book Review	8
RWAV Conference	9
CEO Report	10

INSERT - RMFN Spouse & Children's Program for Rural Medicine Australia 2009



Practice Managers Workshop for practitioners and Practice Managers
Friday 30th October 2009
1.00 pm - 5.30 pm

NEXT ISSUE

Your contributions will be most welcome until our deadline of 15th October 2009.

T: (03) 9349 7806
E: enquiries@rmfn-vic.com

www.rmfn-vic.com

regional news

Central West Gippsland Annual Conference 2009

This year's conference was held the first weekend in May at Novotel St Kilda.

The Saturday family program provided the spouses and children with tickets to enjoy a visit to Luna Park, just a short walk from the Novotel. The Shock Drop, G force and the Spider were just some of the choices for those looking for the more exhilarating rides available.

Sunday was reserved as a family day.

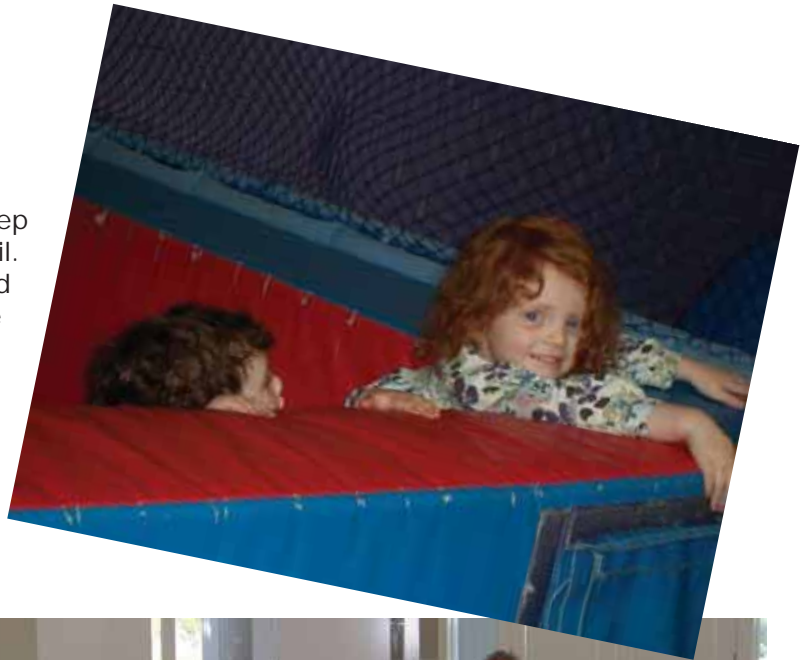


Otway

ODGP and RMFN FAMILY DAY Sunday 5th April 2009

Warrnambool

A small number of families met at the Mantra Deep Blue Warrnambool for a BBQ lunch on Sunday 5th April. Mini Golf, a jumping pillow and tennis were scheduled to follow, however due to inclement weather the afternoon activities were moved to indoors where families enjoyed ten pin bowling and pins and play for the afternoon. Thank you to those who attended and the RMFN for sponsoring the event.





Geelong

Fun Family Day on the Bellarine Railway, GP Family Networking Event

This was a very successful family social day attended by 78 participants among which were 37 children aged from 19yrs old to less than one year of age.

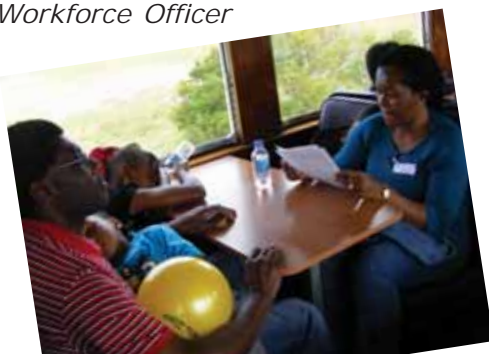
It was a beautiful sunny day as the participants boarded the steam train in Queenscliff and the train carriages were very comfortable and allowed for socialisation. We had morning tea on the train and everyone was able to have a walk around in Drysdale. There was the option of visiting the railway museum; and the children enjoyed time in the playground before the journey back to Queenscliff. The steam train gave everyone a pleasant ride and showed some of the local scenery.

Back at Queenscliff we had lunch at the Senior Citizen's Hall which was conveniently located right next door (to the station). Everyone was quite hungry by the time we got back and the platters of sandwiches, cakes and fruit was well received with a nice cup of tea/coffee. All of the children received a lolly bag to take home.

*Angela Rodaughan,
Workforce Officer*



Pictured left: Angela (right) with Carmel Bateman, Geelong Division.



regional news



Murray Plains GP Family Event - Festival of Flowers

**Friday, 1st May 2009 @
Niks Greek Tavern**

Sponsored by RMFN

MPDGP and RMFN extended an invitation to General Practitioners, MPDGP Staff, Spouse/Partners and Families to attend a Greek Banquet Dinner at Niks Greek Taverna

in Echuca.

The theme for the night was centred around "The Greek Festival of Flowers" which is the beginning of the traditional Greek celebration "Flowers Celebrations" commencing on Friday 1st May. With Mothers Day around the corner, the idea seemed appropriate and fun.

The Greek Banquet Dinner was very successful, beginning with dips and then a variety of seafood and souvlaki meat. The children, depending on their ages, ate from the children's menu or joined in the banquet.

There were a total of nine GPs and their families from the Division, who were evenly spread out on four tables amongst staff and their families. This worked particularly well on the night, with the consistently high noise level indicating that everyone was having a good time. The three children's tables were on the other side of the room, with them placed according to their age.

The children's program was centred around Mothers Day for the younger age group, a variety of card making materials were available including stickers, coloured paper, glitter, glue, pencils and crayons. Leggo

and Duplo were laid out on the floor in between the tables on rugs. The smaller children had a ball spreading it everywhere. The teenage kids all got on well together, playing a number of games including battleships etc and chatting to each other. Several of them were also involved in the supervision of the younger participants.

Forty-nine people attended the event including nine GPs from Elmore, Echuca, Kyabram, Kerang and Boort and nine Division staff; together with their partners/spouses where applicable. There were seventeen children altogether ranging from 2-18 years of age.

*Sally May
Workforce Facilitator
Murray-Plains Division of General Practice*

South Gippsland Annual Conference

**The Annual Conference was held 21st-22nd March
at the Silverwater Resort, San Remo.**

The family program included a visit to Churchill Island where there was free time to explore the many beautiful buildings and meet the animals that live on the island. Lunch was held in front of the island's Cafe before heading back to the bus. It was then on to Amaze'n'Things where there were many fun and stimulating interactive displays, optical illusions and inspiring challenges to explore.

Sunday a bus took the families to The Nobbies Centre where a ranger met and guided the group through activities such as seal watching, beach combing and other activities.



Mallee Division Swan Hill Weekend

The weekend began with a family dinner at the Grain Shed. Unfortunately due to the rain [much welcomed] the programme was changed from the Sound and Light Show to a movie at the Grain Shed.

On Saturday morning there was no formal programme, but some people took part in the Anzac Day march and service. All the families meet with their GP partners for lunch.

In the afternoon the families travelled to Nyah for fishing on the banks for the Murray. They also learnt the delight of cooking bananas in chocolate on the camp fire; marshmallows were also toasted over the fire. The rain held off until we were travelling home.

The GPs and their families braved the torrential rain to travel to Beverford



Tavern for the family dinner. The music for the evening was supplied by Bec, Sue and Fred Turner. The weather cleared at 9pm to revealed a starry sky, which allowed Nic our young fire twirler to put on a magnificent display.

Sunday morning was a cold day but we took over the lower Murray Inn with Sharelle and Chris lahy running games for the children. The adults had morning tea. Some of the party went to see the blacksmith at work. The GPs joined their families for a BBO lunch.



Mallee Division Regional News is continued on page 8

photoboard



2009 Victorian Rural Doctors' Awards

RWAV congratulated nineteen recipients of the Rural Doctors' Awards for their ongoing commitment to country Victoria.

The doctors and their families were acknowledged for their contributions to rural medicine at a dinner held at Hilton on the Park, Melbourne in May.

The Minister for Health, the Hon. Daniel Andrews presented the awards which were in three categories: 35 Years Service, Outstanding Contribution and New Rural Doctor.

RMFN would particularly like to congratulate our RMFN members who together with the GP spouse/partner received an award. They are, in alphabetical order:

CONGRATULATIONS!

Dr Alisdair Barnes & Dr Neville Steer
Mrs Donoi Bello & Dr Fola Bello
Dr Anthony Brown & Dr Ruth Stewart
Mrs Helen Brown & Dr James Brown
Ms Susie McDonald & Dr John
Beaumont
Mrs Caryl Nicolson & Dr Ian Nicolson
Mr Kenneth Reed & Dr Kate Davey



Lorna and James Brown



Iain Nicolson



Donoi and Fola Bello



Ken Read and Kate Davey



Susie McDonald and John Beaumont



Anthony and Ruth Stewart



Alisdair and Neville Steer



Vic Rural Doc Award Recipients

regional news

Mallee Division

RMFN/Mallee Division – GP Family Networking Day – Robinvale Weir, Sunday 22nd March

A social day for doctors in the Mallee regional was held overlooking the Murray River at Robinvale.

Funded by the RMFN and jointly coordinated by the Mallee Division of GP, the day attracted families from Swan Hill, Robinvale and Mildura.

In near perfect weather, GPs and their families enjoyed a BBQ lunch, kindly cooked by several of the GPs and then participated in games such as cricket, then 3-legged, egg & spoon and sack races. These races were fiercely contended and heats were held for children, wives and doctors as well as parent/child combinations before finals were held to determine champions. Some of the results were a little contentious and open to adjudication by onlookers.

It was a great opportunity for new doctors to the region and also those who had not previously met, to get together in a warm family atmosphere.

The day attracted 12 doctors, their spouses and 15 children, along with Amber Moynihan (President RMFN), Divisional staff including David Thompson (EO) and Bill Maher who kindly towed the portable cool room from Swan Hill.

The overall consensus was that the day was a resounding success and one that should be repeated later in the year.

Jackie Forster

Program Service Manager, Mallee DGP

Mallee Division Regional Spouse Meeting

A tea and coffee morning for spouses and families of GPs new (and old) to the district was held on Tuesday 19 May at Woodsies Gem Shop: a family friendly venue, so children were welcomed, and able to play in safety.

Catherine Kelly, the Skilled Migration Coordinator at MRCC was there to talk and answer any questions. Catherine had recently assisted a spouse with obtaining employment.

One issue that was identified was that sometimes IMG spouses feel shy and would not go places they didn't know. For this reason it was suggested that they needed first to go somewhere with their husband and then they may feel more comfortable going out on their own. It was suggested a good start being a family barbecue in a local park one Sunday afternoon for all the family.

GP Family Networking Events

RMFN is pleased to announce that funding will be available for GP Family Networking Events in the 2009-2010 financial year.

A number of divisions have held these events in the past year and some have been highlighted on these regional news pages.

Any suggestions for events can be discussed with your local division or with Gina on 9349 7806 or by emailing gina.lambe@rmfn-vic.com.

Book Review

by Amber Moynihan

Guppies For Tea

Written by
Marika Cobbold

Published by
Black Swan



You may think what a strange name for a book, on reading it you will see why.

The book is written with much insight and feeling about relationships that the main character Amelia Lindsay has with her mother, grandmother and lover Gerald.

The way Selma (the grandmother) copes or not with her time in a retirement village and Amelia's interaction with her is insightful, funny and poignant.

The book put into words what we all have to experience sometime in our life, the ageing of one's parents.

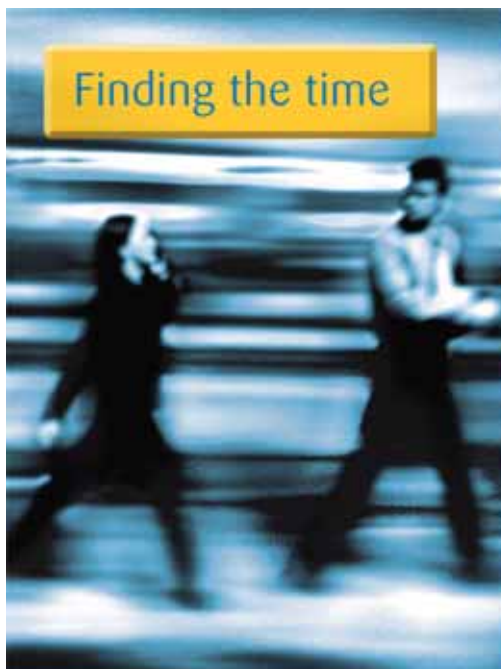


RWAV Conference 2009

RMFN was represented at the RWAV Conference by Michelle Bensley and Gina Lambe. They provided information about the network at the exhibition booth and were available to speak about the various support services available to rural medical families.



Pictured right: Michelle Bensley (RMFN) and Tanja Surwald (DHS)



Finding the time

Australians work some of the longest hours of the developed world. Add this work time to the hours and hours of commuting every week and it is easy to see how difficult it can be to find the time to get things done. Even when at work, emails and phone calls eat away at the time we have to get our real jobs done.

In the midst of a raft of demands, how can we possibly keep on top of everything? Short of voluntary unemployment or chronic sleep deprivation (both of which are not recommended!) the average person is not going to find more hours in the day. Instead, we need to make better use of the time we have.

If you find you are running out of time to get things done, at work or at home, you may find it helpful to:

- Make use of commuting time - If you drive get a hands-free kit and make phone calls, or read work documents if you take public transport
- Get things done in one trip - Try to make one big shopping trip rather than lots of little ones - the average Australian visits the supermarket 3 times a week!
- Share the load - Ask friends or family to help with tasks to get them finished more quickly

Sometimes it can be difficult to see a way forward when you are too snowed under. If you are struggling to manage your time, you might find it helpful to speak with a Converge International counsellor. Their support and guidance can help you to learn time-saving techniques and get back on top of things.

Converge International is a trading name of ITM Australia Ltd ABN 67 060 078 956. CNV00000 9/08

Freecall 1800 337 068
www.convergeinternational.com.au





CEO's Report

by Gina Lambe, CEO, RMFN Victoria

RMFN has seen a great deal of activity throughout the past few months with numerous events held within divisions as well as workshops for spouses and their family members.

RMFN has also been busy preparing and organising events for the RDAV annual conference.

GP Family Networking Events

A number of divisions have been extremely supportive in organising exceptionally favourable events for our/ their medical families. In the main, attendance has been very good and the general consensus is that most would like to see these become an annual event. Some divisions have yet to run their event and RMFN hopes that others who have not yet expressed an interest will do so in the future.

RMFN thanks the divisions for their support. – see articles and photographs in this issue.

RMFN Mentor Training

Three one-day workshops have been held with a total of eighteen participants. All three were extremely successful and thanks must certainly be extended to the facilitator, Dr Leigh Kibby. Leigh has a good knowledge of RMFN and the issues faced by rural medical families.

Some of the comments from participants were:

"I found Leigh to be very down to earth and passionate about his audience."

"Leigh tailored his course to suit his audience"

"Leigh could help us analyse our issues in life and find our own solutions"

"I learnt helpful communication and listening skills"

"It was a very productive workshop"

RMFN thanks those who participated in the workshops.



Churchill Workshop Group with Dr Leigh Kibby (Facilitator)



RMFN Spouse/Partner Education and Training Grants Round 12

Details are now available on the RMFN website www.rmfn-vic.com.

Applications close:
Monday 2nd November 2009



Rural Universities

The Rural Health Club at Melbourne University hosted a rural careers weekend across all universities in Victoria (Deakin, Melbourne, Monash, UNSW) in Wangaratta on the weekend 28th/29th February. The organising committee invited RMFN to attend the event and display its information.

As many are mature-age students with partners and even families it was a worthwhile event to attend. They now know of RMFN's existence when the time comes in the future for them to go rural.

Rural Doctors Association of Victoria (RDAV)

The combined RDAV, ACRRM and RDAA Conference will be held at Rydges Hotel Bell City in Preston, Melbourne from Thursday 29th October to Sunday 1st November 2009.

The venue is conveniently located just 20 minutes from the CBD and 15 minutes from Melbourne airport. The hotel is positioned within walking distance to the tram, rail and bus public transport networks.

The full registration form for the RMFN spouse and children's program is available on the RMFN website www.rmfn-vic.com. Details of all activities are also provided on the insert in this newsletter.

Special accommodation rates have been negotiated for delegates staying at the conference hotel (Rydges Hotel Bell City). To book, please check out the website www.rmfn-vic.com and click 'Accommodation' in the menu on the conference site.

Don't miss an opportunity to attend - place the date in your diary now - 29th Oct to 1st Nov 2009.

Details will be progressively loaded onto the websites:

RMFN www.rmfn-vic.com and RDAV www.rdav.com.au as well as ACRRM www.acrrm.org.au.



RMFN New Image

The RMFN new image is gradually working its way around the state and you should soon be seeing the new logo on all our material - as with everything, it takes time to complete a change.





Who to Call

RMFN Committee

President

Amber Moynihan 5033 1870

Members

Michelle Bensley 5658 1513

Lynn Griffiths 0428 831 637

Deborah Jones 5529 5232

Magdy Shamaly 0412 868 068

Chief Executive Officer

Gina Lambe 9349 7806

Useful Contacts

Beyond Blue 1300 22 46 36

Kids Help Line 1800 55 1800 (freecall)

Lifeline 131 114 (cost of local call)

Mensline Australia 1300 13 11 14

Suicide Prevention Crisis Line (02) 9331 2000

Dates for Your Diary 2009

Rural Medicine Australia 2009 – Healthy careers. Healthy communities.

RDVA Annual Conference co-hosted with RMFN this year joins with the Annual conference of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine and the Rural Doctors Association of Australia.

Thurs 29 October - Sun 1 November 2009
Rydges Hotel Bell City
Preston, Melbourne.

Check website for latest details
www.rmfn-vic.com



Counselling Services

Telephone Counselling FREECALL 1800 337 068

Converge International

24/7 We are there for you

Converge International, a not-for-profit and fully independent organisation, has been operating since 1960. It has the wellbeing of people and their families still at the heart of all we do.

The growing clouds of depression, stress, addiction, conflict, bullying and unethical corporate behaviour are just some of the challenges our team of over 300 experts help manage every day.

Career Counselling

This service is available to the families of general practitioners working in rural Victoria. Secondary students, tertiary students and mature age people are eligible to have consultations with a careers counsellor by telephone, over the internet or in person.

The service is provided by a career counsellor from Box Hill Institute (BHI) in Melbourne.

Please contact the RMFN Office on (03) 9349 7806 to obtain contact details or further information.

VDHP is a confidential and compassionate service for doctors and medical students with health concerns including stress & anxiety problems, substance use disorders, mental health disorders, any other health problems, including physical health concerns.



Telephone 9495 6011

Aikenhead Building,
Level 8, 27 Victoria Parade, Fitzroy, VIC 3065.



Bush Crisis Line 1800 805 391

Confidential 24 hour freecall telephone counselling and debriefing service for remote and rural health practitioners and their families.