



NATIONAL RURAL  
HEALTH  
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## Media Release

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### Conference to consider gold standard for rural diabetes care

Diabetes is a significant health issue for people living in rural Australia, especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people whose death rates due to diabetes are significantly higher in areas outside of major cities. The prevalence of reported diabetes increases significantly with increasing remoteness, with rates in remote areas being more than five times as high as in major cities.

The 10<sup>th</sup> National Rural Health Conference, to be held in Cairns later this month, will devote a concurrent session to improve diabetes care in rural and remote areas. Conference convenor, Owen Allen, said people living outside metropolitan areas need and deserve equitable access to a skilled diabetes professional workforce.

“The papers in the diabetes stream will focus on this issue,” he said.

“Jane Giles, with the benefit of 16 years as a diabetes educator, will look at how support can be provided to rural and remote health professionals providing diabetes education and care. There will be a focus on capacity building within health services, the value of networks based on a ‘hub and spoke’ model, and the establishment of regional and local multidisciplinary networks.

“Peter Goss, an experienced paediatrician in Gippsland, will present findings from a study which showed the importance of a multi-disciplinary model of diabetic services for children and young adults in rural settings. The study found that holistic child diabetes care can be successfully achieved in a rural setting with results comparable to large metropolitan units and with excellent patient and professional satisfaction.

“Bernadette Heenan, a diabetes educator, and colleague Keely Naden, will present an informative case study showing the benefits to a young Indigenous man with type 2 diabetes from professional up-skilling given to an Indigenous Health Worker. The successful outcomes involve Indigenous Health Workers, nurses, diabetes educators and diabetes specialists, early use of appropriate medications, and every available form of technology to communicate. The case study shows that achieving gold standard care is possible no matter where in Australia we live and work.”

The conference will run at the Convention Centre in Cairns from 17-20 May. Registration details and the full program are available at [www.ruralhealth.org.au](http://www.ruralhealth.org.au)

#### Further Contact

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