

## **Introduction to Rural Mental Health Practice commences**

In 2007, the CRRMH was awarded a grant from the Institute of Rural Clinical Services and Teaching (IRCST) to further develop, implement and evaluate an inter-professional orientation program for clinicians new to rural and remote mental health practice. The Introduction to Rural Mental Health Practice (IRMHP) is a distance-based program that uses the University of Newcastle's online learning platform and aims to introduce clinicians to the context of rural and remote mental health practice.

The program commenced in June, 2008 and 60 clinicians from across all four rural Area Health Services enrolled to participate. Currently, there are 52 participants remaining in the program and they are being supported online by staff from the CRRMH, including Danny Hills, Sophie Heathcote, Lyndy Urane and Georgia Pollard

In addition, a number of senior Area Health Service clinicians and educators have assisted with facilitating the online forums, including Denis Casey, Craig Willis and Lyn Davies. Their willingness and obvious commitment to the professional development of clinicians who are new to rural and remote mental health practice is greatly valued. We have received permission from Human Research Ethics Committees at both the University of Newcastle and NSW Health to evaluate the impact of the program and we will be submitting a final report on our findings in early 2009.

## **Funding boost for Mental Health Health Emergency Care online learning program**



In collaboration with the Institute of Psychiatry (IoP), the Education team at the CRRMH have recently received funding from the Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Office (MHDAO), NSW Health to progress academic accreditation for the Mental Health Emergency Care (MHEC) online learning program.

The funding will also include developing a 3-day non-accredited version of the program for workplace training that will be provided across all Area Health Services during 2009.

The MHEC program was piloted across NSW in 2007. The trial identified significant improvements in participants' confidence in managing key mental health and related issues, perceived self efficacy in responding to aggressive behaviours and confidence in key computer and internet related skills.

The MHDAO grant will enable us to refine and continue delivering the MHEC program. We are thrilled to have this opportunity to now ensure we have strategies in place for sustaining this important program and our partnership with the IoP will greatly enhance our capacity to disseminate and sustain the MHEC program.