

“Happy Easter to all our RNA members! This time last year we were busy planning our 2020 Forum in March which was to be held in Melbourne...little did we know that the world would be facing the immense challenge of Covid-19! I want to thank all those members who submitted an abstract for the Forum and we were thrilled to receive so many high quality submissions. The number and quality reflect the growth of our speciality practice and give us pause to consider that the Forum should be a 2 day event in the years to come?

One of the Forum sessions was to be a presentation and discussion about Refugees with Disabilities – the NSW Refugee Health Service, located in Sydney, has formed a Disability Support Team (DST) in recognition of the double jeopardy that refugees with a disability face in settling into their new life. The first is the disability itself, the second is the NDIS...

We understand that many of the outcomes from the DST do require additional funding however there are service pathways and lessons from our experience that can be applied to all other states and territories. We also think this should be shared with you, and not wait for Forum 2021.

So look out for our online presentations which will be followed by an on-line live question and answer panel from the DST in Sydney.

So...if any of our other members who submitted an abstract wish to convert their presentation to a PowerPoint or something similar we would be happy showcase your work on an on-line platform. Please get in touch with your state or territory representative re same

And of course even as our communities are in various forms of lock down our work continues to care for some of the most vulnerable in our society. Models of practice are being tweaked to take into account the new reality of the “lockdowns”, and RNA has been communicating with the Dept. of Home Affairs about some of the vexed issues such as Medicare enrolment during periods of self-isolation etc.

We also remain extremely concerned about the thousands of asylum seekers living in our communities who have been left out of the recent economic stimulus packages announced by the Federal Government. RNA along with RHeaNA have written to the Chief Medical Officer of Australia and all State Chief Medical Officers to express our alarm about the fate of these extremely vulnerable people.

Looking for something to do over Easter? I have attached the just released “State of the World nursing report” for some leisurely reading and our draft RNA Competency Framework.

The Competency Framework builds on our Scope for Practice document we released last year and represents another major piece of work underpinning our professional and speciality status. Have a look and see where you sit within the framework. We will be sending the Framework out later in a Survey Monkey type format for all members to complete. Feedback and suggestions about the Framework are also welcome.

I will leave you with these thoughts from a doctor in India :

*“Social Distancing is a privilege. It means you live in a house large enough to practise it. Hand washing is a privilege too. It means you have access to running water. Hand sanitisers are a privilege. It means you have money to buy them. Lockdowns are a privilege . It means you can afford to be at home.”*

Lastly, when I last wrote to you at Christmas I wished for rain – and am delighted to report that for a large part of Australia the rains did come...so I will be spending my Easter removing foot high weeds from the rarely visited side of the house!

Take care

Sandy

Chairperson RNA