

Greetings from the remote paradise of Thursday Island in the Torres Strait, where I live and work next to the most northerly hospital in Australia.

I am happy and excited to take up the role of FRAME Chairperson for the next two years. I look forward to working with representatives from all of the Rural Clinical Schools, Rural Training Hubs and with others in the rural health education sector. This is a time of much change in rural health education, by working together we can make the most of the opportunities and create great things for our students and our communities.

You might want to know who this person is who has taken this role. A brief resume reads like this. I have been a Rural General Practitioner since the late 1980s always working to that scope of practice we now call Rural Generalism. I worked for many years in south west Victoria but 7 years ago moved to far north Queensland. I took my first academic post at Deakin University in 2008, then in 2012 moved to take up the roles at James Cook University as Associate Professor Rural Medicine, and Director of Rural Clinical Training in the College of Medicine and Dentistry. I lead the Masters of Rural and Remote Medicine course, which is an online postgraduate program for health professionals, designed to build the academic skills needed by rural clinicians. I am immediate past president of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine, and am a board member of the Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service and of Rural Doctors Association of Australia and I sit on a number of committees at state and federal level.

The Australian Government Rural Health Multidisciplinary Training Program which funds Rural Clinical Schools has a significant impact on the interest in rural clinical practice amongst new graduates; but the maldistribution of clinicians persists. As the peak body for Rural Clinical Schools FRAME provides a forum for communication between the RCSs and with our Government funders. This places FRAME as a key organisation to focus the work addressing this workforce maldistribution that means rural and remote Australian communities are underserved in health care.

Finally, I would like to thank Professor Jennene Greenhill the immediate past chair and her assistant Ms Elspeth Radford and the whole Flinders University Rural Clinical School team for their hard work and dedication to FRAME over the past two years. Jennene has devoted much time and effort to this role, I only hope that I can carry the baton she has passed to me with even a modicum of her skill.

I would now like to introduce to you Ms Gabrielle Sabatino, and Ms Tania Torissi who will provide the Secretariat support for FRAME during my term as chair. Any mishaps along the way will be my fault and all competent organisation will be due to their skills.

Talk soon!

Ruth Stewart January 2019