Improving the impact of the research effort over the next five years
Chair: John Humphreys, Professor of Rural Health Research, Monash University, Bendigo

The scope for international collaboration and research
Jane Farmer, Centre for Rural Health, UK

Considering the challenges of international comparative studies - methods, collaborating and funding - and following on from my previous talk on the international research agenda, the question we need to ask is: where and how, from here... if anywhere?

Focusing research outcomes on the needs of practitioners
Jenny May, GP Academic, UDRH and RCS Northern NSW

The challenge is to engage clinicians in rural research efforts to support research in geographic areas, boost critical mass and expertise and develop meaningful partnerships with clinicians and their services.

Is the current rural research agenda primed to listen to rural practitioners, or is it by necessity having to listen to funders’ wishes to evaluate and answer questions of health service delivery mechanisms? Can it do both?

Designing research for policy and advocacy
Gordon Gregory, Executive Director, NRHA

Health researchers – perhaps because they see themselves as scientists, driven only by the search for the truth – sometimes want nothing to do with instruments of government or policy. But then they complain when those same instruments failed to provide them with sufficient resources for their work.

To be relevant, useful and well-funded, health researchers need to get down and get dirty: to involve themselves in partnerships with policy makers and politicians, find out what sort of evidence is currently needed and be flexible and pragmatic enough to set out to provide it.

Policy development through focused research
Jan Williamson, Service Access Programs Branch, Department of Health and Ageing

Health care is in a time of change with multiple reform policies announced by the Government. The emergence of priority issues for governments and the timelines for quality research do not always coincide. It is important to consider how evidence can be incorporated into policy, and how policy development can benefit from targeted research.