



**UNIVERSITY CENTRE  
FOR RURAL HEALTH  
NORTH COAST**  
*education research workforce*

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**Tues 15 Dec 2015**

### **Mental health focus leads to local's full professorship**

Clinical psychologist, educator and researcher James Bennett-Levy has been promoted from associate professor to full professor as a result of his pioneering work in the key areas of cognitive behavioural therapy, and compassion-focused therapy.

These modalities are playing an increasing role in the mental health support provided by health professionals such as psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, Aboriginal counsellors and other health professionals, including doctors and nurses.

Professor Bennett-Levy was advised of his promotion by the medical school of The University of Sydney, the main institution behind the University Centre for Rural Health North Coast where he has been a staff member since 2008.

The English-born psychologist has lived in the Northern Rivers for many years, and was Senior Clinical Psychologist at the Lismore-based North Coast Head Injury Service from 1991-96. He is a graduate of Oxford University, and gained his PhD through Southern Cross University.

During his time at UCRH the highly regarded organisation has developed productive partnerships with a range of key NGOs, and the area's health service coordinators.

"I have a particular commitment to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues to enhance social and emotional wellbeing in the local community", Professor Bennett-Levy said.

"We hope to build on these foundations to help provide better support for Aboriginal health and community workers in their complex jobs, and to develop and research culturally appropriate wellbeing strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients."

Professor Bennett-Levy is also keen to continue his research and writing, which is aimed at developing better training for counsellors and therapists, with a strong focus on personal development and reflection.

He has authored numerous articles and book chapters, and four books, including *The Oxford Guide to Behavioural Experiments in Cognitive Therapy*. Since its publication in 2004 this work has consistently been Oxford University Press' highest selling psychology textbook for clinicians. It was a British Medical Association book-of-the-year.

"With my passion for training and the success of this book, I also realised that there is an important unfilled need for specialist therapy books that translate cutting edge research and/or evidence-based treatments into structured, user-friendly textbooks," he said.

Recently he completed a new book, *Experiencing CBT from the Inside Out*, drawing on 17 years' working with this therapy.

Professor Bennett-Levy has lectured in many countries, including the UK, New Zealand, Sweden, Norway, Estonia, Switzerland, Hong Kong, Denmark, Iceland, Finland, Croatia, Morocco, and China.

Congratulating Professor Bennett-Levy on his promotion, UCRH director Professor Lesley Barclay AM said, "James' innovative work in this field has been highly influential, locally, nationally and internationally."

"His valued presence here on the North Coast, and his involvement with UCRH, has been of immense benefit to health care professionals, and in turn very valuable for the many clients they help support at times of need."

**Media information: Linda Pike, UCRH (02) 6620 7231 - Robin Osborne 0409 984 488**

---

**A collaboration between The University of Sydney, University of Western Sydney, University of Wollongong and Southern Cross University supported by the Australian Government  
Department of Health and the Northern NSW Local Health District**

**PO Box 3074, Lismore NSW 2480  
Phone: +61 2 6620 7570 Fax: +61 2 6620 7270 Email: [reception@ucr.edu.au](mailto:reception@ucr.edu.au)**