

Nursing, midwifery and allied health student engagement guide

July 2019

the future of rural health

The NRHSN is an initiative of the
Australian Government
Department of Health
administered as a consortium by
the Rural Workforce Agencies

About us

National Rural Health Student Network

The National Rural Health Student Network (NRHSN) represents the future of rural health in Australia. It has more than 9,000 members who belong to 28 university Rural Health Clubs from all states and territories.

It is Australia's only multidisciplinary student health network, bringing together people studying medicine, nursing and allied health, encouraging them to pursue rural health careers.

The NRHSN aims to:

- ▶ provide a voice for students who are interested in improving health outcomes for rural and remote Australians; and
- ▶ promote rural health careers to students and encourage students who are interested in practising in rural health care.

The NRHSN and its Rural Health Clubs offer rural experience weekends, career information sessions and professional development activities as well as providing a social base for students at university and when on rural placement.

The student network leaders also advocate on behalf of health students of all disciplines - including opportunities for more rural placements and training support.

Rural Workforce Agencies

The NRHSN is an initiative of the Australian Government Department of Health administered as a consortium by the Rural Workforce Agencies. The NSW Rural Doctors Network is the RWA managing the NRHSN on behalf of the Consortium.

Each Australian State and the Northern Territory is served by a government-designated RWA that works to improve access to high-quality healthcare for people in remote, regional and rural Australia. RWAs do this through a range of programs, services and initiatives that attract, recruit, retain and support GPs, nurses and allied health professionals in rural and remote communities.

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Rural Health Clubs

1. ARMS	Australian National University, ACT
2. AURHA	Adelaide University, SA
3. BREAATHHE	University of Newcastle, NSW
4. BUSHFIRE	Bond University, QLD
5. CARAH	Charles Darwin University, NT in assoc with Flinders University, SA
6. CRANC	University of Canberra, ACT
7. FURHS	Flinders University, SA
8. HOPE4HEALTH	Griffith University, QLD
9. KRASH	Notre Dame University, Broome, WA
10. LARHC	La Trobe University, Bendigo, VIC
11. MIRAGE	University of Sydney, NSW
12. MURHC	Macquarie University, NSW
13. NERCHA	University of New England, NSW
14. NOMAD	Deakin University, VIC
15. OUTLOOK	University of Melbourne, VIC
16. RAHMS	University of New South Wales, NSW
17. RHINO	James Cook University, QLD
18. Rh+	Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, NSW
19. RHUWS	Western Sydney University, NSW
20. ROUNDS	Notre Dame University, Sydney, NSW
21. ROUSTAH	University of South Australia, SA
22. RUSTICA	University of Tasmania, TAS
23. SHARP	University of Wollongong, NSW
24. SPINRPHEX	Combined Universities of Western Australia, WA
25. StARRH	Charles Darwin University, NT including Flinders University, NT
26. TROHPIQ	University of Queensland, QLD
27. WAALHIIBE	Combined Universities of Western Australia, WA
28. WILDFIRE	Monash University, VIC

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Introduction

The NRHSN has always prided itself in advocating for students of all health disciplines across Australia and believes all students should have equal opportunity to be supported and represented throughout their endeavours. We are committed to increasing interest of rural and remote pathways for nursing, midwifery and allied health students and generating equitable representation amongst Rural Health Clubs and other major multidisciplinary health student organisations. We support students in pursuing learning opportunities and experiences that will produce a generation of health professionals who are passionate about addressing the health disparities and outcomes of Australian's who live in rural and remote areas of our country.

Rural and remote

As suggested by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)¹, the term “rural and remote” encompasses all areas outside Australia's Major cities and metropolitan areas. Using the Australian Standard Geographical Classification System (ASGCS)², there are 5 classes of relative remoteness across Australia on the basis of access to services. These 5 classes are classified as Major Cities, Inner Regional, Outer Regional, Remote or Very remote.

Rural and remote nursing and midwifery

Rural and remote nursing and midwifery refers to all emerging and accredited nurse and midwifery professionals who practice outside of Australia's major metropolitan areas. Rural and remote workforce includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities, developed rural townships, farming and mining communities and all remote settlements³.

Rural and remote allied health

Rural and remote allied health refers to all disciplines, excluding nursing and medicine, recognised by the Council of Australian Governments⁴. This includes chiropractic care, dentistry, optometry, osteopathy, paramedicine, pharmacy, physiotherapy, podiatry, psychology, social workers, audiologists, dieticians and more.

¹ The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (n.d.). *Rural and remote Australians*. Retrieved from <https://www.aihw.gov.au/rural-health-rrma-classification>

² The Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2016). Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS): Defining remoteness areas. Retrieved from <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/1270.0.55.005Main%20Features15July%202016?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=1270.0.55.005&issue=July%202016&num=&view=>

³ Healthcare Australia. (n.d.). Rural and remote nursing. Retrieved from <https://www.healthcareaustralia.com.au/jobseekers/rural-remote-2/>

⁴ <https://www.coaghealthcouncil.gov.au/Projects/Independent-Review-of-NRAS-finalised/PID/524/evl/0/CategoryID/13/CategoryName/National-Registration-and-Accreditation-Scheme>

Aims

The National Rural Health Student Network (NRHSN) aims to support the development of Australian Indigenous and non-Indigenous nursing, midwifery and allied health students who are passionate and committed to the outcomes of quality healthcare for all Australians through their studies and future prospects.

The NRHSN works with our 28 Rural Health Clubs (RHCs) to encourage and engage with health students. The NRHSN believes that nursing, midwifery and allied health students often lack representation across Rural Health Club membership, thus The Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Student Engagement Guide has been created to support Rural Health Clubs across Australia to engage nursing, midwifery and allied health students' members.

The aims of the Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Engagement Guide and information provided, include:

- ▶ to inspire young rural and remote students to pursue nursing, midwifery and allied health careers
- ▶ inspire metropolitan nursing, midwifery and allied health students to pursue health careers in rural and remote Australia
- ▶ develop nursing, midwifery and allied health student's knowledge of rural community health
- ▶ share and gain positive and rewarding rural experiences
- ▶ increase nursing, midwifery and allied health presence in rural and remote Australia
- ▶ support and encourage nursing, midwifery and allied health students interested in rural and remote careers
- ▶ to continue to provide a voice for future rural and remote nursing, midwifery and allied health professionals.

Why a Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Student Engagement Guide?

The NRHSN Executive Committee liaise with the elected council members of each and every registered Rural Health Club across Australia. As a student run organisation, we provide a voice for students who are interested in improving learning opportunities for others and regularly investigate expressions of interest amongst our members. It has come to our attention, that rural health club councils wish to continue building a strong engagement with nursing, midwifery and allied health students as this has been identified has a challenge expressed by rural health club representatives.

The NRHSN has developed this guide in response to one of their 2019 priority areas; nursing, midwifery and allied health student engagement and support to encourage a multidisciplinary rural workforce that is well informed about the needs and opportunities in rural Australia.

The NRHSN committee believe in the foundation of a strong inclusive workforce community and therefore we acknowledge that further nursing, midwifery and allied health engagement is a fundamental priority.

How do I get in touch with nursing, midwifery and allied health students?

Engage with other relevant student organisations. Most universities have discipline specific student health clubs. A good first step is to contact the university union (or equivalent) and use their club list as a guide for who to contact. Having a representative from the club at another club's event with flyers and information about your organisation and activities will make your club known to more students. Like all advertising, plug the benefits of joining your club. Allied Health students generally look for something that will upskill them and prepare them for work as a new graduate. Engage with university schools and faculties to advertise what

the RHC does. Many universities are already supporting RHCs so use this to your advantage! Build relationships with placement officers, Heads of School and Deans to promote the club within the university networks. Finding rurally experienced lecturers and tutors within each school is also a great way to find credible advocates for the club. They can also double-up as help for skills days and information evenings.

Events

Below is a list of example events that could be run by your RHC:

Nursing

- ▶ RFDS experience days
- ▶ Skills days station ideas
 - Administration of specific medicines
 - Venipuncture
 - Cannulation
 - Immunisations
 - Falls prevention
 - Drug administration - oral vs IV, S4 vs S8
 - Basic Life Support

Midwifery

- ▶ Skills days station ideas
 - Suturing
 - Catheterisation
 - Mechanism of labour
 - Manual blood pressures

Allied Health

- ▶ Skills days station ideas
 - Rehab skills: specific to each discipline
 - Medication adherence and concordance in patients

Non-specific/combined - could be used for various disciplines

- ▶ Skills days station ideas
 - Mental health screening
 - Infection control/hand hygiene
 - Responding to patients with different abilities
 - Case studies with multidisciplinary team and simulations
- ▶ Hospital visits
 - Teddy bear hospital
 - Rural/Regional hospital tour
- ▶ Fundraisers
 - BBQs, bake sales
- ▶ Career evenings

- Networking with professionals
- Scholarship information
- ▶ Joint-club events
 - Events with all clubs in the region
 - WA Joint conference
 - Joint Rural Health Club Weekend (all QLD clubs)
- ▶ Cultural awareness
 - Art workshops
 - Sensitivity workshops
- ▶ Social events
 - Gala ball
- ▶ Challenge days/mock cases
 - Similar to skills days but in an external location with rural specific scenarios
- ▶ Health promotion in communities
 - Trip to country town over a weekend to interact with children, parents and the greater community outside of the classroom
 - Cherbourg Trip (TROHPIQ)

Leadership

Leadership is important in any organisation. Within our RHCs, health disciplines can be incredibly varied, so appropriate representation is vital. Using nursing, midwifery and allied health students in the committee opens up the club to more members as relatability starts to exist. Ideally, this should create more intent for students to go rural, which is the ultimate aim of any RHC. Having nursing, midwifery and allied health students in leadership positions also allows for the club to facilitate more members and ensures there are enough incentives for students to join. Some clubs have found it useful to mandate discipline representatives by including position in their Rural Health Club Constitution for each health discipline. This encourages active involvement and valuable input from each cohort. Having a multidisciplinary approach to your RHC promotes active participation from more members, which will in turn allow the club to grow and expand.

How do I get nursing, midwifery and allied health (NMAH) students to take on a leadership role in the club?

It begins with engagement of the degree cohorts. As mentioned previously, getting in touch with NMAH students is the only way for them to know the club. NMAH degrees are generally shorter than medicine, usually being two to four years. Furthermore, the majority of these degrees are undergraduate entry so students may be younger and more hesitant to become actively involved in student clubs initially. Having existing members promote the club heavily to younger cohorts is one strategy - this includes (but is not limited to) speaking at lectures, advertising on social media or physical posters/flyers on campus.

Once recruited, it should be a priority to encourage enthusiastic students to take on management roles, then step them into executive positions. Consider having a co-chair system or specific nursing, midwifery, and allied health executive members in charge of that branch of the club, to allow these members to have adequate representation and autonomy. However, it is still important to ensure there is enough support as these students may be inexperienced with student clubs. Having representatives for each discipline/group of disciplines also allows for direct contact from a known person. Students will be more likely to engage with the club if they know their representative. It can be tricky finding consistent representatives for each degree, so grouping into NM and AH, rehab/med services etc can help with filling positions. It can get disheartening

when you can't engage with a specific cohort or discipline, but all it takes is one strong representative to establish the relationship and drive succession.

Important dates in nursing, midwifery and allied health

December-February:

CRANaplus' Rural Nursing Symposium: The Rural Nursing Symposium is a forum for engaged nurses, leaders, clinicians and academics to discuss key issues that face rural nursing now and into the future. *

Universities hold Orientation Days for commencing students. These event locations and dates are specific to your university, however is always a great way to meet students.

March-May

5th May is International Midwives Day. There are walks organised all over the country; with your local branch or your local workforce and we encourage all midwives and supporters of midwives to join in. If there isn't already a walk near you, please plan one and register with Australian College of Midwives (ACM).

12th May is International Nurses Day. Host an ACN National Nurses Breakfast or other event to celebrate International Nurses Day. Register via the ACN website www.acn.edu.au/events

June-August:

The National Allied Health Conference which is held every two years and provides an opportunity to showcase research and network with allied health professionals at all stages of their careers. There is always a strong focus on rural, remote and Indigenous health within the concurrent sessions and workshops. *

September-November:

The Australian College of Midwives (ACM) National Conference and Student Conference. These events take place annually and dates are subject to change. *

CATSINaM National Professional Development Conference - The CRANaplus Annual Conference serves as an opportunity for like-minded remote and isolated health individuals to network, connect and share. *

Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA) host the annual HealthFusion Team Challenge (HFTC). The HFTC is an extracurricular competition for university students from the health and medical professions. It provides students with an opportunity to demonstrate their expertise in teamwork and collaboration as they develop a health care management plan in response to a complex Indigenous case study. *

The SARRAH Summit which is held every two years provides a forum to discuss, develop and promote strategies to enhance the health and wellbeing of people who live in rural and remote communities. These dates are subject to change every two years. *

The SARRAH National Conference for Rural and Remote Allied Health Professionals. *

* Locations and dates of conferences and events are subject to change each year.

Rural placements

Australian Rural Health Education Network (ARHEN)

The Australian Rural Health Education Network (ARHEN), established in 2001, is the peak body for the 11 University Departments of Rural Health (UDRH) located in every State and the NT. It receives core funding from the Department of Health and is co-funded by its member UDRHs.

The Australian Rural Health Education Network (ARHEN) in consultation with its University Departments of Rural Health (UDRH) have developed a guide to multidisciplinary university rural placements at UDRHs across Australia. The UDRH Placements Guide provides information on what discipline placements are available, travel and accommodation and contact details for the individual UDRH for you to contact.

What are the University Departments of Rural Health (UDRH)?

Each UDRH is a leader in multidisciplinary rural health education, research and the development of innovative service models. They are the only rurally based academic facilities that are multidisciplinary, work at undergraduate and postgraduate levels and also with the existing workforce.

UDRHs are focused on expanding and enhancing the rural and remote health workforce through multidisciplinary education and training, research, professional support and service development. The aim of the UDRHs, is to provide and coordinate clinical placements in rural and remote locations for health science students from universities across Australia.

Financial support for rural clinical placements

Scholarships and grants are available for undergraduate students to support their ongoing development of remote Health Professionals for the future.

Scholarships and grants are also offered by many State and Territory Governments and workforce agencies, the Commonwealth Government, Australian Universities and Rural Health Clubs, as well as other participating organisations.

Visit www.nrhsn.org.au/resources/scholarships for links to scholarships offered Australia wide.

Case studies

BREAATHHE Rural Health Club - University of Newcastle, NSW

BREAATHHE have identified the challenges with engaging with nursing, midwifery and allied health cohorts at their university in the past. Although they have never run nursing, midwifery and allied health specific events, Jocelyn Ledger (Chair of BREAATHHE, 2019) explained this has begun to change over the previous two years as they have been heavily focused on increasing their allied health representation. In collaboration with BREAATHHE's Allied Health Executive member, the Rural Health Club identified events they wish to continuing holding this year and in the future. They include:

- ▶ Nursing and midwifery specific Skills Night with involvement of the Nursing and Midwifery Association (AMF)
- ▶ Allied Health and Nursing Scholarship Information Night - similar to the Medical Rural Scholarships Evening promoting JFPP and Bush Bursary but specific scholarships to nursing, allied health, and rural placement opportunities
- ▶ Attendance at Nursing and Midwifery orientation session at the start of the year to increase awareness



"Our biggest single way to engage with students to be involved in our RHC is attending the individual orientation sessions by degree during orientation week at the start of the year. We are hoping that another few years of this, BREAATHHE will be known by all health degree students at UoN."

- Jocelyn Ledger, 2019 President of BREAATHHE

TROHPIQ Rural Health Club - The University of Queensland, Queensland University of Technology, Australian Catholic University, University of Sunshine Coast, Central Queensland University, University of Southern Queensland, QLD

Examples of Nursing and Allied Health events held and organised by TROHPIQ Rural Health Club:

Event: Bush Retreat for Allied Health and Nursing Students, Camps QLD, Lake Moogerah, 2016

The annual interdisciplinary Bush Retreat for Allied Health and Nursing students (or BRAHN) took place at Lake Moogerah in 2019. It was jam-packed with challenging activities, team-building exercises, and case-based team puzzles. The weekend was all about getting to know fellow TROHPIQ members in allied health, becoming familiar with health careers in a rural setting, and having loads of fun!



Event: Allied Health Challenge Day, Kindilan Outdoor Recreation Centre, Redlands, Qld, 2017

Previously known as the “Bush Retreat for Allied Health and Nursing Students”, in 2019 it was changed to just a day time event aimed towards giving Allied Health students a chance to get outside of the city for a day. According to the Rural Health Club report, the day gave students an opportunity to network with other students from a range of allied health disciplines through a range of activities including low-ropes and team building challenges as well as a real-life based case study challenge.

Event: Careers in Rural Health Evening (For Allied Health and Medical Students), UQ Campus, 2017

Provides opportunities for students to learn about the many options for working rural health from a range of speakers. Students benefit from insight about different avenues to work in rural health. These events have been held at different campuses across Queensland associated with TROHPIQ Rural Health Club. Therefore, Allied Health, Nursing and Midwifery cohorts are targeted specifically for each event.

Resources for nursing, midwifery and allied health

This section provides resources available for ongoing skills training, courses, workshops and further professional development support for nursing, midwifery and allied health postgraduates.

Australian College of Midwives

The Australian College of Midwives (ACM) is a national, not-for-profit organisation that serves as the peak professional body for midwives. Its vision is to be the leading organisation shaping Australian maternity care. The College provides a unified political voice for the midwifery profession, supports midwives to reach their full potential, and sets professional practice and education standards. It is also committed to ensuring all childbearing women have access to continuity of care by a known midwife

Australian College of Nursing

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) develops, supports, represents and educates nurses, support partnerships and provides latest news and updates for undergraduate, postgraduate and professional nurses. ACN is the pre-eminent professional nursing membership organisation in Australia, open to nurses in all settings and at every stage of their career. In addition to being the Australian member for the International Council of Nurses, ACN is also an authorised higher education provider and registered training organisation and specialises in online postgraduate, professional development and training courses for registered and enrolled nurses.

Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association (APNA)

The Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association (APNA) is the peak professional body for nurses working in primary health care and students who wish to pursue a career in the primary health care sector. The APNA showcase position papers, events, the “Not Just a Nurse” podcast, media releases, news and more.

CATSINaM

The Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives (CATSINaM) is the sole representative body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives in Australia. CATSINaM's primary function is to implement strategies to increase the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples into nursing and midwifery professions.

CRANaplus

Initially an organisation for remote area nurses, CRANaplus has now expanded to include allied health and medicine. Funding is provided to CRANaplus to address:

- ▶ the lack of support experienced by remote health professionals;
- ▶ the psychological impact of working as an isolated health professional; and
- ▶ the poor access to relevant educational courses.

CRANaplus offer a variety of online learning courses which provide health professionals with the opportunity to stay up-to-date with current and based on the principles of best/evidence based practice and flexible learning. CRANaplus understand that online training is preferable for those who practice health in remote and isolated areas where access to education platforms are limited.

Courses include;

- ▶ Online modules
- ▶ Management training
- ▶ Free modules
- ▶ Clinical skills training
- ▶ Rural Nursing Symposium
- ▶ Rural Nursing Workshops
- ▶ Bush Support Service and Workshops; and
- ▶ LINKS Mentoring Program: Rural and Remote Health Professionals

Indigenous Allied Health Australia

Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA) is the peak body in Australia representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allied health professionals and students. IAHA receives funding through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Training Package. As a peak body IAHA:

- ▶ provides support and advocacy on behalf of Indigenous allied health professionals and students at the local, regional and national level;
- ▶ builds strong leadership capacity across the allied health and Indigenous health sectors;
- ▶ works closely with organisations, universities and other related sectors to improve health curricula, address allied health workforce issues, and promote allied health careers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
- ▶ provides expert advice to governments, allied health professional bodies, educational institutions and the health sector in relation to health policy and issues;
- ▶ develops and maintains strong networks and connections to Indigenous communities to ensure IAHA core objectives are meeting their needs and aspirations; and
- ▶ works closely with the health sector and communities to improve access to allied health services

Services for Rural and Remote Allied Health (SARRAH)

SARRAH describes itself as a grass roots organisation and undertakes a significant amount of lobbying nationally for issues facing rural delivery of services but also has a strong focus on network support for rural and remote allied health. SARRAH is not a member organisation of the AHPA as it is not regarded as an allied health professional organisation.

SARRAH was established as part of the 1997-98 Budget process with the amalgamation of several discrete rural programs into one larger program with the aim of providing a more flexible and streamlined approach. The original objectives of the program include:

- ▶ supporting rural and remote allied health professionals;
- ▶ providing information and assistance to Government and interested parties; and
- ▶ advancing rural and remote allied health through policy advice and identification of priority issues