

# COOEE



ISSUE 1

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Want to get in touch with the executive committee? All you need to do is send us an email:

[executivecommittee@nrhsn.org.au](mailto:executivecommittee@nrhsn.org.au)

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook & Twitter!



# From the Chair



A big welcome to our first newsletter of 2018!

2018 has been off to an exciting start for the National Rural Health Student Network (NRHSN). At the end of 2017, it was announced that the Health Workforce Consortium would be the administrators of the NRHSN for the next 3 years, with New South Wales Rural Doctors Network being the primary organisation. Through face to face meetings and frequent teleconferences, the NRHSN is happy to say that it has been a perfect fit working together with NSW RDN.

The Executive Committee has been busy with updating and creating new position papers, liaising and assisting in the running of our 28 rural health clubs, creating resources and guides for our student members, as well as attending conferences and stakeholder meetings across Australia. It's been a busy 4 months to say the least!

One of the highlights to the start of our year was hosting our Annual Council for the first time at Coogee in Sydney. We had the Presidents of our rural health clubs, plus our Executive Committee all together for a great weekend. Our rural health clubs are the reason that we exist, and we continue to aim to create opportunities for our students and represent them at a national level.

We are so grateful to each one of our stakeholders for their commitment and support of the NRHSN. 2018 is going to be a busy, yet exciting year for the NRHSN!

Carolyn Reimann  
NRHSN Chair

# MEET THE EXECUTIVE



We are very excited to introduce our 2018 NRHSN Executive Team!

- Chair - Carolyn Reimann
- Vice Chair - Digby Allen
- Secretary - Amy Wenham
- Allied Health Officer - Simon Whelan
- Community and Advocacy Officer - Ashley Brown
- Indigenous Health Officer - Rebecca Fatnowna
- Medical Officer - David Trench
- Nursing and Midwifery Officer - James Tsakisiris

If you would like to get in touch with the committee, please send an email to [executivecommittee@nrhsn.org.au](mailto:executivecommittee@nrhsn.org.au)

## NRHSN Chair

Name: Carolyn Reimann

University and Degree: 5th year medical student at James Cook University in Cairns

Don't let the American accent fool you, although our Chair grew up in a large metropolitan city of Detroit in the United States her love is that of Australian rural and remote health. Carolyn has undertaken placements in the rural communities of Boulia, Babinda, and Mt. Isa throughout her time at James Cook University. She was the Secretary of the NRHSN last year, and has been the Secretary of her rural health club RHINO (Rural Health in the Northern Outback) since 2016. Rural health has taken her to Cooktown, Warwick, and Emerald on Joint Rural Health Club Weekends; to the centre of Australia visiting rural

high schools from Alice Springs to Tennant Creek, and even out to the Whitsundays on a boat of rural generalists for the Hamilton Island Yacht. It was at JCU where she first discovered what a Rural Generalist was and the type of medicine that could be practised in rural and remote communities and she was sold hook, line and sinker. The end goal is to become a rural generalist and work in areas of Far North Queensland and the Kimberley.

**Random fun facts:** Holds a degree in Environmental Science and Geology, has hiked the Overland Track and Three Capes Track, you can find her out in the bush hiking and camping in her spare time.



# Executive News

## Rural Health Stakeholder Meeting

On February 9th, our Chair Carolyn Reimann was fortunate enough to represent the National Rural Health Student Network in Canberra at the Rural Health Stakeholder Roundtable.

At this meeting there was a variety of organisations all representing rural and remote health workforce in Australia. The representatives met with the new Minister for Rural Health, Senator Bridget McKenzie and the recently appointed National Rural Health Commissioner Professor Paul Worley.



There were many important discussions that took place which focused on rural health workforce pathways, Indigenous and Allied Health workforce issues in rural and remote Australia.

The NRHSN is grateful for the opportunity to represent the views of all health student disciplines across Australia. We will be meeting with the roundtable later in the year for further discussions

## Tasmanian Rural Health Conference 'Resilience in Rural Communities'

This year the Annual Tasmanian Rural Health Conference was held in Launceston, TAS. Ashley Brown (pictured on the right), the NRHSN Community and Advocacy Officer, is a medical student from Rustica Rural Health Club that was present for this two day conference.

This conference brought together current rural doctors, and trainees committed to becoming a rural doctor. Focusing on a resilience in rural communities.

The Tasmanian Rural Health Conference gave those in attendance the opportunity to learn about paediatrics in primary care, GP training pathways, resilience, and to hear from the National Rural Health Commissioner, Professor Paul Worley.



# NRHSN March Council

By: Amy Wenham  
2018 NRHSN Secretary



The Annual NRHSN Council was hosted the 2nd-3rd of March in Coogee, NSW, and saw representatives from the 28 Rural Health Clubs from across Australia and the NRHSN Executive Committee come together.

This weekend was aimed at updating the Council on the work the executive had done and what was planned for 2018, bringing forth a number of updated papers to be voted on, discussing opportunities for students and much more. The updated position papers that were voted on included; Bonded Position Paper, Nurse Practitioner Position Paper, and the Member Manual.



This weekend also included an update from the Department of Health, a communications workshop, presentation on Indigenous Mental Health and Indigenous Health Engagement, and multiple presentations from the Executive Committee - Engaging Nursing and Allied Health Students, Running a Rural Health Club and How we can all get involved in the rural health world of 2018!



This weekend was a great opportunity for all to see what other rural health clubs were doing and also how they could work together on projects.

# Looking after YOU on a Rural Placement

By: Ashley Brown, Nina Reid, Alannah Gall, Elif Stoneman, Hannah Nichol  
2018 Rustica Committee Members

In 2015/16 Tasmania topped the charts in Australia... For the number of mental health hospital admissions. Beyondblue found in their National Mental Health Survey of doctors and medical students that we, as medical students and young doctors are most at risk of mental health problems. We are more likely to experience burn-out, more likely to experience psychological distress and suicidal thoughts than the general community. But is this news to us? It shouldn't be.

Those of us who live and work in rural communities, or will be in the near future, are at increased risk of suicide and self harm. In fact, the more rural we go the higher the risk. But it's not all doom and gloom. We also know that overall life satisfaction and wellbeing are reported as being better than those living in major cities. And working in rural health is awesome!

So when your rural placements come along, here are some tips for keeping your mental health in order

## Prep and Plan

- Get in touch with the clinic or hospital you are in before you arrive.
- Find where the practice, accommodation and supermarket are; plan your transport; save important contact details.
- This way it won't be so daunting when you arrive and you will always have someone who you can call for help.

## Get Involved

Jump at any social activity you are offered over the course of your placement. It's likely you'll only be there for a few weeks so you have nothing to lose, only new friends and awesome experiences to gain!

## Manage the Isolation

If you embrace life in this new community, you are likely to find new friends everywhere you look - connecting with other students or staff is a good place to start. If you have phone or internet service on your placement, stay in touch with friends, family or your partner at home.



## Take some time for yourself

Whether it's chilling out with yoga or meditation, blowing out the cobwebs with a walk or run, procrasti-baking, napping or a quality Netflix session; take some time to focus on something not related to medicine.

## Talk to someone

Identify people who you trust and if you are feeling overwhelmed or alone talk to them. Often the people who live in the community will have experienced some or all of what you are feeling. Remember - no one can help if you haven't told them you need help! No problem is too big, small, silly or serious - and often the best way to deal with a problem is to share it. There are also a number of mental health hotlines available for health students!



# RURAL HEALTH CLUB HIGHLIGHTS

## BREAATHHE



On Monday 26 March, first and second year medical students attended the inaugural BREAATHHE Rural Medicine Information Night. BREAATHHE, in partnership with NSW RDN and the University Department of Rural Health (UDRH), hosted the evening to promote a broader scope of rural health education and training opportunities to medical students in their pre-clinical years.

Many of the students who attended had not previously considered the possibility of rural placements. BREAATHHE worked with year managers to timetable the event into the first and second year students' schedules. This, along with Facebook and O week promotion, and free pizza (of course!), meant the evening was well attended.

After a brief introduction by BREAATHHE, guest speakers presented information on Bush Bursary scholarships, the John Flynn Placement Program, NSW Cadetships and the UoN Rural Health training pathways. Invited third and fifth year medical students, who had previously been involved with the programs, then related their personal experiences.

To conclude the evening Lauren Cone, Clinical Dean of UoN UDRH gave a highly informative and entertaining presentation on rural training opportunities that arise for medical students in their final clinical years. Dr Cone highlighted the amazing facilities, new hospital and clinical education infrastructure and the positive lifestyle that close-knit rural communities have to offer.

Overall, the night gave a compelling and engaging reason to consider rural health for preclinical medical students. It was well received by all who attended and, most importantly gave clear direction on how to get involved.

# RURAL HEALTH CLUB HIGHLIGHTS

## LARHC

By: Kellie Inglis 2018 Vice President LARHC



As we all know, health students are always busy, always running from a clinical placement to a pharmacology lecture in a 1980s-esque lecture theatre. We all need to take a break to destress from our busy schedules.

On the 21st of March, along the sunny bank of Lake Weeroona in Bendigo, LARHC (La Trobe Rural Health Club) hosted its very first 'lake stroll and ice cream event'. The dichotomy of ice cream and exercise in the same event made sure to draw attention to all those who went.

The tranquillity of a setting sun proved to be a fitting backdrop for an evening of bonding over shared interests in rural health (and decadent desserts). Each LARHC member came with an empty belly and left with new friends and lifelong memories - a wonderful reminder of how lucky we are to live in rural Australia.

## MIRAGE

By: Amy Wenham 2018 MIRAGE President

Each year universities around Australia take part in O-week, as they welcome all new and old students. This week and the weeks after

This year MIRAGE, the University of Sydney Rural Health Club, held their annual rural health information night 'Cans in the Stands' in mid March. This night brought together students from all health disciplines, as well as NSW Rural Doctors Network, for a night of food, mingling and information on how they can get involved in rural health.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## April

11th- 12th : National Rural Health Alliance - 6th Rural and Remote Health Scientific Symposium

14th - 15: ARMS Close the Gap Conference



**ANU Rural Medical School**  
presents

**Close The Gap 2018**

**April**  
**14<sup>TH</sup> - 15<sup>TH</sup>**

JCSMR Finkel Lecture Theatre  
ANU Canberra

**TICKETS**  
ARMS MEMBER: \$30  
NON-MEMBER: \$35  
ACCOMODATION  
+ TICKET : \$75

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**ARMS Close the Gap**  
[www.facebook.com/armsclosethegap](http://www.facebook.com/armsclosethegap)

Tickets available at  
[closethegapconference.getapay.com](http://closethegapconference.getapay.com)

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Cander River

COME JOIN STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS FROM AROUND AUSTRALIA FOR TWO DAYS OF INSPIRING SPEAKERS, STIMULATING WORKSHOPS AND UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES.  
LEARN ABOUT WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO IMPROVE INDIGENOUS HEALTH AND TOGETHER WE CAN CLOSE THE GAP!