



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

going
rural
health



Strengthening Victoria's rural health workforce

The Going Rural Health program develops the rural health workforce by:

- **Working with health providers** to recruit and retain graduate nursing and allied health professionals in rural and remote Australia
- **Creating new placements** in innovative settings to teach students about engagement, public health and working with disadvantaged clients
- **Making students more work ready** through innovative placement models such as Service Learning, and by providing contemporary education programs
- **Enhancing existing student placements with regional university partners** to provide quality rural training experiences for health profession students
- **Addressing the barriers for students to 'go rural'** for their placement by providing accommodation, financial support, orientation, cultural awareness training and tutorial support
- **Providing education and training to supervisors** to ensure quality placements and develop a culture of learning in rural health services.

In 2017 we



**supported 1,400
nursing & allied
health students**



**trained over 400
supervisors of
students**



**developed and
implemented over
100 service learning
placements**



**delivered Cultural
Awareness
workshops to more
than 110 students
and staff**

What do students say?

'I enjoyed being able to work closely with other health professionals and the opportunity to provide personalised care for each client. My teamwork skills have improved immensely as a result of this placement. I also now appreciate the importance of client advocacy and some of the associated advantages and challenges of a rural setting. Having placement in a rural setting has increased my desire to work in a rural setting once I graduate.'

Speech Pathology student



- **91% of students supported are "very satisfied or satisfied" with their rural placement**

The Going Rural Health team:

- Are a multidisciplinary team of health professionals and administrators with extensive experience in rural student placement support
- Work with small rural health services in Victorian communities to enable education and expansion of their workforce
- Provide much needed discipline-specific professional development to our regions
- Maintain a skilled team co-located in regional centres as well as in small health services (Numurkah, Yarrawonga, Maryborough, Benalla, Echuca, Cobram, and others) to holistically support students, supervisors and health professionals
- Collaborate with La Trobe University, Federation University and Charles Sturt University to ensure their students have access to rural placements, and are supported to be trained, in our regions
- Bring metropolitan and regionally based students to small, rural communities for a generalist and innovative placement
- Provide financial support for student travel and accommodation

We work with all educators

Referring to Going Rural Health initiatives, a student coordinator from another university commented: ‘..the students have had a wonderful time and felt very supported. Thank you for your work with us this year, you are doing a great job making these connections! The living skills project is fantastic’ ..and.. ‘it is excellent news that you have sourced a number of local clinical supervisors.’

Associate Professor, Placement Coordinator
Australian Catholic University

Rurally experienced students get jobs

Our ongoing evaluation of rural placements has identified 50 % of students who complete a rural placement, come back to practice rurally once qualified.

Service learning

Health students contributing to healthier communities

A small District Health Service had a 3 year waiting list for physiotherapy services. The Going Rural Health team developed a project where the student reduced the waiting list and provided low-risk interventions (through a Service Learning placement). The student exceeded all expectations by developing a fantastic program resulting in the waiting list being reduced significantly, giving the local community improved access and providing valued support to the department for this much-needed local service.

“The support from the Going Rural Health has been fundamental in the growth in number and quality of service learning placements that promote and develop CSU graduate attributes.”

Physiotherapy Lecturer
Charles Sturt University

Our students have impact!

The Going Rural Health team supported a Social Work student on placement at a rural community health centre. The student conducted an evaluation of a program’s assessment tools. The evaluation provided evidence that led to continued funding of this program and ensured the staff positions associated with the program were ongoing.

‘It was a joy to go to work each day. Not once did I feel like I wasn’t contributing to the team of healthcare workers. Staff always had time to teach me/answer questions and as a result, I believe I have grown over the past 5 weeks.’

Dietetics student

Physiotherapy students undertook placements at a small district health service where Going Rural Health provided support and supervision. The students led an evaluation and re-design of their model of care. This resulted in an expansion of the number of physiotherapy positions available at this service and increased capacity to have more students in the future. Ultimately, this led to an expansion of physio services to the community.



Case Study

Last year I had the pleasure of supervising fourth year Occupational Therapy students through their project placement. In partnership with a not-for-profit NGO, the students developed a comprehensive lifestyle program for those experiencing homelessness and mental health issues.

The students commented that my direct supervision assisted them to gain the most from their practical experiences and in building their confidence as new practitioners. The program was then successfully rolled out with third year students in subsequent placements.

It is exciting to know that the innovative work developed by the initial students has been adopted across all sites and is now an ongoing placement for students.

Laura Forbes,
Mental Health Occupational Therapist

For further information:

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