



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

going
rural
health

University Department of Rural Health

Excellence and equity in Rural Health through education, research and engagement

New Rural Placements in Victoria

Appointment of educators has created new placements in small, rural health services

Numurkah

An allied health educator has been appointed at Numurkah Health Service. This one day per week role will increase the number of allied health students on placement at this service, support these students while on placement and enhance allied health education for staff and students.

Ms Rochelle Barbaro, an Occupational Therapist, has taken on this role. As an experienced educator, Rochelle provides a range of opportunities for her students to learn. Feedback from her students describe the placement in the following ways:

"Being able to work with a range of different client needs. Being able to closely work with other health disciplines to further understand their scope of practice."

La Trobe Occupational Therapy student

In 2018, as a result of Rochelle's work, a further 10 students (50 placement weeks) will undertake their placement Numurkah Health.

Yarrawonga

An allied health educator has also been appointed at Yarrawonga Health one day per week. Ms Kirsty Paul is a Dietitian with a passion for student learning and a clear understanding of the health needs of her small community. Kirsty has been able to support students as well as increase

the supervision skills of staff to ensure a positive placement experience for students. Student feedback shows this has had an impact:

"More opportunities presented themselves and I was able to take part and learn new things. The educator was very resourceful and mindful of our learning. I am able to confidently handle a patient load, assess a patient. I had great exposure, which can sometimes not be seen in city hospitals."

Charles Sturt Nursing student

As a result of Kirsty's efforts, Yarrawonga Health will host an additional 10 allied health students (50 student placement weeks) in 2018.

Psychology Program

The Going Rural Health program has been tasked with supporting 20 Master of Psychology students to undertake a long part-time placement in rural areas. These students carry a caseload and so provide services under supervision to clients with mental health conditions. These placements have become highly valued by students because they engage in a range of learning experiences, hold a degree of independence, and work with a large scope of client ages, presentations and therapeutic needs. One student described her experience on a rural placement:

"I wanted to gain a better understanding of the challenges of working in rural areas. During my rural placement, I gained exposure to these challenges; how my clinical care is impacted when there are often less resources and services available in allied health. I gained exposure to varying presentations and those from different cultural backgrounds. I learnt about the services specific to the regional area within which I worked and the programs specifically tailored to the needs of that community. Through the Going Rural program, I was supported with financial remuneration for travel and accommodation during my placement. Going Rural Health also have a great website with useful tools and the

opportunity to attend additional training. I was fortunate enough to attend a 'Cultural Insight' learning seminar conducted by an Aboriginal Elder within the community I was working in. This expanded my knowledge of the culture within which I worked and taught valuable lessons of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that I feel will be beneficial to my clinical care. I definitely recommend a rural placement to future students and believe it has positively influenced my decision to practice in regional areas."

University of Melbourne Clinical Psychology student

Appointment of clinical specialists has increased the quality and quantity of rural placements

Psychology

Dr Kate Reid, a Clinical Psychologist in the Goulburn Valley, has been a consultant to the Going Rural Health team for our Psychology program. She has coordinated a network of psychologists to support Masters of Psychology placements. In addition, she has encouraged other providers (both public and private) to offer placements to expand student opportunities and mental health service provision in the region. Kate has also supervised placements in community settings, creating new placements at Euroa Primary School where Psychology students have established a positive mental health initiative for children and their families.



Social Work

Ms Marina Klooster is an experienced Social Worker based in Shepparton. Marina has been a consultant to the Going Rural Health team where she has engaged with Social Workers in the Goulburn Valley to increase the number of student placements, encourage practitioners to undergo training to become accredited supervisors, and encourage new and innovative placement opportunities.

The Going Rural Health Program has seen more than double the numbers of Social Work students attending placements in the Goulburn Valley region in the past few years. In 2017, Going Rural Health supported 43 Social Work students.

Occupational Therapy

Ms Sarah MacNeil has supervised occupational therapy students on placement in an aged care facility allowing for occupational therapy students to develop occupational therapy skills specific to dementia and aged care. This placement has now expanded to include a second aged care facility.

Speech Pathology

Ms Tara Ianazzo has been employed to supervise speech pathology students. Initially this resulted in a pediatric placement for 2 speech pathology students and this has now been developed to include services to aged care and NDIS clients.

Physiotherapy

Ms Lauren Woodhart has supervised physiotherapy students at Maryborough Health Service on behalf of the Going Rural Health program for the last 2 years. As a direct result of her engagement with students, other allied health staff have requested students and become interested in education and placement opportunities. Now students from Occupational Therapy, Speech Pathology, Medical Imaging and Pharmacy are all undertaking placements within this small town. With Lauren's efforts, the Going Rural Health program has seen a tripling of student placement numbers, from 15 in 2016 to 45 students in 2017. In addition, placement opportunities are being broadened to community based services and schools in Maryborough to offer a blend of placements across acute and community based settings.

Student feedback has identified the value of challenging themselves through placement:

"Having the chance to work as a real OT, seeing clients and conducting assessments independently. Having the support of my supervisor throughout my placement was very important to my development. It was challenging being away from my family. I did however learn so much and developed myself professionally. Advice for future students: say yes to any opportunity that is offered to you. I definitely learnt so much just by saying 'yes' to opportunities even if it was challenging or daunting."

Deakin University
Occupational Therapy student

Working with disadvantaged groups

Ms Karen Speedy, an experienced Speech Pathologist specialising in pediatrics, has particular expertise in working in primary schools and kindergartens with a large demographic of disadvantaged, low socioeconomic and culturally diverse students and families. The Going Rural Health program has established placements in these schools as they have a known need for allied health services.

Karen has created a number of comprehensive and insightful education packages for allied health students to prepare them for their placement. For students who have not previously worked in high needs communities, Karen's education prepares them to get the best experience from their placement and instill public health knowledge on how they can make a difference to children's lives. Student feedback about a placement not undertaken in a 'traditional' setting (such as a hospital) is shown by this example:

"It allowed for a lot of opportunity to research and implement strategies that I have not had experience in previously. Before I came on this placement, I honestly thought it was going to be a waste of time; but I have learnt so much and grown as a health professional because of it. [The placement allowed me] to be independent and take initiative, as I will [when I am] a new graduate."

Charles Sturt Physiotherapy student

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