

CRANplus Position Statement Students and New Graduates

CRANplus, the peak professional body for remote and isolated health, is committed to actively engaging, supporting and being responsive to the needs of students and new graduates. We do this in the interest of promoting remote health as a career choice, thus ensuring a future remote workforce.

CRANplus believes that:

Today's students and tomorrow's new graduates are pivotal to our future remote workforce. We are dependent upon them for maintaining vital, accessible health services for remote and isolated communities into the future.

Students

CRANplus believes that the vast majority, if not all, nursing students should have an opportunity to undertake at least one clinical placement in a small, limited-resource health service with a focus on comprehensive primary health care. Ideally, this would be offered in the final (third) year of study. Such health services are typically located in rural or remote locations where resources are considerably less than those available in regional and metropolitan areas.

Exposing students to these learning opportunities encourages a deeper understanding of the social determinants of health, due in large part to the fact that rural and remote Australians bear the greatest burden of disease and chronic illness. Furthermore, in a climate where nursing practice is becoming increasingly 'specialised', such placements also foster an appreciation of the value of specialist generalist nursing. In any one day a student nurse would see patients across the entire lifespan with a wide cross-section of presentations including childhood illness, chronic disease, mental illness, the complexity of co-morbidities, aged care residents and responding to an acute emergency and transfer out of a critically ill person.

It is well-established that health professionals who train in rural or remote areas during their undergraduate experience are much more likely to remain or return to those areas following graduation. The medical profession has embraced this evidence and there are substantial incentives for medical students and graduates to train and work in rural locations. CRANplus believes that similar inducements should be offered for nursing students, including Commonwealth subsidised clinical placements that provide free or low-cost accommodation and travel.

As reflected in the CRANplus' *Professional Standards of Remote Practice* (2016) and the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia's *Registered Nurse Standards for Practice* (2016), every health professional has a responsibility to contribute to the professional development of others. This can be achieved through preceptoring and mentoring of students and new graduates. We support

increased investment in the promotion of contemporary models of mentoring and clinical supervision of students.

It is essential that the hosting service have the capacity to support student placement(s) in regard to appropriate staff, and demonstrates a commitment to create a welcoming workplace, whereby students have access to an induction/orientation program and supervision is in place.

Furthermore, the hosting service engages with the community/consumer regarding the student's placement and care provided.

It is equally important for students to be supported by their universities /tertiary facilities through adequate preparation pre-placement, and having induction and supervision in place for them. We promote the use of contemporary models of mentoring and supervision, which overcome the barriers of distance. For example, students can be supported remotely by the university through various online modalities such as Skype and Zoom. The roll out of Telehealth in the bush has improved connectivity and communications for rural and remote health services. This infrastructure provides yet further opportunities for contemporary models of clinical supervision

New Graduates

A well-structured 'Transition to Practice' program will assist new graduates to build competence and confidence in their abilities to work to their full scope of practice; thus it is the building block for the future remote workforce.

The elements of an effective pathway for new graduates to move from rural to remote and isolated practice would be:

1. New graduate's first employment position is within a regional/rural health service; a well-supported 'Transition to Practice' program is provided for them as well as participating in the CRANplus LINKS mentoring program
2. New graduates have acquired the requisite knowledge, skills, and attributes to be confident and competent in their practice
3. New graduates then move onto an outlying small remote hospital or a primary health care clinic.
4. The graduate commences the process of CRANplus Remote Area Nurse (RAN) Certification
5. The graduate undertakes continuing professional development, inclusive of postgraduate studies in rural and remote health offered by the universities.

CRANplus recommends:

- The issues, challenges and benefits of a career in remote primary healthcare are included in all undergraduate programs.
- Students from a rural and remote background are encouraged to become health professionals and be supported throughout their undergraduate studies.
- Scholarships are available for students to offset travel and accommodation costs associated with undertaking rural/remote placements.
- A flexible approach be undertaken by university/tertiary undergraduate schools in making opportunities available for students who express and demonstrate a commitment to remote practice.

- Students are responsible for their own preparation prior to a remote placement by sourcing CRANplus' *Pathway to Remote Practice* and other resources (listed later in the document) that will provide comprehensive, appropriate information.
- A strong commitment by health services and staff to ensure induction/orientation processes are intrinsic to workplace practices and accessible for all student placements.
- Contemporary models of mentoring and clinical supervision of students are promoted and adopted by resident staff in rural/remote health services.
- Access to a central portal for students and health services to identify those health services that have the capacity to take students and have graduate programs to meet their needs
- New graduates are offered the opportunity to undertake dedicated 'Transition to Practice' programs that provide solid expertise and attributes required for a future career in the remote sector.
- Transition to practice is one part of the overall educational pipeline to providing quality care through lifelong learning. The pipeline commences with undergraduate education, to transition programs, post graduate programs and continuing professional development.

CRANplus commits to:

1. Actively advocating for Commonwealth supported rural and remote clinical placements for undergraduates, and Transition to Practice programs for new graduates.
2. Being a consistent, reliable source of information and support for all health professionals, particularly students and new graduates, who are considering a remote placement or position. This includes career advice, mentoring programs, scholarships and connecting them with rural and remote health professionals or resources to meet their learning needs.
3. Developing, promoting and maintaining resources that enhance students' and new graduates' competencies and life-long learning capabilities, for their well-being, resilience, confidence and competence as future health professionals in remote and isolated communities across Australia.
4. Working with universities/tertiary training organisations to foster a supportive placement environment through means of adequate preparation pre-placement and clinical supervision programs that overcome distance and isolation.
5. Working with health services in providing resources and support to promote contemporary models of mentoring and clinical supervision, thereby fostering a positive, supportive placement environment to maximise learning for both students and new graduates.

CRANplus RESOURCES

CRANplus

<https://crana.org.au/>

CRANplus Supporting Students

<https://crana.org.au/workforce-support/other-support/students>

CRANplus Pathway to Remote Practice (2015)

https://crana.org.au/uploads/pdfs/CRANplus_RemotePractice_V1_1_webrescmp_Jan15-1_1.pdf

CRANplus Framework for Remote Practice (2018)

<https://crana.org.au/uploads/pdfs/CRANA-Framework-for-Remote-and-Isolated-Practice-2018.pdf>

CRANplus Professional Standards of Remote Practice (revised 2016)

https://crana.org.au/uploads/pdfs/Professional-Standards_Remote-Practice_NursingMidwifery-Jun2016.pdf

CRANplus Clinical Governance Guide for remote and isolated health services across Australia (2013)

<https://crana.org.au/uploads/pdfs/CRANplus-Clinical-Governance-Guide.pdf>

CRANplus LINKS Mentoring Program

<https://crana.org.au/workforce-support/other-support/mentoring-program/>

CRANplus Bush Support Service (BSS)

24-hour confidential psychologist driven phone line (1800 805 391)

<https://crana.org.au/workforce-support/bush-support-services/>

CRANplus Undergraduate Remote Placement Scholarships

<https://crana.org.au/workforce-support/other-support/scholarships>

CRANplus Student Courses - Remote Emergency Course (REC) and Maternity Emergency Course (MEC) (places organised through NRHSN for students to attend).

<https://www.nrhsn.org.au/>

CRANplus Annual Conference (presentation opportunities for students to undertake in a collegial supportive environment, as well as, provides networking opportunities to engage with remote clinicians).

<https://crana.org.au/conference/about-conference/>

RESOURCES ENDORSED BY CRANplus

National Rural Health Student Network

NRHSN Rural Placements Guide: How to make the most of your placement (2015)

<https://www.nrhsn.org.au/resources/publications/rural-placements-guide/>

NRHSN Mental Health Guide: When the Cowpat hits the Windmill (2015)

<https://www.nrhsn.org.au/resources/publications/mental-health-guide-when-the-cowpat-hits-the-windmill/>

Australian Rural Health Education Network

ARHEN Clinical Placement Guide for Students 2018

<http://arhen.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/REVISED-FINAL-UPDATE-March-2108-Student-Placement-Guide-2.pdf>

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