



S·A·R·R·A·H
Services for Australian
Rural and Remote Allied Health

24 November 2016

An Update from SARRAH to our Parliamentarians

Allied Health Scholarships

Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health (SARRAH) remains concerned that the Government is yet to release the tender to administer the new Health Workforce Scholarship Program. This means that there will not be any Commonwealth Government scholarships available for Undergraduate (Entry-Level) students who plan to study in semester 1, 2017. Consequently, people in rural and remote areas will miss out on the opportunity to study next year. Our feedback tells us that if students from a rural or remote area do not receive a scholarship, they will not be able to attend university. This delay will have a longer term impact on the rural and remote health workforce. SARRAH continues to receive high levels of inquiries from people seeking information about scholarships for next year – our mailing list currently has over 2000 subscribers, and this number continues to grow.

National Rural Health Commissioner

During the 2016 Election campaign, the Coalition announced the creation of a National Rural Health Commissioner. It is SARRAH's view that the Commissioner must work with rural, regional and remote communities as well as all components of the health workforce including allied health to improve health policies in the bush. In keeping with the vision that the health system must have a focus on patient centred care, perhaps the Commissioner should be a health consumer/advocate rather than a health professional. The Commissioner could also focus on:

1. Funding evidence based research into the economic impact of allied health interventions and their capacity to reduce overall costs to health budgets for complex and chronic conditions.
2. Increasing workforce incentives and programs to improve the supply and retention of Allied Health Professionals practicing, and students wishing to practice in the bush through increasing scholarships for rural and remote Allied Health Professionals and rural clinical placements with adequate supervision for allied health students.
3. Improving access to allied health services for rural and remote consumers with chronic and complex conditions through increasing support, and investment in multi-disciplinary primary health services commissioned by Primary Health Networks, ensuring allied health services are involved in the Health Care Homes pilot, and increasing the range and number of allied health services covered by the Medical benefits Schedule.
4. Integrating allied health services into the MyHealth Record system through providing greater support and funding for allied health service providers helping them connect to the system.

SARRAH 2016 Conference

The 2016 SARRAH National Conference was held during 27-29 October 2016 in Port Lincoln, South Australia. The conference theme was "It takes a village to raise a child" which is a traditional African proverb. The SARRAH Conference recommendations will be finalised over the coming weeks and circulated to interested Parliamentarians. It is anticipated that the 2018 SARRAH National Conference will be held in Darwin.

SARRAH 2015-16 Annual Report

On 28 October 2016, SARRAH held its Annual General Meeting where a copy of the 2015-16 Annual Report was tabled. A copy of the report is available by clicking [here](#).

Thank you for your continued support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rod Wellington". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rod" being more prominent.

Rod Wellington
Chief Executive Officer