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

19 June 2017

An Update from SARRAH to our Parliamentarians

Allied Health Scholarships

Welcome to our second update for 2017.

On 31 March 2017, the Department of Health released a closed tender inviting four organisations to submit an application to administer the new Health Workforce Scholarship Program (HWSP). The HWSP provides financial support for study in post graduate or continuing professional development activities in the field of medicine, nursing and allied health. The HWSP has been allocated $33.33m in funding over 3 years.

Unfortunately there is no funding to support new undergraduate (entry-level), clinical psychology or clinical placement scholars from January 2018. During 2016, SARRAH evaluated the outcomes of the allied health stream of the Nursing and Allied Health Scholarship and Support Scheme and found that **since 2011, 60% of the undergraduate scholars from nationally registered allied health professions were practising in ASGC-RA 2-5 areas**.

Our concern is that with the current workforce maldistribution set to continue coupled with the inequitable access to allied health professionals, the health and wellbeing of rural and remote communities will continue to suffer.

One of the solutions to address this is providing financial support to undergraduate students from rural and/or remote Australia studying an allied health profession – we need your assistance to rectify this workforce gap.

National Rural Health Commissioner

SARRAH welcomed Wednesday night's passing of legislation by the Senate to create the role of National Rural Health Commissioner. We strongly commend all Parliamentarians for their support of this important legislation.

The inaugural National Rural Health Commissioner has real potential to bring about significant, positive reforms in the rural and remote health sector. It is SARRAH's view that the Commissioner must work with regional, rural 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**.

Allied Health Rural Generalist

During 2013, work commenced on developing an Allied Health Rural Generalist (AHRG) pathway. An AHRG Project Governance Group was established with a multi-jurisdictional collaboration of health service providers formed. The Group continues to meet and progress subsequent phases of work with representatives from Queensland, Northern Territory, Western Australia, South Australia, New South Wales and SARRAH.

PO Box 74 Deakin West ACT 2600, Tel: 02 6285 4960, Fax: 02 6162 4094, sarrah@sarrah.org.au
Website: www.sarrah.org.au

To continue this work post June 2018, resourcing to support the AHRG Pathway national strategy will be required for:

- national coordination and stakeholder engagement activities;
- funding for rural generalist program participants;
- evaluation of rural generalist workforce and service strategies; and
- development of accreditation processes for the AHRG pathway in the post-trial phase.

We look forward to working with you and your office to progress these matters.

Thank you for your continued support.

Rod Wellington
Chief Executive Officer

PO Box 74 Deakin West ACT 2600, Tel: 02 6285 4960 Fax: 02 6162 4094 Email: sarrah@sarrah.org.au
Website: www.sarrah.org.au