Pathway to Remote Practice - Tying it all together

Now that you have successfully navigated the other preparatory steps, and have professionally and personally decided to take up the opportunities and challenges associated with being a remote health professional. There are few more aspects of which you need to be aware, in ‘Tying it All Together’.

New (novice) to Remote Practice

What does new (novice) to remote practice mean? At the commencement of any new role or position individuals experience a sense of feeling ‘new’ when processes and activities are presented for the first time within an unfamiliar workplace setting. This may seem overwhelming at first, however it is a ‘learning curve’ all employees experience.

It is important to recognise that you bring to the role or position acquired knowledge, proven abilities and expertise which over time will be enhanced, reflecting the expertise and practices of an experienced remote health professional.

The diagram below shows the continuum of professional clinical competence [novice to expert- 5 levels of proficiency] ¹ for Registered Nurses / Midwives in gaining acquisition and development of expertise.

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Defining Scope of Practice

Throughout, we have broadly referred to scope of practice. As a professional, it is important to have a clear understanding of the term ‘scope of practice’ and its meaning pertaining to the legal and regulatory requirements of your professional practice.

A profession’s scope of practice is the full spectrum of roles, functions, responsibilities, activities and decision-making capacity which individuals within the profession are educated, competent and authorised to perform.

The scope of professional practice is set by legislation — professional standards such as competency standards, codes of ethics, conduct and practice, and public need, demand and expectation. It may therefore be broader than that of any individual within the profession.

The actual scope of an individual’s practice is influenced by the:
• context in which they practice
• consumers’ health needs
• level of competence, education, qualifications and
• experience of the individual service provider’s policy, quality and risk management framework, and
• organisational culture.²

Orientation / Induction – Development - Support

The employer is responsible in supporting all staff to fulfill their roles and responsibilities within the organisation. Support is required to ensure new staff are given the opportunity to participate in an orientation and induction program inclusive of practice specific processes, networks, peer support and mentors. In addition, support for the ongoing training and development of all staff to further acquire expertise, in order to work to their full scope of practice in meeting the community’s health needs.

It is a good idea to talk to the employer regarding your position description, contract and performance review and development including the regularity of review – Is there an annual performance review and development [clinical and educational] program in place and would your position description and contract be reviewed on annual basis?

To gain some understanding of working in the community, talk to a senior Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander health worker, if they are working in the health centre, or a locally acknowledged senior elder of the community. They will be able to provide you with solid evidence and stories around the successes and challenges you may experience (this should be in addition to a cultural orientation).

Whilst some health services offer peer support and recommend mentors as part of the induction program, others will suggest CRANAplus Rural and Remote Mentoring Program, to provide support and mentorship for new graduates or an experienced health professional ‘new’ to remote practice. This program utilises current heath professionals to provide effective mentoring to clinicians (mentees) with a focus on building their capabilities in clinical leadership, decision-making, networking and resilience.

The program is available at: http://crana.org.au/education/eremote/remote-and-rural-mentoring-program/

Survival Tips

These survival tips were gathered from a number of Advanced Practice Remote Area Nurses and Midwives (RAN/Ms) gained from their experiences in dealing with the isolation of practice, the terrain and limited resources:

- **Examine what your motivation is**, before you make your decision – pay is only one factor! Job satisfaction is linked to liking what you do, and having a work environment congruent with your values and professional growth.

- **Practice your assessment skills prior to employment** i.e. listen to chests, look in ears, note skin integrity - gain confidence and experience under supervision.

- **In preparation for remote practice - think about a rural placement first**, it’s a great place to learn expertise relevant to remote practice and often gives you an opportunity to get a ‘feel’ for the area and potential remote opportunities.

- **Do your homework** - ask people who are already working out bush about your first community. *Do not feel pressured into taking the first offer!*

- Ideally a location with 3 or more nurses and Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Health Workers will give you an opportunity to learn and have their support. Take the opportunity to work alongside health workers and learn from them. They can act as ‘cultural mentors’.

- **Understand that to become a ‘local’, it often takes a generation or so**, to gain a sense of belonging and acceptance of being a ‘local’ within a community.

- **Authenticity** is the key to building trust and commitment to the community

- **As a health professional form relationships**, be friendly, but maintain a level of professionalism.

- **Respect local health workers and community workers**, do not take over from them. As this will be perceived as a sign of disrespect, they will not be keen to work with or alongside of you.

- **Follow protocols and guidelines** and seek advice whenever necessary.

- **Do not** take it upon yourself to **work outside of your scope of practice**. If you don’t know **ASK** – confer with your professional and collegial networks.

- **Feel comfortable with your employer**, (especially if you are employed by an agency as you need to feel confident that you can call and discuss concerns).

- **Self-Care comes first** – be aware of feeling tired, fatigued - have a plan – remember you can’t be all things to all people, look after yourself.

- **CRANAplus does not support Single Nurse Posts** for more information refer to our Position Statement at: [https://crana.org.au/advocacy/position-statements/singlenurseposts](https://crana.org.au/advocacy/position-statements/singlenurseposts)
Recommended readings


Further Information

Postgraduate courses and continuing education programs specific to remote health, **but not limited to**: 

**Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners / Workers**

**Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education**

- Cert IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Primary Health Care (Practice)


**Central Australian Remote Health Development Service**

- Cert IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Primary Health Care (Practice)

Visit website: [www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au](http://www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au)

**Nurses and Midwives, Allied Health Practitioners**

**Centre for Remote Health (NT)**

Joint centre - Flinders University and Charles Darwin University


- Master of Remote Indigenous Health
- Master of Nursing - Nurse Practitioner
- Graduate Diploma in Remote Health Practice
- Graduate Certificate in Remote Health Practice


**Cunningham Centre – Queensland Health**


For medical, nursing and allied health continuing education courses:

**Medical**

- Continuing Medical Education and Training (CMET) Program  

**Nursing**

To prepare and / or up-skill registered nurses to work in the acute rural health setting by updating professional and clinical skills.

For information regarding Drug therapy protocol – Rural and Isolated Practice Area – Endorsed Nurse (RIPRN)  
[Rural and Isolated Practice Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation 1996 (Qld)]

To provide rural and remote clinicians with current, evidence based knowledge and skills for advanced clinical nursing practice.
Advanced Clinical Skills for Rural and Remote Nursing
Professional and Clinical Skills Program for Rural Nursing

Allied Health
Allied Health Education and Training Program

Allied Health Professional Enhancement Program (AHPEP) Statewide project which provides Allied Health professionals and assistants across Queensland Health with improved access to quality professional development that aims to improve health outcomes for rural / remote communities.

Curtin University
- Master of Nursing (Nurse Practitioner)
- Grad Cert in Public Health
- Grad Cert in Public Health
- Master in Public Health
- Grad Cert in Health Promotion
- Grad Dip in Health Promotion
- Master of Health Promotion
Visit Website: https://www.curtin.edu.au

James Cook University (Qld)
- Master of Nursing (Nurse Practitioner)
- Master of Nursing (Adv. Clinical Practice)
- Master of Public Health and Tropical Medicine
- Master of Rural and Remote Medicine
- Graduate Diploma of Nursing (Rural and Remote)
- Graduate Diploma of Nursing (Adv. Clinical Practice)
- Graduate Diploma of Public Health and Tropical Medicine
- Graduate Diploma of Rural and Remote Medicine
- Graduate Certificate of Nursing (Rural and Remote)
- Graduate Certificate of Primary Health Care Research
- Graduate Certificate of Public Health

National Critical Care and Trauma Response Centre (NCCTRC) is dedicated to education and training for participants involved in trauma and disaster management
A Yearly Training Calendar is available
Visit website: www.nationaltraumacentre.nt.gov.au

PaRROT – Pathway to Rural and Remote Orientation Training – Queensland Health
A primary health approach - PaRROT is a learner centred program, focusing on primary health care, rural and remote health service provision and chronic disease care.

Services for Rural and Remote Allied Health (SARRAH)
Training Package, an online resource to support allied health professionals transitioning to rural and remote practice.

The University of Adelaide
- Master of Public Health

• Master of Research Studies (Public Health)
• Master of Health Science (Community and Primary Care)
• Graduate Diploma of Public Health
• Graduate Diploma of Nursing Science (Community and Primary Care)
• Graduate Certificate of Public Health

Visit website: [http://www.adelaide.edu.au](http://www.adelaide.edu.au)

**The University of Sydney (NSW)**
• Master in Primary Health Care
• Graduate Diploma in Primary Health Care
• Certificate in Primary Health Care


**University of Queensland**
• Master of Nurse Practitioner (specialisation)
• Master of Advance Practice Nursing
• Master of Rural and Remote Nursing
• Master of Primary Health Care Nursing
• Master of Public Health (Indigenous Health)
• Master of Public Health (Health promotion and disease prevention)
• Graduate Diploma of Advanced Practice Nursing
• Graduate Diploma of Primary Health Care
• Graduate Diploma of Rural and Remote Nursing
• Graduate Certificate of Primary Health Care Nursing
• Graduate Certificate of Rural and Remote Nursing
• Graduate Certificate of Public Health (Indigenous Health)
• Graduate Certificate of Public Health (Health promotion and disease prevention)


**University of Tasmania**
• Master of Clinical Nursing (specialisation)
• Master of Public Health
• Graduate Diploma in Advanced Nursing – Rural and Remote
• Graduate Diploma in Public Health
• Graduate Certificate in Advanced Nursing – Rural and Remote
• Graduate Certificate in Public Health

Visit website: [http://courses.utas.edu.au](http://courses.utas.edu.au)