PATHWAY TO RURAL PRACTICE

PREPARING TO WORK RURAL

This information is intended for nurses and midwives interested in working in rural areas.
STEP 1
THINKING ABOUT GOING RURAL

Both your professional and personal life requires equal attention when considering working and living in a rural community.

Rural practice requires a broad generalist approach, delivering comprehensive Primary Health and Emergency care across the lifespan.

Areas of practice include:
- Emergency care
- Triage
- Comprehensive clinical assessment and decision-making knowledge and skills
- Acute and sub-acute care
- Chronic disease
- Wound management
- Aged care
- Community health
- Effective time management and communication skills
- Palliative care

Effective, safe, quality care requires an understanding of the unique needs of the community.

Your scope of practice will change depending on the unique needs of the community, the health service’s policies and procedures and your own personal skills and knowledge.

STEP 2
GETTING UNDERWAY

Explore the possibilities of going rural by proactively seeking answers, gaining awareness and getting an insight into the rural lifestyle and the community.

- What do I need to know about this community? Demographics, cultural differences, recreational and general services, local economy or industry
- What employment and other opportunities exist for my partner and family?
- What schooling is available?
- Will my internet and mobile phone service provider operate in the rural areas?
- Do I need a ‘Blue Tick’ or equivalent phone? These should provide coverage in places where other phones struggle to get a signal
- What is the availability of local accommodation; short or long term?
- Do I need a drivers license and a vehicle?
- Is there any public transport available?
- What is the range of health services provided?
- What is the composition and size of the health service team?
- What level of professional support is available? For example, orientation, induction, professional development and mentoring programs.
You may be new to rural, however you will bring your own acquired knowledge, abilities and expertise. Over time these will be enhanced, and developed, reflecting the expertise and practices of an experienced rural health professional.

STEP 3
I’VE MADE A DECISION... NOW FOR FOLLOW UP

It’s time to find out what resources, knowledge and skills you will need to have or acquire before going rural.

• What skills, knowledge and experience do I have that will equip me to work in this setting?
• What are my skills and knowledge gaps?
• What education programs do I need to undertake prior to employment?
• Practice your assessment skills prior to employment i.e. Listen to chests, land bowel sounds, look in ears, note skin integrity – gain confidence and experience under supervision. Take opportunities to learn NOW!
• What professional development opportunities exist?
• Obtain competency certificates in cannulation, venipuncture, suturing, plastering, etc.
• Is there 24/7 Medical coverage?
• What clinical supports are available, including Clinical Guidelines?
• Understand the Health Service and NSQHSS Standards.
• Is there an Employee Assistance Program?

STEP 4
HAVE CONFIDENCE YOU CAN DO THIS

Your application is in or you have accepted your first rural position...

Access resources and networks to support you professionally and personally:

Links Mentoring Program
https://crana.org.au/professional/mentoring-program

CRANAplus Education program, including E-learning education and short courses
CRANAplus eRemote provides an online learning platform that provides health professionals with online learning opportunities, including BLS & ALS

Remote Primary Healthcare Manuals
If working in NT and other specific jurisdiction

Primary Clinical Care Manual (PCCM)
If you are working in Queensland and other specific jurisdictions (or the Military)

National Midwifery Guidelines for Consultation and Referral: Australian College of Midwives

National Safety Quality Health Service Standards
http://www.safetyandquality.gov.au

CRANAplus Bush Support Service (BSS)
CRANAplus Bush Support Service is a free and confidential telephone counselling service for rural and remote area health professionals and their families.
1800 805 391 BSS provides a range of resources aimed at improving psychological, social and emotional well-being of those working in the bush https://crana.org.au/support
ASPIRING AND THRIVING TIPS

• Examine what your motivation is
  – Is your partner being relocated?
  – Are you looking for a lifestyle change?
    Job satisfaction is linked to liking what you do, and having a work environment congruent with your values and professional growth.

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

• Do your homework
  – Ask people who are already working out in the rural areas about rural practice.
  – Do not feel pressured into taking the first offer!

• 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, get involved, join local clubs and activities.

• Authenticity
  – This is the key to building trust and commitment within any community.

• As a health professional, form relationships
  – Be friendly, but always maintain a level of professionalism.

• Follow protocols and guidelines
  – 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
  – You need to feel confident that you can call and discuss concerns freely.

The peak professional body for the remote and isolated health workforce

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CRANApplus acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of Australia, many of whom live in remote areas, and pays its respect to their Elders both past and present. CRANApplus contributes significantly to improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by building the strength of the remote and isolated health workforce.

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