

## Keeping up with the Joneses while at home with the Smiths

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With the introduction of the Australian Health Practitioner Registration Authority many allied health disciplines have had significant changes to their registration standards, including some states and disciplines that have never had statewide registration requirements previously. This has been a significant transition for the whole workforce but one group particularly affected by the changes are 'stay at home (SAH)' care givers. These professionals, whilst not currently practising or in a very part-time capacity, have had a mammoth task in understanding and meeting new requirements. It has been our experience as 'SAH' care givers that meeting the continuing professional development requirements and recency of practice standards pose a significant threat to our ability to maintain our registration. This is made more difficult by our rural and remote locations. So how can we fulfil our desires to SAH with infants and children and yet remain registered and able to continue to play a significant role in the health field on re-entry?

It is well documented that rural and remote locations have great challenges in recruiting and retaining allied health professionals. It is also well recognised that the vast majority of allied health professionals are women and that they will leave the workforce for a period of time in order to pursue a family. In doing so we are often losing senior clinicians with years of experience out of the workforce and unless we are able to provide innovative solutions for these care givers many are unlikely to maintain their registration and re-enter the workforce with all their experience at a later date.

This paper addresses some innovative ways to complete the requirements of recency of practice and also of continuing professional development, particularly for those located in rural and remote locations. We as professionals are concerned about the lack of support for this SAH group and are passionate about finding solutions to keeping people work ready. If we are really serious about 'people' and 'places' then lets look seriously at some 'possibilities' for this group of practitioners.