

The impact of significant employment changes in a remote NT mining community: the GP's perspective

Sarah Chalmers, Colin Smith

Endeavour Health Services and Flinders University, NT

Two general practitioners share their views of the impact of significant employment changes within a mining town.

Nhulunbuy is a remote mining town on the North Eastern tip of the NT, population of 4,500. Since the mid 1960s it has been a thriving community based around the bauxite mine and alumina refinery. In November 2013, after 2 years of uncertainty, Rio Tinto announced the curtailment of the refinery, resulting in the loss of 1000 jobs. The following 12 months have been a difficult time for the community, with ongoing uncertainty for the future of the remaining workforce, the community and local businesses.

As the only mainstream general practice in town, we have observed the changes in our community through this adjustment phase. As residents and business owners in the town we have also been participants in the process.

This talk will be an observational narrative of our experiences, and the effects that this had on our families and other staff in the practice.