Andrea Thomas

Andrea Thomas was ‘born and bred’ in country South Australia. She took up her first job as a podiatrist in the Riverland (her home town) in 1989. Andrea was appointed to the senior podiatrist role at Riverland Community Health Services in 1992. She is responsible for ensuring the delivery of podiatry services for the Riverland region of South Australia, which has a population of around 38,000 people. Having worked in a rural area for all of her working life, Andrea is well aware of the challenges faced by rural clinicians.

Like other states, South Australian Rural Podiatry Services differ significantly across the many regional areas within the state. Things such as eligibility criteria, funding sources, case loads and staffing levels are not standardised across rural areas and the services people in the community receive is more often than not determined by their postcode rather than their clinical need. One of the first tasks undertaken by the newly appointed Clinical Lead Podiatrist was to address these inconsistencies and a number of working parties were formed to assist with this. Andrea was appointed as the lead for the ‘Eligibility Criteria and Priority of Access’ working party and as a small group of enthusiastic podiatrists, they were charged with developing standardised eligibility criteria for podiatry services across country South Australia.