

## ★ 'We're beside you'—tailored preparation to remote health practice

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Remote Area Health Corps, NT

Remote Area Health Corps (RAHC) recruits, prepares and mobilises urban based health professionals to supplement the permanent workforce in remote primary health services throughout the NT.

**History:** Remote Area Health Corps (RAHC) is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health under The Indigenous Australians' Health Program: Stronger Futures Northern Territory to contribute to “address persistent challenges to accessing primary health care services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait people in the Northern Territory”.

RAHC collaborates closely with health services to supplement their permanent workforce by providing clinically safe and culturally sound health professionals (HPs) for short term placements. RAHC was set up in response to stakeholder requests to access the pool of urban based HPs interested in working in a remote setting. Provision of tailored preparation, training and support is an essential part of the RAHC model to assist HPs to make a successful transition to remote practice.

**Process:** RAHC applies a rigorous approach to credentialing to identify HPs that will meet the requirements of health services and then provides a range of information and training to prepare the HP for a placement. This approach has delivered almost 3,000 placements and overwhelmingly positive feedback from both the HPs and the health services and a repeat rate approaching 80 per cent. Further, over 25 HPs have transitioned into permanent positions in the NT.

**Remote Educator (RE) support program:** RAHC's RE support program provides REs to deliver one on one support on the ground for nurses to assist their successful transition to remote practice. The program begins with the RAHC clinical team guiding a nurse to prepare for their first placement. RAHC's suite of 15 eLearning modules provide an introduction to remote health practice along with additional resources including the CARPA manual and the NT immunisation training course (AGV).

Arriving in the NT, the nurse completes 2 days of face to face clinical and cultural orientation. A RE then accompanies the nurse for the first week (longer if required) to their placement and works with them side by side to support a safe and effective clinical and cultural transition. Feedback is solicited from the HP, RE and the Health Centre Manager about this process.

**Summary:** RAHC's high repeat rate and the increasing use of the RE program by health services provides evidence that our preparation and support is contributing to supplementing the workforce in the Territory.